



# Sanatana Dharma

## The Eternal Religion

Newly Edited by  
**Swami Nirmalananda Giri**  
(Abbot George Burke)

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Dedicated to the Noble Memory of  
Doctor Judith Tyberg  
A Modern Dharmacharya  
(Teacher of Dharma)

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# Editor's Preface

## **Preface to *Sanatana Dharma***

This book was printed nearly one hundred years ago in Varanasi (Benares) for use as a textbook by the students of the Central Hindu College—now known as the Benares Hindu University. Its original title was *Sanatana Dharma, An Advanced Text Book of Hindu Religion and Ethics*. I bought a copy during one of my pilgrimages to India, but only read it through recently, almost fifty years later. I had been planning for some time to write a book outlining the principles of Sanatana Dharma on a much briefer level, but I decided to lay aside my plan and prepare an edition of this book for publication by our Atma Jyoti Ashram.

In one of my writings I have told how shortly after my return to America from my first pilgrimage to India I was riding through the streets of western Los Angeles with a beginning yogi. At one point he said to me, “I don’t want to spend a lot of time on it, but could you explain Hindu religion to me in five minutes or so?” It is no exaggeration when I say I was stunned. Sanatana Dharma in five minutes? I would have been appalled if he had said only five hours! The ignorant and worthless—because it was ineffectual—religion in which I was raised could certainly have been outlined in five minutes, but not the Eternal Truth I had found in India.

Sanatana Dharma is vast and requires a life-long study and a life-long process of self-evolution, for it is the vision of those incalculably great and perfected yogi-sages, the ancient rishis of India, whose consciousness could hold Infinity as easily and naturally as an ordinary person can hold a myrobalan (amalaki) fruit in his hand. (The amalaki fruit in the hand is a simile used by sages such as Adi Shankaracharya to express the natural and easeful state of total realization possessed by the yogi siddhas.) It is complex, consisting of a vast number of sacred texts that impart profound knowledge, and requires an extensive Sanskrit vocabulary, as the Glossary indicates.

For the aspiring yogi a lifetime study of Sanatana Dharma is a necessity because he must work and think continually in the context of Sanatana Dharma of which yoga is an inseparable part. True, yoga is not a matter of intellectuality and mere philosophy, but Truth is as infinite as the Reality to which we aspire when we pray:

Lead me from the unreal to the Real,  
Lead me from darkness to the Light.  
Lead me from death to Immortality.

Paramhansa Yogananda said, “Stupid people cannot find God.” And neither can ignorant, uninformed people be yogis, since the truly worthy yogi is of necessity a Sanatana Dharmi—a conscious adherent and practicer of Sanatana Dharma. Sanatana Dharma is not just a religion, it is the encompassing of the Infinite Reality in both its relative and absolute aspects.

It may seem odd that so much is given in the final part regarding the individual dharmi's relationships with others. But true dharma is primarily intended for personal growth, including the dharmi's own intellectual and emotional responses to others. "Thy neighbor as thyself" was a principle brought into the West two millennia ago from India by the Nath Yogi, Sri Isha Nath—Jesus the Christ. (See *The Christ of India*.)

Brilliant and complex as this book may be, it is just a wave in the ocean—the Vidyasagar, the Ocean of Wisdom—that is Sanatana Dharma. And the wise immerse themselves perpetually in that ocean. Come and explore that Ocean with the countless sages of India that have realized their oneness with It.

I have dedicated this printing to one of America's finest scholars, philosophers and educators, Dr. Judith Tyberg, whose guru, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, named her Jyotipriya—Lover of Light. She was herself an alumnus of the Benares Hindu University and founder of the East-West Cultural Center in Hollywood. It was she who taught me my first steps in Sanatana Dharma as a living system of wisdom leading to enlightenment.

It have written and included a brief commentary on the Manu Smriti since it is so frequently cited in *Sanatana* Dharma as a supreme authority.

Swami Nirmalananda Giri

# Sanatana Dharma

## Introduction

The religion based on the Vedas, the Sanatana Dharma, or Vedic Dharma, is the oldest of living religions, and stands unrivalled in the depth and splendor of its philosophy, while it yields to none in the purity of its ethical teachings and in the flexibility and varied adaptation of its rites and ceremonies. "It is like a river, which has shallows that a child may play in, and depths which the strongest diver cannot fathom." It is thus adapted to every human need, and there is nothing which any religion can supply to add to its rounded perfection. The more it is studied, the more does it illuminate the intellect and satisfy the heart. Those who learn it are laying up for themselves a sure increaser of happiness, a sure consolation in trouble, for the rest of their life.

"That which supports, that which holds together the peoples (of the universe), that is dharma." Dharma is not merely a set of beliefs having no necessary connection with the daily life of humanity, but is the very principles of a healthy and beneficent life. Therefore to know those principles and act upon them is to be a true aryan—follower of Vedic Dharma—and to tread the sure road to happiness, individual as well as general. (See the Glossary for the correct meaning of "aryan.") The etymological meaning of "religion" is also the same, "that which binds together." "Vedic" means "pertaining to the Veda or Perfect Knowledge." Hence Vedic Dharma means "the Religion of Perfect Knowledge."

One of the most remarkable things in the Sanatana religion is the way in which it has laid down a complete scheme of knowledge, and has then crowned it with a philosophy composed of six faces (the six darshanas or systems of philosophy), though governed by one idea and leading to one goal. No such comprehensive and orderly view of human knowledge is elsewhere to be found.

### **The basis of Sanatana Dharma**

Besides the Four Vedas (Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Atharva Veda and Yajur Veda) which are collections of hymns, the fundamental texts of Sanatana Dharma are the twelve Upanishads: Aitareya, Kaushitaki, Taittiriya, Katha, Shvetashvatara, Brihadaranyaka, Isha, Kena, Chandogya, Mandukya, Mundaka and Prashna. These contain the basic philosophy of Sanatana Dharma and were commented on by the founders of the leading schools of Vedanta, or by their early disciples. On these texts the whole fabric of Vedic Dharma, the religion of the Vedas, as it is truly named, is built. Both the Vedas and the Upanishads are called the Shruti: That Which Was Heard in the depths of

meditation by the ancient sages, the rishis, who received the revelation and transmitted it by writing it down just as it came to them.

Next in order to the Shruti in authority comes the Smriti, That Which Is Remembered, the teachings of later sages who explained and developed the entire range of Dharma, laying down the laws which regulate aryan national, social, family and individual obligations. They are the text-books of law, and are very numerous.

Thus we see that, as in the case of the Vedas, the rishis with the necessary authority made alterations and adaptations to suit the needs of the time. It was this flexibility, characteristic of the Sanatana Dharma, that preserved it through so many ages, when other ancient religions perished.

Of the authority of the Shruti and Smriti, Manu—the first law-giver, whose code is the foundation of Hindu religious and social conduct—says: “The Veda is known as Shruti, the dharmashastras as Smriti: these should not be doubted (but carefully consulted and considered) in all matters, for from them dharma arose” (Manu Smriti 2:10).

Manu wrote a dharmashastra of 2,685 slokas. The twelfth chapter deals with transmigration and declares that supreme bliss is to be gained by the knowledge of the Atman, on whom “the universe rests.”

[“If you ask whether among all these virtuous actions, performed here below, there be one which has been declared more efficacious than the rest for securing supreme happiness to man, the answer is that the knowledge of the Self is stated to be the most excellent among all of them; for that is the first of all sciences, because immortality is gained through that” (Manu Smriti 12:84-85).

“Let every man, concentrating his mind, fully recognize in the Self all things, both the real and the unreal, for he who recognizes the universe in the Self, does not give his heart to unrighteousness. The Self alone is the multitude of the gods; the universe rests on the Self” (Manu Smriti 12:118-119)

“He who thus recognizes the Self through the Self in all created beings, becomes equal-minded towards all, and enters the highest state: that of Brahman” (Manu Smriti 12:125).]

Next in succession to the Smriti come the Puranas, which, with the Itihasa, the histories, are sometimes said to form the Fifth Veda since they give a knowledge of the Vedas, and are therefore worthy objects of study. There are eighteen Puranas: Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Narada Purana, Markandeya Purana, Agni Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Brahmavaivarta Purana, Linga Purana, Varaha Purana, Skanda Purana, Vamana Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsyav, Suparna or Garuda Purana, and Brahmanda Purana. Certain definite characteristic subjects of a Purana are: creation, secondary creation [some interpret the word as meaning “reabsorption,” “destruction”], genealogy, manvantaras, and history. The sage Vyasa (Krishna Dwaipayana, the son of Parashara) is considered the compiler of the Puranas.

The Puranas contain the history of remote times, when the conditions of existence were quite different from those which prevail in our days; they also describe regions of



the universe not visible to the ordinary physical eye. Hence it is unfair to regard the conceptions of the Puranas as being of the same nature as those of modern science. When yoga-siddhis are developed, the puranic pictures of the universe and its past history are seen to be infinitely more correct than those arrived at by the modern scientific use of our physical organs of perception, however much these may be aided by delicate scientific apparatus.

Two other important books considered related to the Puranas are the Vishnu Bhagavata and the Devi Bhagavata. Both are equally valuable and instructive. The Devi Bhagavata is specially fitted for those who are inclined to metaphysics and science, while the Vishnu Bhagavata is most acceptable to the devotional temperament.

The other part of the Fifth Veda is the Itihasa, the two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Ramayana has for author Valmiki, and is the history of the family descended from Ikshwaku, in which was born the avatara of Vishnu, Ramachandra, and his three brothers. The whole story gives a vivid picture of Indian life as led towards the close of the Treta Yuga, and is intended to provide, in the life of Ramachandra and his brothers, a model of fraternal affection and mutual service, leading to prosperity and general welfare, that may serve as a lesson and inspiration in true aryan living, and a model of kingship for all aryan rulers.

The Mahabharata was compiled by Vyasa early in the Kali Yuga, but different recensions of it have been made. The story is far more complicated and more modern than that of the Ramayana, and relates the varying fortunes of a family which, rent by jealousies and rivalries, perished by internecine strife. Against this dark background stands out the figure of the avatara, Sri Krishna, dominating the whole, surrounded by the Pandava family, which triumphs by virtue of its righteous cause over the opposing Kurus; while, among the latter, shine forth the heroic Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, the splendid but doomed defenders of wrongful sovereignty. The story fitly opens the Kali Yuga, in which good and evil contend with almost equal forces, and in which ethical problems and the complicated workings of karma baffle and bewilder the mind; in the destruction of the best and wisest of the kshatriya caste it seems to presage the coming invasions of India, and in the gloom of its closing earthly scenes to forecast the darkness that was soon to settle down on Aryavarta. The main thread of the story is constantly broken by interludes, consisting of instructive lessons and stories, among which are the immortal discourse of Bhishma on dharma, and the most famous jewel of aryan literature, the Bhagavad Gita. The whole forms an encyclopedia of history, morals and religion, not surpassed, or even rivaled, by any other epic in the world.

### **The Science and philosophy of Sanatana Dharma**

The science of ancient India was contained in the Shadangani, six limbs, or branches, of the Vedas. Its philosophy was contained in the Shad-Darshanani, the Six Views, or Systems, also called the Shad-Upangani, Six Subsidiary Limbs. They are all designed to lead man to the One Science, the One wisdom, which saw One Self as Real and all else as unreal.

The rishis, realizing the unity of all knowledge, made no distinction between

science, philosophy and religion. All alike were based on the Veda; the sciences were the Vedangas, the limbs of the Veda, the philosophies were the Vedopangas, other limbs of the Veda, all culminating in the Vedanta, the end of the Veda. And they were all summed up together as the Lesser Knowledge, the Knowledge of the One being alone supreme and indivisible; even the revealed Veda was included in the former, in virtue of its being revealed, whereas in the latter the atman knows itself. Thus it is written: “Two knowledges are to be known, thus say the knowers of Brahman: the supreme and the lower. The lower: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, the method of study, the method of ritual, grammar, philology, prosody, astrology. The supreme: that whereby The Eternal is reached.”

### **The six darshanas**

The Six Darshanas (Shad-Darshanani) are best understood by being seen in relation to each other rather than in opposition, for they form, in their entirety, one great scheme of philosophic truth. They are arranged in pairs:

Nyaya–Vaisheshikam

Sankhya–Yoga

Mimamsa–Vedanta

The Prasthanas Bheda of Madhusudana Saraswati after summarizing the Six Darshanas, lays stress on their unity. “In reality, all the munis who have put forward these theories agree in wishing to prove the existence of the One Supreme Lord without a second.... These munis cannot be in error, considering that they are omniscient: and these different views have only been propounded by them in order to keep off all nihilistic theories, and because they were afraid that human beings, with their inclinations towards the objects of the world, could not be expected at once to know the true goal of man” (Max Muller, *Six Systems*, pp. 107-108).

As the Shruti says: “Cows are many-colored; but the milk (of all) has but one color. Look on knowledge as the milk, and on the teachers as the cows” (Brahma-bindu Upanishad, 19).

The object of all the Darshanas is the same: to rescue men from suffering. And the way of rescue is the same: the removal of ignorance—which is bandha, bondage—and consequent union with the Supreme. Thus the Nyaya calls ignorance, mithyajnana, false knowledge. The Sankhya calls it avivekah, non-discrimination between the Real and the unreal. And the Vedanta calls it avidya, nescience. Each philosophy aims at its removal by jnana, wisdom, whereupon ananda, bliss, is enjoyed. This ananda is the nature of the Self, and therefore cannot accurately be said to be obtained. The Self is Bliss, and it is only necessary to remove the illusion which causes suffering in order that Bliss may be enjoyed. The Nyaya hence speaks of its object as apavarga, salvation or deliverance, and moksha or mukti, liberation, is the universally accepted goal.

### **Sankhya**

The Sankhya is an account, primarily, of the “how” of creation. There are two primary roots of all we see around us, purusha, spirit, and prakriti, matter. Purusha is

many, as appears by the differences in happiness and misery, birth and death, etc., but all are of like essential nature. Purusha thus may be taken to represent a totality, the subjective side of existence, whereas prakriti is the objective side of existence.

## **Yoga**

Yoga, the system of effort, or of union, accepts the Sankhya as its philosophy, and in adding to it a system of effort which should set the purusha free, it makes one of the means of freedom Ishwarapranidhana: offering the life to God. Patanjali then defines Ishwara as a special purusha who has not been touched by pain, action, consequences of action, and desires, unlimited by time. Yoga is the means of stopping the constant movements of the chitta, the thinking principle, and thus reaching samadhi, the perfectly steady and balanced condition, from which kaivalya, the isolation of the purusha, i.e., the separation from prakriti, can be gained.

The remaining pair of systems is entitled the Mimamsa, for both deal primarily with the leading principles to be adopted in interpreting the text of the Vedas. But the Purva Mimamsa generally bears the name, the Uttara Mimamsa being usually known as the Vedanta. The Purva, or Earlier, Mimamsa is concerned with the Karmakhanda of the Veda, that is with the sacrifices, offerings and ceremonials generally; while the Uttara, or Later, Mimamsa is concerned with the Brahmajnana of the Veda, the knowledge of Brahman. The Uttara Mimamsa, or Vedanta, is the Darshana which may be said to dominate Indian thought in the present day, in its three forms. The Vedanta has three great schools: the Advaita: Non-dualism; the Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-dualism): Non-duality with a difference; and the Dvaita: duality.

## **Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads**

The student of the Vedanta is expected to study the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita is the application of the philosophy to life, the explainer and the guide of conduct. The Upanishads contain the philosophy in an intellectual form, and on them the intelligence is exercised. For this reason no man was admitted to the study of the Vedanta until he possessed the Four Qualifications: vairagya, (freedom from selfish attachment to the things of the world), viveka, (a strong sense of the distinction between the permanent and the transient), shatsampatti (the six mental and moral requirements: peacefulness, self-control, resignation, endurance, faith and collectedness) and mumuksha, (the longing for liberation), and was thus fit for its reception.

## **Dvaita Vedanta**

The Dvaita Vedanta insists on the separateness of the jivatman and the Paramatman. It teaches that Vishnu is the Supreme Deity, and who formed the universe out of the already-existing prakriti; Vishnu is the efficient cause of the universe, and matter is the material cause thereof, as the goldsmith and the gold are the double cause of the bracelet. Both Vishnu and prakriti are beginningless and endless, as also is the jiva, the individual soul; but prakriti and jiva are subordinate to,

and dependent on, Vishnu. Vishnu is Sat, reality, Jnanam, wisdom, and Anantam, infinite. He enters prakriti—called also jada-prakriti—as Purusha, the animating universal soul, and thereupon follows the evolution of the universe. The jiva is immaterial, different from Vishnu, and each jiva is different from every other. The jiva attains moksha, in which it enjoys bhoga, eternal bliss; this is fourfold and the jiva reaches one or other of the four conditions, according to its deserts. These conditions are: Salokyam, residence in the Divine World; Samipyam, nearness to God; Sarupyam, similarity to the Divine Form; Sayujyam, union with God. This union must not be considered as one of identity of nature.

### **Vishishtadvaita Vedanta**

The Vishishtadvaita Vedanta is for those who, conscious of separation, and longing for union with the Supreme, feel the necessity for an object of worship and devotion, and find it in the conception of the Saguna Brahman, the conditioned Brahman, Ishwara, the Supreme Lord. Brahman is the highest reality, the One, but has attributes inseparable from Himself. From Brahman comes samkarshana, the separated soul, which produces pradyumna, the mind, which produces aniruddha, the “I.” These separated souls are vyakta, manifested, during the period of activity, and when the pralaya approaches they are drawn in, become avyaktam, unmanifested. Brahman is then in the karanavastha, the causal state, in which remain avyakta—both soul and matter. Brahman is the object of worship on whom the soul depends, [yet] the soul being not Brahman, but a part of Brahman, the separation is insisted on but union is sought.

### **Advaita Vedanta**

The Advaita Vedanta is summed up in the words “Thou art That.” Brahman is nirguna, without attributes, and is Real; all else is unreal; jivatman and Paramatman are the same, there is no difference. The idea of difference arises from avidya, nescience, and when the atman transcends nescience, it knows its own nature and is free.

The universe springs from Brahman, as hairs from a man’s head; it is the work of Maya. Cause and effect are one and the same, not two different things, as an aggregate of threads is cloth, and there is no cloth apart from the threads that run lengthways and crossways. The universe, having Reality as it were behind it, has a kind of reality, like a shadow which could not exist without a substance, and this justifies and makes necessary activity of all kinds. Hence there is also an apra vidya, the knowledge of the phenomenal, as well as a paravidya, the knowledge of the noumenon.

Having established the fundamental truth of unity, the Vedanta explains the conditions which surround the atman enveloped in avidya: the upadhi, which makes its illusory separateness, their grouping as the sthula, sukshma and karana shariras—the physical, astral and causal bodies—and the states of consciousness belonging to these. While the atman identifies itself with the upadhis, it is bound; when it knows itself as itself, it is free.

For those who are not yet ready for this effort after self-knowledge, ritual is not only desirable but necessary; but for those who have reached the point where only the atman attracts, jnana is enough, Brahman is the goal.

It must not be supposed from this that the jnani is an abstainer from action. On the contrary, he best understands action, and has the best reason for engaging in it. "Therefore, constantly unattached perform that which is your duty. Indeed by unattached action man attains the Supreme" (Bhagavad Gita 3:19). "As the unwise act, attached to action, so the wise should act, unattached, intending to maintain the welfare of the world" (Bhagavad Gita 3:25). And Shankara himself: "If I had not walked without remission in the path of works, others would not have followed in my steps, O Lord" (Quoted in Max Muller's *Six Systems*, p. 217).

The jnani recognizes his duties to all around him—plants, animals, men, gods, Ishwara—and performs them the better, because he acts with opened eyes, and without personal motivations to confuse his judgment. He performs actions as free, and, being without desire, is not bound by them.

### **The six-fold unity**

The Six Darshanas may now be seen as parts of a whole. In the Nyaya and Vaisheshika, a man learns to use his intellectual powers rightly, to detect fallacies and to understand the material constitution of the universe. In the Sankhya he learns the course of evolution, and in the Yoga how to hasten his own growth. In the Mimamsa he is trained to use the invisible world for the helping of the visible, and in the three schools of the Vedanta he learns to climb from the idea of himself as separate from Brahman to the thought that he is a part of Brahman that can unite with Him, and finally that he is and ever has been Brahman veiled from Himself by avidya.

Further, a coherent view of the whole vast school of aryan teachings as an ascending path of evolution for the jivatman may now be gained. The literal meaning of the Veda, with its ritual and daily obligations, developed the manas, the mind, of the aryan, disciplined his kama, his passions and desires, and evolved and directed his emotions. It is said in the Brahma-bindu Upanishad: "Manas is said to be of two kinds, pure and impure: moved by kama it is impure; free of kama, it is pure."

Manas, joined to kama, was gradually purified by a life led according to Vedic rules. Such a manas, become pure, was further developed in capacity by the study of the angas, was trained and developed, and thus became capable of the exercise of philosophic thought. To a mind thus trained to see and to understand the many, the Veda would unfold its deeper occult meanings such as the intellect could master and apply. The end of all this study was to make possible the evolution of pure reason, buddhi, which cannot unfold unless manas is developed, any more than manas can unfold without the development of the senses. It thus led up to the Darshanas, which develop the pure reason, which sees the One in the many and then realizes its unity with all, which therefore hates and despises none, but loves all. To the buddhi, thus unfolded to see the One, the Veda would unveil its spiritual meaning, its true end, Vedanta, intelligible only to the pure compassionate reason. Then, and then only, is

man ready to reach the goal, the paravidya is attained and the atman beholds itself.

Thus utterly rational, orderly and complete is the Sanatana Dharma, the aryan religion.

# Part One

## Basic Hindu Religious Ideas

### I

#### The One Existence

“One only, without a second” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.2.1). Thus all the Shrutis proclaim. Infinite, Absolute, Eternal, Changeless, the All, is THAT, without attributes, without qualities, beyond name and form: Nirguna Brahman.

“Then was not non-existence nor existence... THAT only breathed by its own nature: apart from THAT was naught” (Rig Veda 10.129.1-2). It contains all, therefore can no particular thing be said of It. It is all, therefore can no one thing alone be ascribed to It. It is not Being only, for that would exclude Non-Being; but Being arises in It, and Non-Being is also there. “When no darkness (was), then (there was) not day nor night, nor being nor not-being, (but) the Blessed alone” (Shwetashwatara Upanishad 4:18). The same upanishad (5:1) says: “In the imperishable infinite supreme Brahman knowledge and ignorance are hidden.” “It is,” (Katha Upanishad 2.3.12)—such is all that can be said.

When Nachiketa presses Yama, Lord of Death, to reveal to him the supreme secret, and when Yama has admitted that he is worthy to hear it, Nachiketa prays: “Other than dharma and adharma, other than action and inaction, other than past and present, THAT which you see, THAT declare” (Katha Upanishad 1.2.14). And Yama answers: “THAT which all the Vedas declare, THAT which all austerities utter, THAT, desiring which men lead the life of brahmacharya, that I tell you” (Katha Upanishad 1.2.15-16).

This unity, which never appears but which is, is implied in the very existence of universes and systems and worlds and individuals. It is not only recognized in all religion, but also in all philosophy and in all science as a fundamental *necessity*. Endless disputes and controversies have arisen about It, but none has denied It. Many names have been used to describe It, and It has been left unnamed; but all rest upon It. It has been called the All and the Nothing, the Fullness and the Void, Absolute Motion and Absolute Rest, the Real, the Essence. All are true, yet none fully true. And ever the words of the sages remain as the best conclusion: *Neti; neti*. “Not this, not this” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.3.6. Sometimes rendered “Not this, not that.”).

Words seem to put far off and to veil in mystery THAT which is in truth nearest and closest, nay, which is more than close, is our very Self. One name, perhaps, speaks most clearly, the Paramatman, the Supreme Self.

#### **The jivatman, the individual Self**

And within THAT the jivatman, the individual Self lives and evolves. “This atman

(is) Brahman” (Mandukya Upanishad 2). Such is the truth declared over and over again, insisted on in various forms lest it should not be grasped. “As by knowing one clod of clay all clay is known, as by knowing one piece of gold all gold is known, as by knowing one piece of iron all iron is known, no matter by what number of names men may call the objects made of clay, or gold, or iron; so to know one’s Self is to know The Self, and knowing It, all is known” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.1.4-6).

Moreover, as is said in the Chandogya Upanishad: “All this verily (is) Brahman” (3.14.1). “This” is the technical word for the universe, and the universe is Brahman, because “therefrom it is born, thereinto it is merged, thereby it is maintained.” All that we see around us comes forth from that Fullness and is as the shadow of that Substance. And yet, as the upanishad declares, we need not go far to seek: “This my Self within the heart, this (is) Brahman” (Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.4).

It is not necessary for a student to try to grasp metaphysically this great truth, nor to grapple with the questions that spring up in the thoughtful mind when it is stated. It is enough that he should know that this truth is recognized in some shape or another by all thoughtful men, that it is the foundation of all right thought, and later may be known to himself by deeper study. It is enough for the present—in the case of most, at least—if he try to *feel* the unity as a center of peace and a bond of fellowship with all. It is the Heart of the universe, equally in all and therefore in himself; and this may be felt before it is understood intellectually.

This knowledge is the paravidya, the supreme wisdom, and it is to be gained by purity, devotion, self-sacrifice and knowledge. “(He who) has not renounced evil ways, nor (is) subdued, nor concentrated, nor (of) subdued mind, even by knowledge he may not obtain It” (Katha Upanishad 1.2.24). “Nor is the atman obtained by the strengthless, nor by the careless, nor without marks of austerity: the wise, who strives by these means, of him the atman enters the abode of Brahman” (Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.4).

Here is the Supreme Peace, the Nirvana of Brahman. “The seers whose evils have been annihilated, whose doubts have been dispelled, whose inner being is mastered, who rejoice in the welfare of all beings, attain Brahmanirvana” (Bhagavad Gita 5:25). Of such a one, says Sri Krishna: “He attains peace” (Bhagavad Gita 5:29).

### **Unity in duality-Duality in unity**

But now we read: “Verily, O Satyakama, this is the Supreme and the Lower Brahman” (Prashna Upanishad 5:2). And again: “There are two states of Brahman, with form and without form—formless; changing and unchanging; finite and infinite; existent and beyond [existence]” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.3.1). This second, lower, with form, changing, finite, existent Brahman is not “another,” but is Brahman conditioned—and therefore limited, manifesting—and therefore Saguna, with attributes.

The Rigveda, in the hymn before quoted, declares this arising of a seeming duality in the Absolute: “By the great power of tapas uprose The One” (10.129.3). Again, the Wise are asked: “What was that One, who, in the form of the Unborn, has established these six regions?” (Rigveda 1.164.6).



The One: that is His Name, for That wherein He arises is numberless, beyond number, and being the All is neither one nor many. Manu describes that arising in stately slokas: “This was in the form of darkness, unknown, without marks (or homogeneous), unattainable by reasoning, unknowable, wholly, as it were, in sleep. Then the Self-existent, the Lord, unmanifest but making manifest, This—the great elements and the rest—appeared with mighty power, dispeller of darkness. He who can be grasped by that which is beyond the senses, subtle, unmanifest, ancient, containing all beings, inconceivable, even He Himself shone forth. That unmanifest cause, everlasting, in nature Sat and Asat, that produced the purusha famed in the world as Brahma” (Manu Smriti 1.5-7, 11).

“This” is the universe, but here in darkness, *i.e.*, in the unmanifested condition, as Mulaprakriti, the Root of matter, “unknowable.” This becomes manifest only when the Swayambhu, the Self-Existent, shines forth. The emergence is simultaneous; for He cannot become manifest save by clothing Himself in This, and This cannot become manifest save as illumined, ensouled, by Him. This Two-in-One, by nature Sat and Asat [“Being and non-being am I,” (Bhagavad Gita 9:19)], the Self and the Not-Self, Purusha and Prakriti, everlasting but appearing and disappearing, is the cause of all things. “When He has shone forth, all shines forth after (Him); (by) the shining forth of Him all This shines forth” (Katha Upanishad 2.2.15).

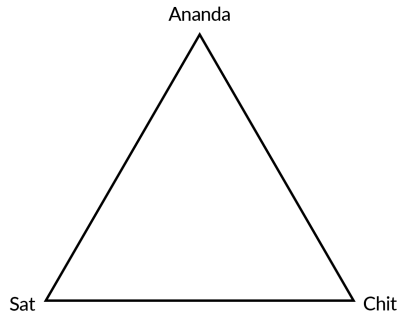
### **Satchidananda Brahman**

We have seen that He is the Saguna Brahman, and He is declared to be in His own nature Sat, Chit, Ananda (Satchidananda), Pure Being, Pure Intelligence, Pure Bliss. He is called Akshara, the Indestructible One, on whom the other-Prakriti—is woven; He is the Atmantaryamyamrita [Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.7-8], the Self, the Inner Ruler, Immortal, who dwells in the earth, the waters, the fire, the atmosphere, the wind, the heavens, in all that is, in the devas, in the elements, in the bodies of all beings, the all-pervading.

“Unseen He sees, unheard He hears, unthought of He thinks, unknown He knows. None other than He is the Seer, none other than He is the Hearer, none other than He is the Thinker, none other than He is the Knower. He is the Self, the Inner Ruler, Immortal. That which is other [than This] perishes” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.1, 23).

He is “the Self abiding in the heart of all beings” (Bhagavad Gita 10:20). This is the clearest idea to grasp. The conditioned Brahman is the Self-conscious Universal Ego as against the Non-Ego, Spirit as against matter, the “I” everywhere, always and in all things, identical in nature with the Nirguna Brahman, but manifested, with qualities, and always united to mulaprakriti.

In the language of symbols, so largely employed by the Sanatana Dharma, Ishwara is represented by a triangle pointing upwards, the triangle symbolizing His triple nature, Sat, Chit, Ananda.



We see this—especially when interlaced with a second downward-pointing triangle, which will presently be explained—in many temples.

This idea of the eternal Subject, the Spirit, the Self, the “I,” being firmly grasped, the student must next seek to grasp the eternal Object, matter, *mulaprakriti*, the Not-Self, the Not-I.

We have already seen in the *Manu Smriti* that, in the unmanifested state, this is homogeneous and unknowable; it is therefore often compared with the ether, formless but the root of all forms, intangible but the root of all substances. Its inherent nature is divisibility, as that of the eternal Subject is inseparateness; it is multiplicity, as He is unity. While He is the Father, the Life-Giver, she is the Mother, the Nourisher. Matter is the womb in which the germ is placed.

“For me great Brahma is the womb, and in that do I place the egg [seed]. The origination of all beings comes from that” (*Bhagavad Gita* 14:3)—explained by Shankara as the *prakriti* of three *gunas*.

### The three *gunas*

We must pause for a moment on the three *gunas*, for an understanding of them is necessary for any clear conception of the working of nature: *Prakriti*.

First, what “they” are not. The *gunas* are not effects, but inherent qualities. They are not matter. The creation is not made of three basic “substances” or materials that are the *gunas*. Nor are they mere qualities or characteristics inherent in the basic “material” of creation. Rather, they are modes of manifestation within the basic energy/vibration of the creation, which at all times is Consciousness. They are really aspects of the dream of the Cosmic Dreamer in the sense that they are three modes of the apparent “*behavior*” of the Cosmic Energy, the Cosmic Vibration, of which creation is formed. *Tamas*, *rajas* and *sattwa* are not things or superficial appearances: they are three modes of energy behavior which the basic energy of the creation can take on temporarily—but which itself never is fundamentally or permanently behaving in that manner or quality.

With that in mind we can now consider what “they” are. Everything in the universe is vibrating, magnetic energy that interacts in and upon itself. When the energy of something within creation is heavy, unyielding and unresponsive—basically resistant to any change whatsoever, even if it is eventually forced into change—it is *tamasic*. If it is always moving, always changing, always in flux and agitation it is *rajasic*. If it is to a degree fluidic yet coherent and stable and capable of many variations, yet never

unstable or unsure, it is sattwic.

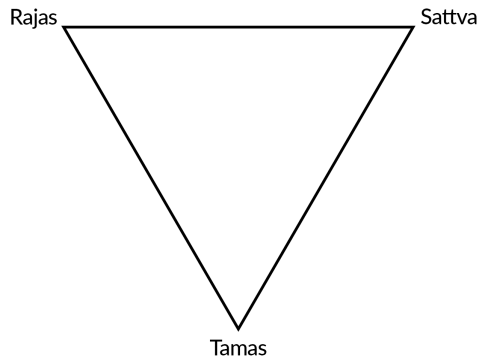
Tamas and rajas cannot be changed, except perhaps to some limited degree or extent. Sattwa is stable yet responsive to outer influence of a sufficient degree and is therefore malleable but not unstable or uncontrollable as rajas. Sattwa alone responds. Tamas and rajas never vary and never fundamentally change and therefore never respond in any significant degree to outside influence or pressure.

The conscious energy of the creation can take on these three modes of behavior while remaining absolutely unchanged in its eternal nature. This is possible because the creation is a dream, a thought, a wave in the Cosmic Mind. It is a very real Illusion, the Dreamer alone being Real. It is easier for a yogi to grasp this since he is used to experiencing his subtle energy makeup which to some extent is an inner reflection of the creation outside him.

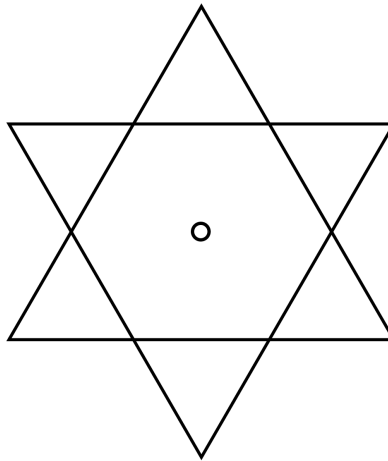
These gunas are named: Tamas, Rajas and Sattwa. Tamas—often translated darkness or foulness, the effect of tamasic predominance being taken as the guna itself—is resistance, stability, what is called in science the inertia of matter. All matter is fundamentally and always resistant; it resists. Its capacity for taking form is due to this constituent. Rajas is motion, the capacity of every particle to change its place, and the necessity of so changing it unless prevented; in scientific phrase this is motion, inherent in matter. Sattwa is rhythm, the limiting of movement to an equal distance in an equal time on each side of a fixed point, the power and necessity of what is, in scientific phrase, vibration. Hence every particle of matter has resistance, motion, and rhythm.

When the equilibrium of the three is disturbed by the breath of Ishwara, these three gunas at once manifest: tamas appearing as inertia, resistances, rajas throwing every particle of the resistant mass into active movement, thus producing what is called chaos; and sattwa imposing rhythm on the movement of each particle, each thus becoming a vibrating, *i.e.* a regularly moving, particle capable of entering into relations with the surrounding particles. All the qualities found in matter arise from the interaction of these three gunas, their endless permutations and combinations producing the endless variety of attributes found in the universe. The predominance of tamas in a body made up of countless particles gives rigidity, immovability, such as is seen in stones and other things that do not move of themselves. The predominance of rajas in a body gives unregulated hasty movements, restlessness, excess of activity. The predominance of sattwa gives harmony, controlled rhythmical movements, order, beauty. But in the most immovable stone, the minute particles are in a state of unceasing vibration, from the presence of rajas and sattwa; in the most restless animal there is stability of material and vibration of particles from the presence of tamas and sattwa; and in the most harmonious and controlled man there is stability of material and movement from the presence of tamas and rajas.

As the triple nature of Ishwara, Sat-Chit-Ananda, was symbolically represented by a triangle pointing upwards, like a flame, so is the triple nature of mulaprakriti symbolized as a triangle, but now it points downwards, like a drop of water.



From these two triangles is formed the symbol of Ishwara and His universe, often seen in temples, the two interlaced, and a point in the center, the symbol of the One, the whole giving the Great Septenary, the Supreme Brahman and the Universe.



Thus we have before us the second member of the Duality which, as we saw above in the Manu Smriti, is the cause of all things.

### **Shakti/Maya**

The divine power, or Shakti—the will of Ishwara, His light sent forth and making “This” manifest, as says the Smriti—is called Maya. Maya is inseparable from Ishwara; their unity is like that of the moon and the moonlight, or that of fire and its power to burn. Thus we read: “The will am I, O Daitya, of Him [the Supreme Purusha]; I send forth the whole universe. He beholds me, He the Universal Self, I His benign nature” (Devi Bhagavata 5.16, 36).

Nilakantha, commenting on the above, quotes one of the Shiva Sutras: “Will-power (is) Uma, the Virgin.” While inseparable from the Lord, when turned towards Him She is called Mahavidya, Supreme Knowledge. She is also called, when turned away from Him, Avidya, Nescience, and emphatically Mahamaya, the Great Illusion, as She permeates mulaprakriti and becomes inseparable from it. These are Her two forms: “Maya manifests as a duality; these (are) ever vidya and avidya” (Adhyatma Ramayana

3.3.32).

This identification of the shakti of the Lord with mulaprakriti often causes Maya to be called Mulaprakriti and Prakriti. So Sri Krishna, having defined prakriti as generally understood, said: “Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego-principle: these are the eight divisions of my prakriti. This is my lower prakriti,... Know my higher prakriti [as] consisting of all jivas (spirits), by which this world is sustained (supported; is the substratum)” (Bhagavad Gita 7:4-5). This “other prakriti” is also spoken of by Him under the name of “the eternal Origin of beings” (Bhagavad Gita 9:13), His own Power, His Yogamaya, by which truly “this world is sustained.” As says the Shruti: “Let (the student) know Maya as prakriti; the possessor of Maya as the Great Lord” (Sveshavatara Upanishad 4:10).

In the Devi Bhagavata some very beautiful descriptions are given of this matter side of Nature, regarded as Maya, thus: “She (is) Bhagavati, the Goddess, the Cause of us all, Mahavidya, Mahamaya, the Fullness, the Imperishable Prakriti.... The Will of the Supreme Self verily (is She), in Her nature (uniting) the Everlasting and the Ever-passing.... (Her) embryo the Veda, the long-eyed, the Primal Goddess of all. At the pralaya, having rolled up the universe, She sports, hiding within Her own body the types of all living beings.... Mulaprakriti is She indeed, ever united with Purusha. Having made the world-systems, She shows them to the Supreme Self.... The cause of it (is) She, the All, Maya, the benignant All-Ruler” (Devi Bhagavata 3:51-61).

This Maya is inseparable from Ishwara, the Saguna Brahman, as said above: “She, Maya, is ever in the Supreme Essence, whose nature is Consciousness, subordinate to Him, and by Him ever sent forth among jivas. Therefore should be worshipped that Consciousness, whose nature is Sat, Chit and Ananda, Lord of Maya, the Divine, with Maya, the Supreme Lady” (Devi Bhagavata 6:48-49).

Being thus seen as the illusion-producing power of the Lord, She is known as the cause of bondage and also as the path to liberation. As Avidya She deludes; as Vidya She leads to Her Lord, and as She vanishes in Him the atman knows itself as free. “This notion of separateness being present sends (the jiva) forth into samsara. This is avidya. O fortunate one! Vidya is the turning away from this. Vidya and avidya should be always known by the wise. Without sunshine how (should) the pleasure of shade be known? Without avidya how should vidya be known?” (Devi Bhagavata. 1.18, 42-44). “The travelers on the pravritti-marga (the forth-going path) are under the power of avidya. The travelers on the nivritti marga (the returning path) ponder the teaching of the Vedanta” (Adhyatma Ramayana 3.3.32).

When the jiva goes forth, facing prakriti and looking at it, Maya envelops him as Avidya. When he turns his back on prakriti and turns towards the Lord, then She turns with him and becomes Vidya, and he is free. As Nilkantha says, quoting the Shaivagama: “The inward-facing shakti is Vidya.”

Then he realizes the mighty power of Maya, Her divine nature, and Her identity with the Supreme, and hymns Ishwara and Maya as One: “Thou Sovereign of endless crores (tens of millions) of world-systems, we bow to Thee! Hail! (Thou that art) in the form of the rock-seated (the changeless and motionless Eternal), the form of

Consciousness, we bow to thee! Hail! (Thou that) mayest be known by the Vedanta, the Ruler of the universe, we bow to Thee! Thou whom all the sacred books only describe by the words 'Not this, not this.' Goddess! the cause of all, with our whole nature we bow to thee!" (Devi Bhagavata 7:28, 31-32).

The Supreme Ishwara, by His Maya, creates preserves and destroys the innumerable world-systems that form the ocean of samsara. He produces the many: "That willed: May I be many, may I be born" (Chandogya Upanishad 6:2,3). Then, He is given many names: "To what is One, the Wise give many names" (Rigveda 1.164.46). But whatever the names given, Ishwara is One. Thus has it ever been taught in the Shruti and Smriti, as we have seen, and this is repeated in the more popular teaching of which the Vishnu Purana may serve as example: "Thus the One Only God, Janardana, takes the designation of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, accordingly as He creates, preserves or destroys.... He is the cause of creation, preservation, and destruction" (Vishnu Purana 1.2.62).

### **The points to be remembered**

To sum up. The student must remember,

#### UNMANIFESTED

1. The Absolute, the All, Paramatman, Nirguna Brahman.

#### MANIFESTED

2. The One, Ishwara, the Self, the Subject, Sat, Saguna Brahman.
3. Mulaprakriti, the Not-Self, the Object, Asat.
4. Maya, the shakti, the power, the will, of Ishwara.
5. The many, arising from Mulaprakriti by the Maya of Ishwara.

As to the precise definition of the nature of these five and of their mutual inter-relations there is much discussion, and more or less difference of opinion, in the Six Darshanas and their subdivisions, as now taught. But the fact of these five, under whatever names, is recognized by all, and the student who studies deeply enough will come to the conclusion that the differences between the Darshanas arise from each great teacher emphasizing one aspect of the relations, and that all the Six Darshanas, rightly understood, form one organic whole.

## II

### The Many

"At the approach of [Brahma's] Day, all manifested things come forth from the unmanifest, and then return to that at [Brahma's] Night. Helpless, the same host of

beings being born again and again merge at the approach of the Night and emerge at the dawn of Day. But there exists, higher than the unmanifested, another unmanifested Eternal which does not perish when all beings perish. This unmanifest is declared to be the imperishable (eternal), which is called the Supreme Goal” (Bhagavad Gita 8:18-21).

Here, in a few slokas, the coming forth of The Many is stated. At the beginning of the day of manifestation, all beings stream forth from the unmanifested Root of matter, mulaprakriti, from “This” in darkness, as the Manu Smriti has it. When the day is over, and the night of pralaya comes, then all these separated existences again dissolve into mulaprakriti. Over and over again this occurs, for universes succeed universes, in endless succession. Behind this, then, there must be another Unmanifested, Ishwara, the Saguna Brahman, other than mulaprakriti, the Indestructible Lord. The wise man “perceives the various states of being as resting in the One, and their expansion from that One alone” (Bhagavad Gita 13:30).

### **How it happens**

We have now to study the nature of this procession from, or production of, the Sarga, the creation, the sending forth, or evolving.

The Sanatana Dharma does not recognize an unscientific creation, a making of something out of nothing. The supreme Ishwara evolves all beings out of Himself. “As the spider sends forth and retracts (its web), as in the earth herbs grow, as from a living man the hairs of the head and body, so from the Indestructible the universe becomes” (Mundaka Upanishad 1.1.7). “As from a blazing fire in a thousand ways similar sparks spring forth, so from the Indestructible, O beloved, various types of beings are born, and also return thither... From That are born breath, mind, and all the senses, ether, air, fire, water, and earth, the support of all.... From that in various ways are born the gods, sadhyas, men, beasts, birds” (Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.1, 3, 7).

In the Manu Smriti more details are given as to the order of evolution, and here again it is said that the immediate Creator, Brahma, created all beings from Himself and from the elements previously produced from Himself, as we shall immediately see. Brahmandani, literally Eggs of Brahma, or as we should say, world-systems, are numberless, we are told: “All around this Brahmanda there blaze infinite crores of other similar Brahmandas, with their envelopes. Four-faced, five-faced, six-faced, seven-faced, eight-faced, successively, up to the number of a thousand-faced portions of Narayana, in whom the rajoguna is predominant, creators each of one world-system, preside in them. Portions of Narayana, called Vishnu and Maheshwara, in whom the sattwa and tamogunas predominate, also preside in them, performing the work of preservation and destruction in each. They wander about, these Brahmandas, like shoals of fishes and bubbles in a vast mass of water” (Atharvana Mahanarayana Upanishad). “Grains of sand are perhaps numerable, but of universes (there is) not any (numbering). So there is no numbering of Brahmas, Vishnus, Shivas and the rest. In each of these universes there are Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and other (devas)” (Devi Bhagavatam 9.3.7-8).

This we could have imagined, even had we not been told it, for since, as we saw in the Vishnu Purana, the “one only God, Janardana, takes the designation of Brahma,

Vishnu and Shiva accordingly as He creates, preserves, or destroys, and creation, preservation and destruction must go on in every world-system, God must manifest in each in these three Forms.” This is the Trimurti, the reflection as it were in Space and Time of that Supreme Triple Unity, the Source of beings—the Nirguna Brahman, the Saguna Brahman and mulaprakriti, outside of Space and Time, Eternal. The Trimurti is the manifestation, then, of Ishwara in a world-system, or Brahmanda, and is therefore the supreme will, wisdom and activity in a concrete form.

### **Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva**

Brahma is the Creator, and His Shakti is Saraswati, the Goddess of Wisdom, without whom activity could not be wisely guided. He is pictured as with four heads, one looking towards each quarter, as the Maker of the four quarters and their contents, and riding on the Hamsa, the Swan. The name hamsa, a rearrangement of sah, aham, Soham, is an allusion to His relation with ahamkara, the divider, the maker of atoms.

Vishnu is the preserver and sustainer, the principle underlying and sustaining the universe in order, and preserving forms, holding them together by His attracting force. His Shakti is Lakshmi, the Goddess of Happiness, of Prosperity, of all desirable objects. He is pictured with four arms, as sustaining the four quarters, and rides on Garuda, the emblem of speed and of intelligence. He is the source of avatars, and in them, or in His own person, is perhaps the most generally worshipped manifestation of Ishwara. Indeed, as Narayana, He whose dwelling is in the (causal) waters, He is worshipped as Saguna Brahman, dwelling in matter.

Shiva, or Mahadeva, or Maheshwara, is the destroyer (dissolver), He who frees the atman from imprisoning forms, who destroys avidya and so gives vidya, and who, finally rolling up the universe, brings the peace of liberation. His Shakti is Uma—ichchha shakti, will—called also Brahmadevi, who reveals Brahman.

He is pictured always as an ascetic, it being He who is the object of worship for yogis, who have renounced the world. He rides on the bull, the emblem of the mind (and sometimes of physical nature), as having subdued it, and wears the tiger-skin, the emblem of the slain desire-nature. Hence He is, as the name Shiva implies, ananda, the peace and bliss of the atman, freed from desire and master of mind.

These supreme forms of Ishwara, separated by their functions but one in essence, stand as the central life of the Brahmanda, and from and by them it proceeds, is maintained, and is indrawn. Their functions should not be confused, but their unity should never be forgotten.

### **The Brahmanda**

Brahma, as the creative God, is spoken of as appearing first, born in the Golden Egg, which grows out of the seed of the One in the [causal] waters of matter. “He, having meditated, desiring to produce various beings from His own body, first put forth the waters; in these He placed the seed. That became a Golden Egg, equal in radiance to the thousand-rayed (the Sun). In that was born Brahma Himself, the Grandsire of all worlds” (Manu Smriti 1.8,9). Here the waters, matter, mulaprakriti, receive the seed of



Life, and this becomes the Hiranyagarbha, the Golden Egg, in which the Creator is born, in order to form His world-system. Hence a world-system is called a Brahmanda, a Brahma-Egg, a very significant epithet, as world-systems are oval (elliptical) like an egg, and seen from outside present exactly an egg-like form, each planet following an egg-like, elliptical, orbit. Of this Egg we read in the Vishnu Purana that within it Brahma and the world-system were contained, while it was invested externally by seven envelopes: water, fire, air, ether, the origin of the elements (ahamkara), mahat and primal homogeneous matter, which surrounds the whole (Manu Smriti 1.2). Every world-system is thus surrounded by the great cosmic elements, as described in the first chapter of the Manu Smriti by Manu himself (slokas 5 to 59). The account of the later creation is given over to Bhrigu, who explains briefly the repetition of the process within the World Egg. A similar and fuller account is given in the Mahabharata, and in the Vishnu and other Puranas.

It will be enough if the student grasps the general principles, and he can fill up later the complicated details from the many accounts given in the sacred books. He should remember that the process in the universe containing many Brahmandas, and in the separate Brahmandas, is similar.

### **More about how it happens**

We shall now see that the creative process within a Brahmanda follows on the same lines. Brahma is surrounded by homogeneous matter, called pradhana, in the Vishnu Purana—in which the gunas are in equilibrium; His energy disturbing this tamasic condition, rajoguna prevails and there is rapid motion. Then He puts forth the principle of mahat-buddhi, pure reason—which, entering matter, being invested by it, and causing the predominance of the sattwaguna, the motion becomes rhythmical, harmonious. Then follows ahamkara, the individualizing principle, separating the homogeneous matter into particles—anus, atoms. Ahamkara, causing the tamoguna to prevail in prakriti, forms successively the five tanmatras, or subtle elements, and the senses: hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell, with their appropriate gross elements: akasha, vayu, agni, apa, prithivi—ether, air, fire, water, earth. Causing the rajoguna to prevail, ahamkara gives rise to the ten indriyas: the five ideal types of sense-organs (jnanendriyas) and the five ideal types of action-organs (karmendriyas). Causing sattwaguna to prevail, ahamkara calls out the ten deities connected with the sense-and-action-organs, and manas, the centralizing organ of the indriyas. These three creations are called respectively the bhutadi, that of the elements; tajasa, that of the fiery, the active energies; and vaikatrika, the directing, administrative powers. The points to remember here are: in what is usually called matter, tamoguna predominates; in the indriyas, rajoguna predominates; in the presiding deities, sattwaguna predominates.

### **Brahma's assistant-creators**

The work of creation proceeded by calling into existence the suras or devas, described by Manu as karmatmana “whose nature is action,” that vast multitude of intelligent beings of very varying power and authority who guide the whole course of

nature, and direct all its activities. It is of course, clearly understood by all Hindus that this vast host of devas no more obscures the unity of Ishwara in His triple form as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, than do the vast hosts of men, animals, plants, and minerals. As said in the Shruti: “Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, they call Him, and He is golden-feathered Garuda. Of what is One, sages speak as manifold; they call Him Agni, Yama, Matarishwan” (Rigveda 1.164.46). So also the Smriti: “All the gods (are) even the Self: all rests on the Self. Some call Him Agni, others Manu, (others) Prajapati, some Indra, others Life-breath, others the eternal Brahman” (Manu Smriti 12.119, 123).

But the devas have their own place in nature as the ministers of the will of Ishwara, ruling, protecting, adjusting, guiding, with intelligence and power far greater than human, but still limited. The name deva—shining or radiant—very well describes their resplendent appearance, their bodies being formed of a subtle luminous matter, and hence flashing out light. They are concerned with the matter-side of nature, and the guidance of its evolution, and all the constructive energies studied by science are the energies of the devas. On their work depend the fruits of all human activities concerned with production, in all its branches.

### **Humans and devas**

Those who seek for material prosperity need their continual co-operation, and this co-operation is granted under quite definite laws. It may be obtained by a scientific knowledge of their methods of working, man falling in with their activities and thus sharing the result. Or it may be obtained from them by what is literally exchange, man supplying them with objects which facilitate their work, or which they enjoy, and they, in return, directing their energies, the energies of “nature,” to suit his ends—as a strong man may help a weak man in the performance of a task. Or their increased co-operation may be won by prayers, accompanied by such acts as they approve, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, etc. Or their services may be commanded by great rishis and yogis who by purity, knowledge and austerity have risen above them in the scale of being. Sometimes a man wins the favor of a deva by some service done in this or a previous birth, and then all his efforts prosper, and he succeeds where others fail, and he is called “lucky.” “Good luck” is the result of the working of devas, and as their working is invisible, men think the result is a chance, or accident. But it must be remembered that all devas work within law, and not by arbitrary fancies. The sacrifices and offerings prescribed in the Vedas form a great occult system for obtaining and regulating this co-operation between devas and men, whereby the work of both is carried on with the largest results.

“May you foster the gods by this, and may the gods then foster you. Then, each the others fostering, you shall attain the highest welfare. The gods, fostered by sacrifice, will give you desired enjoyments” (Bhagavad Gita 3:11-12). And the reason is given: “From food all beings are produced, and from rain all food is produced. From sacrifice there comes down rain” (Bhagavad Gita 3:14). “Longing for success in action, in this world men sacrifice to the gods” (Bhagavad Gita 4:12).

But the benefits obtained from them are transient: “Temporary is the fruit” (Bhagavad Gita 7:23). Hence the worship of the devas is not practiced by men whose hearts are set on higher, spiritual things. They worship Ishwara, rather than His ministers, either as Brahman, or as revealed in the Trimurti, or in the Shaktis, or in such a deva as Ganesha for learning, or in the avatars. But this will be further dealt with in Part Two, Chapter Five.

### **Devas of the elements and the four quarters**

The devas of the elements—ether, air, fire, water and earth—Indra, Vayu, Agni, Varuna and Kubera, are the Five Devarajas, Deva Kings, of these great departments of nature, Indra being the Chief Ruler. Under them are divided the great hosts of devas. Thus the sadhyas, vasus, adityas and apsaras are specially connected with Indra; the maruts with Vayu; the yakshas, gandharvas, vidyadharas, and kinnaras with Kubera. Some have charge of the animal kingdom, as the nagas and sarpas of snakes, the suparnas of birds, etc.

Four great gods rule the four quarters: Indra, Yama, Varuna and Kubera, as the protectors of mankind. Yama is the Lord of Death, the wise and gracious deva who instructed Nachiketas in the Katha Upanishad.

### **Asuras**

The asuras, the beings who are opposed to the suras, or devas, in their activity, embody the destructive energies of nature; they are as necessary and as useful as the constructive, though on the surface opposed to them. They hinder and obstruct evolution, embodying the very essence of matter, the tamoguna, inertia, resistance, and by that very resistance make progress steady and durable.

### **Samsara: the world-process**

These creations belong to the invisible worlds, although, in their activities, they were to be closely connected with the visible—the worlds visible and invisible, indeed, forming the field of a vast evolutionary process—samsara, the world process.

The order of the process in the physical world at its origination was: minerals, plants, animals, men. In the Vishnu Purana it is stated that while Brahma was meditating on creation—the three primary prakrita (prakritic) creations of mahat, the elements and the indriyas, being over—the immovable creation, minerals and plants, appeared. Then followed the animal kingdom, called tiryaksrotas. The creation of some devas followed here, according to the Purana, but they do not belong to the physical world, with which we are here dealing. Then came the creation of men. It must be remembered that while this is the fundamental order of evolution, many varieties occur in different kalpas, and accounts in the different books vary, within certain broad limits, since these great classes of beings overlap each other, so that new kinds of animals and plants appear long after man. The world in fact is ever-becoming along the four great lines, however much we may separate them for purposes of exposition.

## Evolution in the world-process

The stages of evolution are very plainly given in the Aitareya Brahmana. “He who knows the atman as Him (the Purusha) in manifestation, he most enjoys that manifestation. Herbs and trees and all that bears life, he knows as the Self in manifestation. In herbs and trees rasa (sap, life) is seen, and mind in them that have prana. In them that have prana, the atman is (more) manifest. In them, rasa also is seen, while mind is not seen in the others. In man, the atman is (most) manifest; he is most supplied with knowledge. He speaks that which he knows; he sees that which he knows; he knows what occurred yesterday; he knows the visible and the invisible; by the mortal he desires the immortal. Thus supplied is he. But of the others, animals, hunger and thirst are the only knowledge. They speak not the known; they see not the known; they know not what belongs to yesterday, nor the visible and the invisible. Only this much have they. According to the knowledge are the births” (Aitareyanyaka, 2.3.2).

On this Sayana comments as follows: “All objects whatsoever, being of the nature of effects, are upadhis [adjuncts] for this manifestation of the Supreme Self, Sat, Chit, Ananda, the cause of the universe. In the unconscious, earth, stones, etc., only Sat is manifest, and the atman has not yet attained to the form of jiva. The unmoving jivas, namely the herbs and trees, and also the moving jivas, which have prana as breath, both these are stages of manifestation in a higher degree.”

The student should note these passages, as it is currently supposed that the idea of evolution is of modern birth.

## A larger view

In the Vishnu Bhagavata mention is made in connection with the making of the World Egg as an organized form, but, as said before, the process is similar on the large scale or the small. The point to be recognized is that Vishnu is the Organizer. “When these separated existences, the bhutas, indriyas, manas and gunas, were unable to create organisms (literally, a dwelling-place, an upadhi), O best of Brahma-knowers, then, mixing with each other, they were impelled by the power of Bhagavan (Vishnu), and, becoming both Sat and Asat, existent and non-existent evolved this” (Vishnu Bhagavata 2.5.32-33).

The ten maharishis, Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prachetas, Vasishtha, Bhrigu and Narada, were superhuman beings, who having obtained liberation in former kalpas, were called forth to aid in the direction of the world process, and who remain, superintending the destinies of the worlds, and will remain until the pralaya. Sometimes only seven are given this rank, Prachetas, Bhrigu and Narada not being included in the list. Sometimes others are added, as Daksha and Kardama.

The Kumaras, variously given as four, five, six and seven, are, as their name implies, Virgin Beings, ascetics, and they watch over the world. Shiva Himself took the form of one—Rudra or Nilalohita. Sanatkumara, Sanandana, Sanaka and Sanatana are the four most often referred to. Ribhu, Kapila and Sana are also mentioned.

To this brief sketch of the world process it should be added that the early human races preceding the aryan are often referred to under the names of danavas and daityas, huge beings of enormous strength and energy, who carried on many a struggle with the devas themselves. The rakshasas were another race, more brutal in nature, usually malformed, huge, cruel, powerful cannibals, the terror of milder races. They possessed, moreover, many magical secrets of a dark kind, which they used for terrorizing and oppressing. All these have long entirely disappeared from the earth.

Such is the vast field of samsara in which the pilgrim jivatmans wander until, in some human form, they reach the knowledge of the Self, and obtain liberation.

### **The points to be remembered**

1. The coming forth of the many from Saguna Brahman, and Mulaprakriti by the power of Maya, and their return at the close of the day of manifestation.
2. The manifestation of Ishwara as the Trimurti, in the forms of Creation, Preservation, and Destruction, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, with their Shaktis, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Uma.
3. The work of Brahma, forming the materials of the universe and the ideal types of all beings, suras, asuras, minerals, plants, animals and men.
4. The work of Vishnu, giving prana and chit, and hence making living organized forms possible, all such forms being preserved and maintained by Him.
5. The work of Shiva, breathing into these forms when they arrive at the human stage; jivatmans that have reached in previous kalpas a stage at which such highly organized bodies can be utilized by them—bodies in which avidya can be destroyed, and they can attain vidya.
6. The existence throughout the world process of lofty superhuman intelligences, such as rishis and kumaras, intent on human welfare.
7. The past races on the earth, danavas, daityas and rakshasas.

## **III Rebirth**

“In the vast Brahma-wheel, the source and support of all jivas, the hamsa (the individual) is made to wander, thinking himself and the Ruler different. United with Him, he obtains immortality” (Svetashvatara Upanishad 1.6). Here, in a single sloka, we are given the reason of rebirth and its ending. Man wanders about in the universe so long as he thinks of himself as different from Ishwara; knowing (not just believing) himself to be one with Him, he obtains liberation.

In Shruti and Smriti, in Purana and Itihasa, the Self in man is declared to be of the nature of Brahman. “Then, having known the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Immensity, as the Essence hidden in all creatures, the one Pervader of the universe, the Lord, they become immortal. The measure of a thumb, the purusha, the inner Self, ever dwelling in the heart of men” (Svetashvatara Upanishad 3.7, 13). “He, this Self, is

Brahman” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.5). “He, this great unborn Self, (is) He who (is) this intelligence in living creatures, He who (is) this akasha in the heart” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.22). “He, this great, unborn, undecaying, deathless, immortal, fearless Self, (is) the fearless Brahman” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.25).

It is this nature, identical with Brahman as the sparks from a fire are identical with the fire, which evolves, unfolds itself as the jivatman in all living beings. As a seed grows to be a tree like its parent, so the jivatmic seed grows into self-conscious deity. Samsara exists that the jivatman may learn to realize himself. The jivatman differs from Brahman only as the seed from the tree that bears it. “Wise and unwise, both unborn, powerful and powerless” (Svetashvatara Upanishad 1.9).

Therefore, although unwise and powerless, the jivatman can become wise and powerful; to this end he must evolve, and his evolution is on the wheel of births and deaths. Transmigration is the word usually given to this journey, for the jivatman transmigrates from one body to another—as one grows old and wastes away he takes another. “Even as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and then clothes himself in others which are new, so the embodied casts off worn-out bodies and then enters into others which are new” (Bhagavad Gita 2:22). The word “reincarnation” (in Sanskrit, punarjanma) is also very generally used in modern days, the stress being here laid on the body rather than on the jivatman; it again takes a fleshly covering.

This truth of the evolution of the jivatman from ignorance to wisdom, from feebleness to power, is definitely revealed in the Shruti, and a knowledge of it is necessary as a basis for good conduct and for the wise shaping of life. Man is not a creature of a day, here today and gone tomorrow, but an unborn immortal being, growing into a knowledge of his true nature and powers. Everything is within him, the fulness of divine wisdom and power, but this capacity has to be unfolded, and that is the object of living and dying. Such a view of man’s nature gives dignity and strength and sobriety to life. It has been believed in by wise men in all ages, and has been a part of every ancient religion.

Only in modern times, during a period of great ignorance, was this truth lost sight of in the West, and very irrational and fantastic notions have in consequence grown up there as to the human soul, its nature and destiny, undermining belief in the just and loving rule of Ishwara. But even in the West such great scientific thinkers as Professor Huxley have begun to recognize the continued existence of the jivatman from life to life. “Like the doctrine of evolution itself,” he says, “that of transmigration has its roots in the world of reality; and it may claim such support as the great argument from analogy is capable of supplying” (*Evolution and Ethics*, p. 16.)

The jivatman contains within himself infinite possibilities, but when first descended into prakriti, embodied in a rupa (body) made up of the five elements, all these are inherent, not manifest. He passes through the diversified existences of the mineral kingdom, and of the plant and of the animal realms—the udbhijah (born by fission in the minerals and plants); the swedajah (born by exudation or gemmation, in certain low forms of plants and animals); the andajah (born first as eggs, the oviparous animals)—before coming into the jarayujah (the viviparous, womb-born, higher animals)

and the human kingdom).

### **Dual evolution**

In these many of his lower powers are developed, and his consciousness passes from the latent to the active condition. A double evolution goes on; there is the continued life of the jivatman himself, continually increasing in richness and complexity; and there is a corresponding continuity in the forms he occupies, as each physical form is directly derived from a preceding physical form. Each form, however independent it may seem, was once part of another form, whose characteristics it shared, and from which it has been separated off for an independent career. While part of the parent form it shared all the advantages and improvements, or the reverse, due to the developing jivatman within that parent form, and thus starts on its separate life on a little higher level than its parent if the jivatman has progressed, or on a little lower level if it has retrograded. For while the general movement is one of progress, there are little ebbs and flows, like the waves that run on and fall back in a rising tide. This unbroken physical inheritance from form to form causes what science calls heredity, the passing on of characteristics from parents to offspring.

But it has been observed by scientific men that mental and moral characteristics do not pass from form to form, and they are puzzled to account for the evolution of consciousness. Their theory needs to be completed by the acceptance of transmigration. For just as physical continuity is necessary for physical evolution, so is the continuity of consciousness necessary for the evolution of mental and moral characteristics. This continuity is the consciousness of the jivatman, which takes a form suitable to his condition, as we shall see presently in Section Four, enlarges his own powers by using the form, and thereby improves the form also. The bodies of the children of the body share these improvements of the form, are improved again by other jivatmans, and pass on still more improved bodies. When the old body is worn out, the jivatman throws it off, and takes another form, as said above.

### **Human evolution begins**

When the animal stage has been fully experienced, and the jivatman is ready to pass on into the human form, his triune nature, the reflection of the triune nature of Ishwara, begins to manifest. The human jivatman—as we may now call him—manifests the three aspects of jnana, ichcha and kriya which have ever been in him, and these begin to evolve as self-consciousness. Ahamkara appears, and the recognition of the “I” as opposed to the “Not-I” rapidly develops. The desire-nature, developed in the animal kingdom, now becomes much more powerful, by seizing on the evolving mind as its slave and using its growing powers for the satisfaction of its own cravings. As the mind grows stronger and the jivatman by experience learns the pains that result from unbridled desires, he begins to exert his strength in checking and directing the desires, and the long struggle commences between the jivatman, dimly beginning to feel his own divinity, and the kamic elements of his upadhis. As is written in the Katha Upanishad: “Know the Self the chariot-owner, the body the chariot; know reason as the

charioteer, and the mind as the reins; they call the senses the horses, the sense-objects their province. The Self, joined to the senses and mind, (is) the enjoyer; thus say the wise. Whoever is ignorant, always with mind loose, his senses (are) uncontrolled, like bad horses of the charioteer. Whoever is wise, always with mind reined-in, his senses (are) controlled, like good horses of the charioteer. Whoever is indeed ignorant, thoughtless, always impure, he does not obtain that goal, (but) comes again into samsara” (Katha Upanishad 1.3.3-7).

When a term of earth-life is over, the jivatman withdraws from the physical body, and in a subtle vehicle passes into the invisible worlds. He carries thither the results of the earth-life to be enjoyed and suffered as fruits, going to the worlds in which these fruits can be consumed. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4.4.4) a description of this is given. The jivatman leaves the body, taking with him the knowledge he has gained and the result of his work; then: “As a goldsmith, having taken a piece of gold, makes another form, new and more beautiful, so verily the atman, having cast off this body and having put away avidya, makes another new and more beautiful form.” In this he goes to the invisible world for which he is fitted—a matter to be dealt with in Section Six—and then the upanishad goes on to say what happens when his fruit in that invisible world is consumed. “Having arrived at the end of (the fruit of) that work—(of) whatsoever he here does—this one returns again from that world to this world of action; thus verily (the story of) him who desires.”

This process is repeated over and over again as long as he has desires, for these desires bind him to the wheel of transmigration. It is truly “the story of him who desires.” So also in the Devi Bhagavata (4.21.22-25) the same idea is expressed: “Having abandoned the former body, the jiva, following karma’s rule, obtains either swarga [heaven] or naraka [hell] according to his deeds. And having obtained a celestial body, or a body of suffering born of objects of desire, experiences varied fruit in swarga or naraka. At the end of the fruits, when the time for his rebirth arrives... then Time unites him again with karmas (selected out) of the sanchita karmas.” The development of the chit aspect of the jivatman, and the purification of the ichcha aspect, being the main work of the human stage of evolution, the growth of manas, and later of buddhi, marks out the steps of the journey.

### **The human constitution**

The constitution of the human being is very clearly outlined in the Mahabharata (Shanti-parvan, 202), from which we give the following summary:

The Self in man, the jivatman, is identical in nature with the Supreme Self, Brahman. From this comes forth the understanding (buddhi) and from the understanding the mind (manas); when to these the senses (indriyas) are added, the man, the dweller in the body, is complete; the body, his dwelling, is made up of the five elements. The senses, through the body, come into touch with the outer world; the senses hand on to the mind the results of the contact, giving the attributes or properties of the objects contacted—the way in which the objects affect them. The mind receives these reports, and groups them into mental images, and presents these to the



understanding; the understanding pierces to the reality in which these mental images, made up of attributes, inhere. This is the outgoing of the jivatman, and his gathering of experience, the pravritti marga, the path of going forth.

The first step or stage of this evolution is the experiencing of varied sensations; and therefore manas is regarded as the sixth sense, which receives and organizes the impressions conveyed to it by the five senses, affected by their contact with the outer world through the sense-organs. “The senses, and the mind as the sixth sense” (Bhagavad Gita 15:7). Or, when the senses and sense organs are taken together: “The ten senses and one” (Bhagavad Gita 13:5).

Manas at this stage is the slave of kama, and develops its capacities by directing the search for objects of enjoyment. Evolution is quickened by the instruction of the rishis, who teach man to sacrifice the objects of enjoyment to the devas, first to gain increased worldly prosperity, and then to gain the delights of swarga.

The second stage of evolution is one of continual conflict between manas and kama, manas being now sufficiently developed to recognize that the pleasures longed for by kama usually, in the long run, bring more pain than pleasure. “Pleasures born of contact [with the senses] are wombs of pain” (Bhagavad Gita 5:22).

Manas, therefore, begins to resist the searching for objects of enjoyment, instead of directing it, and hence conflict, in which manas grows more rapidly. The thwarting of the kamic longings purifies kama, and the higher aspect of ichcha begins to show itself—ichcha which is will, the Shakti of Shiva, who is the destroyer of Kama, the son of Vishnu and Lakshmi, and also the lower aspect of ichcha. (Dharma is born from the wisdom of Vishnu, kama from His Love, which must be developed in man first by desire for material objects; therefore dharma, kama and artha are enjoined together on the pravritti marga.)

The third stage of the evolution of manas consists in the development of the higher intellectual powers; manas no longer enslaved by, nor even struggling with kama, has become free, is the pure manas, engaged with ideas, wrought out by his own labor, not with sense-born images. The jivatman ceases to delight in sense-contacts, or in their mental reproductions, and engages himself in pure thought, in the endeavor to understand the Self and the Not-Self. This stage leads up to the evolution of buddhi, the pure reason or the Higher Understanding, of which the expression is wisdom, the result of the union of knowledge and love, wisdom which sees and loves the Self alone. “Better than the sacrifice of material things is knowledge-sacrifice. All action without exception is fully comprehended (contained) in knowledge..... By this you shall come to see all creation in your Self and then in me” (Bhagavad Gita 4:33, 35).

When the jivatman reaches this stage, he is on the threshold of liberation. He has long “ceased from wicked ways,” is “subdued,” “concentrated,” “of pacified mind” (Katha Upanishad 1.2.24). “Whoever verily is wise, thoughtful, always pure, he obtains that goal whence he is not born again” (Katha Upanishad 3.8).

### **Freedom from rebirth**

For this round of births and deaths is not everlasting for the jivatman; bound to it

by his own desires, with the ceasing of those desires he becomes free; bound to it by his ignorance of his own nature, with the ceasing of that ignorance he knows himself free. Only: “He goes from death to death who here sees manyness” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.19). “When all the desires hiding in his heart are loosed, then the mortal becomes immortal; here he enjoys Brahman” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.7). “Therefore having thus becomes wise, calm, subdued, dispassionate, enduring, collected, he sees the Self in the Self, he sees the Self as all; nor does sin overcome him, he overcomes all sin; nor does sin consume him, he consumes all sin. Free from sin, free from passion, he becomes a Brahmana (of the nature of Brahman); this the Brahman-world” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.23).

The return is the reversal of the process of outgoing, as is very clearly outlined in the Mahabharata, from which we can summarize the return as we summarized the outgoing. The senses are withdrawn from contact with the outer world through the body, and become tranquil. The mind is withdrawn from its study of the images obtained by the senses, and thus also becomes tranquil. The understanding withdraws from the study of the concepts presented by the mind, and, thus tranquil, reflects the Self. So long as the mind turns to the senses it finds misery. When it turns to the understanding it finds bliss. Along this road, the nivritti marga, or returning path, the jivatman returns from his wanderings in samsara and reaches his true home, the Eternal, paying, while he treads this path, all the debts contracted on the pravritti marga.

To see the Self is jnana, wisdom; to love the Self is bhakti devotion; to serve the Self is karma, action. Such jnana, bhakti, karma, are the three margas, ways, to moksha, liberation. The jnana marga is for those in whom chit predominates; the bhakti marga for those in whom ichcha predominates; the karma marga for those in whom kriya predominates. But in each path, as each jivatman is triune, the evolution of all of its three aspects must be carried on. The jnani, as he gains wisdom, will find devotion and right activity appear; the bhakta, as devotion is perfected, will find himself possessed of activity and wisdom. The karmanya, as his activity becomes wholly selfless, will achieve wisdom and devotion. The three margas are, in fact, one, in which three different temperaments emphasize one or other of its inseparable constituents. Yoga supplies the method by which the Self can be seen and loved and served.

The words spoken by Sri Krishna, as to the Sankhya and Yoga Darshanas, may well be applied here: “Sankhya and [karma] yoga are different, the childish declare—not the wise. If one is practiced correctly, that person finds the fruit of both. The state (realization) that is attained by the followers of Sankhya is also attained by the followers of [karma] yoga. Sankhya and [karma] yoga are one” (Bhagavad Gita 5:4-5).

The mukta, the man who has reached liberation, may or may not remain active in the three worlds. The rishis are muktas, and are employed in the maintenance and guidance of the worlds. Janaka was a mukta, and was a king, ruling his realm. Tuladhara was a mukta, and was a merchant, weighing out his goods. Many a mukta is spoken of in the Itihasa who is surrounded by physical conditions. For mukti is not a change of external conditions, but a change of internal condition; not an alteration of

the circumstances surrounding the jivatman, but the attitude of the jivatman to the Self and the Not-Self.

### **Regression**

It was said above that while the general sweep of evolution is upward and onward, temporary retrogression might occur, and in some of the very ancient aryan books a good deal of stress is laid on the danger of such reversions. Sri Krishna, speaking in much later days, says that “the most degraded of men” are thrown “into only the wombs of demons” (Bhagavad Gita 16:19), are born of evil people, such as he had just been describing as demonic (asuric). The law is that when a man has so degraded himself below the human level that many of his qualities can only express themselves through the form of a lower creature, he cannot, when his time for rebirth comes, pass into a human form. He is delayed, therefore, and is attached to the body of one of the lower creatures, as a co-tenant with the animal, vegetable or mineral jiva, until he has worn out, exhausted, the bonds of these non-human qualities and is fit to again take birth in the world of men. A very strong and excessive attachment to an animal may have similar results, where the man should be far beyond such exaggerated fondness. Such was the case of Jada Bharata, a king of ancient India who became so fond of a pet deer that he was thinking of it intently at the time of death and was temporarily reborn as a deer though with full awareness of his previous life.

### **The points to be remembered**

1. The jivatman is Brahman, as a seed is the tree, and remains as a wanderer in samsara till he realizes his own nature.
2. There is continuity of forms, by a new form separating from an old and leading an independent existence; and continuity of life in each evolving jivatman.
3. The jivatman, embodied in a form, experiences through that form, throws it away when outworn, reaps his reward in the invisible worlds, and returns to the visible.
4. The jivatman may be detained in animal forms by self-degradation.
5. There are three stages of the evolving manas: (a) subjection to kama; (b) conflict with kama; (c) triumph over kama and development of the higher intellectual powers.
6. Buddhi is evolved, and liberation is reached.
7. There are three paths to liberation, jnana, bhakti, and kriya (action), and these finally blend.

## **IV Karma**

Karma literally means action, but as every action is triple in its nature, belonging partly to the past, partly to the present, partly to the future, it has come to mean the sequence of events, the law of causes and effects, the succession in which each effect follows its own cause. The word karma, simply action, should however remind us that

what is called the consequence of an action is really not a separate thing but is a part of the action, and cannot be divided from it. The consequence is that part of the action which belongs to the future, and is as much a part of it as the part done in the present. Thus suffering is not the consequence of a wrong act, but an actual part of it, although it may be only experienced later. A soldier is sometimes wounded in battle, and in the excitement does not feel any pain; afterwards, when he is quiet he feels the pain; so a man sins and feels no suffering, but later the suffering makes itself felt. The suffering is not separated from the wound, any more than heat from fire, though experienced as a result. Hence all things are linked together indissolubly, woven and interwoven inseparably; nothing occurs which is not linked to the past and to the future. "How shall there be in this samsara an uncaused action?" (Devi Bhagavata 1.5.74).

### **The law of karma**

The jivatman, then, comes into a realm of law and must carry on all his activities within law. So long as he does not know the law in its various branches, called the laws of nature, he is a slave, tossed about by all the currents of natural energies, and drifting whithersoever they carry him. When he knows them, he is able to use them to carry out his own purposes. A boat without oars, sails, or rudder is carried about helplessly by the winds and currents, and the sailor finds himself drifting along under the press of forces he can neither change nor direct. But a clever sailor, with oars, sails and rudder, can send along his boat in any direction he pleases, not because he has changed the winds and the currents, but because he understands their directions, and can use those that are going in the direction he wants, and can play off, the one against the other, the forces that oppose him. So can a man who knows the laws of nature utilize those whose forces are going his way and neutralize those which oppose. Therefore knowledge is indispensable; the ignorant are always slaves.

It must be remembered that a law of nature is not a command to act in a particular way, but only a statement of the conditions within which action of any kind can be done. Water boils at 100° C under normal pressure. This is a law of Nature. It does not command a man to boil water, but states the conditions under which water boils at 100° C. If he wants boiling water at that temperature these are the conditions which are necessary. If he is on a high mountain where the pressure is much less than the normal, his water will boil at a temperature not sufficiently high for cooking purposes. How then does the law help him? It tells him how to get his boiling water at 100° C by increasing the pressure: Let him shut his water up in a pot from which the steam cannot escape, and so add to the pressure the weight of the steam given off, till the temperature of the water rises to 100° C. And so also with every other law of nature. The laws state conditions under which certain results follow. According to the results desired many conditions can be arranged and, given the conditions, the results will invariably follow. Hence law does not compel any special action, but only renders all actions possible, and knowledge of law is power.

The jivatman, as we have seen, is three-fold in his nature; he consists of ichchha, jnana and kriya, will, wisdom and activity. These, in the lower world of upadhis, of

forms, express themselves as desire, knowledge and action, and these three fashion a man's karma, and each works according to a definite law.

Desire stands behind thought, stimulating and directing it; thought, energized and determined by desire, stands behind action, expressing itself therein in the world of objects. "Man verily is desire-formed; as is his desire, so is his thought; as (his) thought is, so he does action; as he does action, so he attains" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.5). On this passage Shankara comments that desire is the root of the world.

### Three laws

We have then to study three laws, which, taken together, make up the law of karma. We shall then understand the conditions under which things happen, and can shape our future destiny according to the results we have chosen.

1. Desires carry the man to the place where the objects of desire exist, and thus determine the channels of his future activities. "So indeed the desire goes by action to the object in which his mind is immersed" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.6). Desire attaches a man to the objects of desire, binding him to them with unbreakable links; wherever is the object of desire thither must go the man who desires it. The object of desire is called fruit, and the fruit which the man has sought he must consume, in whatever place it is found. The man "attached to action based on desire is bound" (Bhagavad Gita 5:12). Whether the fruit be good or evil, pleasurable or painful, the law is the same. So long as a man desires fruit, he is bound by his attachment to that fruit, and is said to have "good" or "bad" karma according as the fruit is pleasant or painful. When a man understands this law, he can watch over his desires, and allow them to attach themselves only to objects the possession of which will yield happiness; then, in another life, he will have opportunities of attaining them, for they will come and place themselves in his way. This is the first law, belonging to the desire-nature.

2. The second law concerns the mind. Mind is the creative power, and a man becomes that which he thinks. "Now verily man is thought-formed; as a man thinks in this world, so, having gone away hence, he becomes" (Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.1). As Brahma created by meditation, so does manas, which is His reflection in man, have creation as its essential activity. Brahma embodies kriya, activity, but we find that his activity consisted in meditation, thought, and this gave birth to the worlds. Hence action is only thought thrown outwards, objectivized, and a man's actions are only his past thoughts materialized. As Brahma created His world, so manas creates his vehicles, and by the same means, thought. Character, the nature of the man, is thought-created; this is the first of the three factors of karma. What the man essentially is in himself, that is the outcome of his thinking. As he is thinking now, so hereafter he will himself be. If he thinks nobly, he will become noble; if he thinks basely, he will become base. Thus knowing, a man can deliberately shape his character, by dwelling in his mind on all that is good and pure and elevating, and driving out of it all that is evil, foul, and degrading. This is the second law, belonging to the mind.

3. The third law concerns action. Circumstances are made by actions. "Devoted to

the fruits of acts, whatever kind of acts a person covetous of fruits accomplishes, the fruits, good or bad, that he actually enjoys, partake of their character. Like fishes going against a current of water, the acts of a past life are flung back on the actor. The embodied creature experiences happiness for his good acts, and misery for his evil ones” (Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, 201.23). “Nothing can sprout forth without a seed. No one can obtain happiness without having accomplished acts capable of leading to happiness” (Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, 291.12).

### **Sowing and reaping**

If a man spreads happiness round him, he will reap happiness hereafter; if he spreads misery, he will reap misery. Thus knowing the law, he can prepare for himself favorable or unfavorable circumstances, as he prepared a good or bad character, and pleasure-giving or pain-giving objects. This is the third law, belonging to actions.

These three laws cover the making of karma, for the jivatman consists of will, wisdom and activity, and these show themselves in the world by desires, thoughts and actions. When we have divided the factors in a man’s destiny into opportunities, character—or capacities—and surrounding circumstances, we have covered them all. Nothing else remains.

We find, then, that we are always making new karma, and experiencing what we have made in the past. We are obliged to act now in the conditions we have created in our past; we have only the opportunity of obtaining the objects then desired; of using the capacities then created; of living in the circumstances then made. But the living jivatman, that then desired, thought and acted, is still the same powerful agent as he then was, and can put out his powers within the limits he has made, can modify and slowly change them, and create better conditions for the future. Therefore Bhishma places effort above destiny.

### **Two wrong views of karma**

A view of karma that paralyzes human efforts is a crude and mistaken one, and men should see in karma a guide, and not a paralyzer, of action. One very commonly-felt difficulty in connection with karma is this question: “If I am destined by my karma to be bad or good, to do this or not to do it, it must be so; why then make any effort?” The fallacy of this line of thought should be very clearly understood, if the above has been grasped, for it turns upon a complete misunderstanding of the nature of karma. The effort is part of the karma, as much as the goodness or badness; karma is not a finished thing awaiting us, but a constant becoming, in which the future is not only shaped by the past but is being modified by the present. If a man desires to be good, he is putting forth an energy which presently will make him good, however bad he may be now. A man is not a helpless being, destined by his karma to be either bad or good, but he becomes that which he daily chooses as desirable—badness or goodness. He always is, and always must be, making efforts, merely because he is alive, and his only choice lies in making an effort to move in one direction rather than in another; his quietude is merely a choice to let past choices have their way, and to go in accordance with them.

He does not eliminate the element of choice by doing nothing; he simply chooses doing nothing. A man has only to desire, to think, to act and he can make his karma what he chooses. Thus the gods have risen to their high estate, and thus may others rise.

“By his karma a jiva may become an Indra, by his karma a son of Brahma. By his karma he may become Hari’s servant, and free from births. By his karma he may surely obtain perfection, immortality. By his karma he may obtain the fourfold mukti connected with Vishnu: salokya (being in the same plane or world as God), samipya (being in close proximity and association with God), sarupya (having the same form as God) and sayujya (united with God; one with God). Godhood and manhood and sovereignty of a world-empire a man may obtain by karma, and also the state of Shiva and of Ganesha” (Devi Bhagavata 9.27.18-20).

The main thing is to see in karma not a destiny imposed from without, but a self-made destiny imposed from within, and therefore a destiny that is continually being remade by its maker.

Another mistake sometimes made as to karma is that which leads a person to say respecting a sufferer: “He is suffering his karma; if I help him I may be interfering with his karma.” Those who thus speak forget that each man is an agent of the karma of others, as well as an experiencer of his own. If we are able to help a man, it is itself the proof that the karma under which he was suffering is exhausted, and that we can be the agent of his karma bringing him relief. If we refuse to carry the karmic relief, we make bad karma for ourselves, shutting ourselves out from future help, and someone else will have the good karma of carrying the relief and so ensuring for himself aid in a future difficulty. Further, “ifs” and “maybe’s” are no ground for action; “If I do not help him I may be interfering with his karma,” is as valid an argument as “If I help him.” Action should be based on what we *know*, and we know it is right and good to help others; it is constantly commanded by the wise. Only a full and clear knowledge of the causes in the past resulting in the suffering of the present could justify refusal to help on karmic grounds.

### **The three kinds of karma**

Karma is said to be of three kinds: prarabdha, santchitam, and vartamanam, called also agami. Prarabdha karma is that which is ripe for reaping and which cannot be avoided; it is only exhausted by being experienced. Sanchita karma is the accumulated karma of the past, and is partly seen in the character of the man, in his powers, weaknesses and capacities. Vartamana karma is that which is now being created. “That which was in the olden time produced in many births, is called sanchita... That karma which is being done, that is called vartamana. Again, from the midst of the sanchita is selected a portion, and, at the time of the beginning of the body, Time energizes this: it is known as prarabdha karma.” (Devi Bhagavata 6.10.9, 12-14)

The Sanchita karma is the karma which is gathered, collected, heaped together. It is the mass which lies behind a man, and his tendencies come from this. The Vartamana karma is the actual, that which is now being made for the future, or the agami, the coming karma; while the prarabdha karma is that which has begun, is actually bearing

fruit.

Now this prarabdha karma is, as said in the sloka quoted above, selected out of the mass of the sanchita karma. In Vedantic literature it is sometimes compared to an arrow already shot. That which is sufficiently congruous to be worked out in one physical body is selected by the devas who rule this department of nature, and a suitable physical body is built for it, and placed with the parents, nation, country, race and general surroundings necessary for the exhaustion of that karma.

Prarabdha karma, as said above, cannot be changed; it must be exhausted by being experienced. The only thing that can be done is to take it as it comes, bad or good, and work it out contentedly and patiently. In it we are paying our past debts, and thus getting rid of many of our liabilities. The exhaustion of prarabdha karma is possible only by the suffering of the consequences of it.

Sanchita karma may be largely modified by the additions we make to it: vicious tendencies can be weakened, virtuous ones can be strengthened, for with every thought, desire and action we are adding to that which will be the sanchita karma in our next birth.

Vartamana karma may, to a great extent, be destroyed in the same life, balanced up, by one who deliberately expiates a wrong done by restitution, voluntarily paying a debt not yet due, instead of leaving it to fall due at a future time.

### **Freedom from karma**

There remains the question: how can a man become free from karma?

From the general karma of the universe he cannot be freed so long as he remains in the universe; devas, men, animals, plants, minerals, all are under the sway of karma; no manifested life can escape from this everlasting law, without which the universe would be a chaos. "All, Brahma and the rest, are under its sovereign rule!" (Devi Bhagavata 4.2.8)

If a man would escape this universal karma, he must go out of the universe—that is he must merge in the Absolute. But a man may escape from the wheel of births and deaths, and yet remain manifested so long as Ishwara chooses for him to manifest, by ceasing to create fresh karma and by exhausting what already exists. For the tie that binds man to the wheel is desire, and when desire ceases man creates no more bonds. "When all the desires hidden in the heart are loosed, then the mortal becomes immortal, then he here enjoys Brahman" (Katha Upanishad 2.6.14). Such is the reiterated teaching of the Shruti.

Again, we read in the Bhagavad Gita: "Whose undertakings are devoid of plan and desire for results, whose actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge—him the wise call wise.... The action (karma) of one who is free from attachment, whose thought is established in knowledge, undertaking action for sacrifice, is wholly dissolved" (Bhagavad Gita 4:19, 23). Then freedom is achieved, and the man may either remain, as the rishis have remained, to aid in the evolution going on in the Brahmanda or may enter fully into nirvana (moksha; total liberation).



### **The points to be remembered**

1. The nature of action and its consequence.
2. The nature of law.
3. The three laws which make the karma of the jivatman.
4. The relation between exertion and destiny.
5. The three kinds of karma.
6. The ceasing of individual karma.

## **V Sacrifice**

### **The Purusha Shukta**

A thousand heads hath Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.

This Purusha is all that yet hath been and all that is to be; the Lord of Immortality which waxes greater still by food.

So mighty is his greatness; yea, greater than this is Purusha. All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths eternal life in heaven.

With three-fourths Purusha went up: one-fourth of him again was here. Thence he strode out to every side over what eats not and what eats.

From him Virāj was born; again Purusha from Virāj was born. As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward o'er the earth.

When gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusha as their offering, its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn; summer was the wood.

They balmed as victim on the grass Purusha born in earliest time. With him the deities and all sadhyas and rishis sacrificed.

From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up. He formed the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and tame.

From that great general sacrifice Riks and Sama-hymns were born: Therefrom were spells and charms produced; the Yajus [Yajur Veda] had its birth from it.

From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth: from it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.

When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?

The Brahmana [Brahmin] was his mouth, of both his arms was the Kshatriya made. His thighs became the Vaishya, from his feet the Shudra was produced.

The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth; Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vāyu from his breath.

Forth from his navel came mid-air, the sky was fashioned from his head, earth from his feet, and from his chariot the regions. Thus they formed the worlds.

Seven fencing-sticks had he, thrice seven layers of fuel were prepared, when the

gods, offering sacrifice, bound, as their victim, Purusha.

Gods, sacrificing, sacrificed the victim; these were the earliest holy ordinances.

The Mighty Ones attained the height of heaven, there where the sadhyas, gods of old, are dwelling. (Rig Veda 10.90)

### **The law of sacrifice**

As far-reaching as the law of karma is the law of sacrifice, the law by which the worlds were built, the law by which they are maintained. All lives can only be supported by absorbing other lives: all forms can only be preserved by absorbing other forms. Sacrifice permeates all religion as it permeates the universe. Says Sri Krishna: “This world is not for the non-sacrificing—how then the other [worlds]” (Bhagavad Gita 4:31).

The Sanatana Dharma has incorporated this law into its very essence; all the Shrutis declare it; all the Smritis inculcate it; the Puranas and the Itihasas are full of it; the Six Darshanas lay it down as the pathway to be trodden before knowledge can be gained.

We shall see in Part Two how sacrifices pervade the whole life of the true aryan; we are here concerned with the general principle, not with the specific applications.

### **Creation-sacrifice**

Creation began with sacrifice: “The dawn verily is the head of the sacrificial horse” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.1.1). The dawn is explained as the beginning of the day of Brahma, the day of creation. Then is the great horse sacrifice, the horse, whose body is the universe, the sacrifice of the One who carries the many—devas, gandharvas, asuras, men—as the next sloka says. And then the upanishad goes on to describe the beyond, when there was not anything, and the building of the universe.

So also in the Rigveda the splendid Purusha Shukta that begins this section, describing the sacrificial slaying of Purusha, tells how all creatures were formed by one-fourth of Him offered up as “victim” in “that great general sacrifice,” three-fourths remaining in heaven as the Eternal Life.

The great sacrifice involved in creation is beautifully described in the Shatapatha Brahmana (13.7.1): “Brahma, the Self-existent, performed tapas. He considered: ‘In tapas there is no infinity. Come let me sacrifice myself in living things and all living things in myself.’ Then having sacrificed himself in all living things and all living things in himself, he acquired greatness, self-effulgence and lordship.” Manu also declares that Brahma created “the eternal sacrifice” before He drew forth the Veda.

This profound teaching, that Ishwara sacrificed Himself in order to create His universe, means that He limited Himself in matter—technically died—in order that His life might produce and sustain a multiplicity of separate lives. Every life in His universe is a part of His life: “A fragment of Myself” (Bhagavad Gita 15:7). Without this sacrifice, the universe could not come into existence. As only a fourth part of Purusha is said to suffice for the bringing forth of all beings, so Sri Krishna says: “I ever support this whole world by just one portion of myself” Bhagavad Gita 10:42). Ishwara is far more than His universe, but it is wholly contained in Him, lives in His life, is

composed of His substance.

### **Humans and sacrifice**

Sri Krishna tells how Prajapati “having emanated mankind together with sacrifice,” bade man find in sacrifice his Kamadhuk, the cow whence each could milk the objects he desired. So action is essentially rooted in sacrifice: “The offering in sacrifice which causes the genesis and support of beings is called karma” (Bhagavad Gita 8:3).

“The pouring out” is the pouring out of life, which alone enabled separate beings to live, and this pouring out is that same sacrifice described in the Purusha Shukta. So thoroughly has this been recognized that karma has become the general name for sacrifices, and karma-kanda is the name which covers all sacrificial rites.

The essential idea of sacrifice, then, is the pouring out of life for the benefit of others; such pouring out is the law by which life evolves. It is imposed on the lower creation by strife and continual combats; its voluntary acceptance by self-sacrifice is the crowning glory of man. Hence all man’s higher evolution is marked out by self-sacrifice, by sacrificing himself and all his actions to the Supreme man obtains liberation. “Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer [in sacrifice], whatever you give, whatever tapasya you practice, do that as an offering to me. Thus shall you be freed from the bonds of actions producing both good and evil fruits” (Bhagavad Gita 9:27-28).

### **The law of sacrifice in the world**

Let us see how the law of sacrifice is seen in the physical world. The life in the mineral kingdom evolves as the mineral forms in which it dwells are broken up to nourish plants of every kind. The mineral forms perish to feed the life in the vegetable kingdom, and the life in the mineral forms has grown more complex and developed by this sacrifice.

The life in the vegetable kingdom evolves by the sacrifice of the lower plants to nourish the higher, the countless annual plants perishing to enrich the soil in which trees grow. Myriads of others are eaten by animals, and their forms go to build up animal bodies, in which the Life has fuller scope.

The life in part of the animal kingdom evolves by the sacrifice again of the lower forms to the higher, and also to the maintenance of the human kingdom, within which also the weak are devoured by the strong in the savage state. But here gradually, with increasing development of the animals to keen sensibility, and with the development of conscience and sympathy in man, another form of the law appears, and man begins to refuse to sacrifice to the support of his own life those who share with him the feelings of pleasure and pain. He first revolts against cannibalism—eating his own kind—and then against eating his weaker brothers in the animal kingdom. He realizes that the divine nature in him develops by sacrifice of himself to others, and not by the sacrifice of others to himself. He lessens as much as he can his demands on the lives of others, and increases as much as he can his own sacrifices for them. So long as a man identifies himself with his body, he is always trying to take, to absorb, because the body

continues only by such taking and absorbing. When he identifies himself as the Self, he is always trying to give, to pour out, because the joy of the Self is in forth-pouring. On the pravritti marga he takes; on the nivritti marga he gives. Thus evolves the life of man.

### **Sacrifice in Sanatana Dharma**

The alphabet of the lesson of sacrifice was taught to man by the rishis who watched over the human race in its infancy. They did not attempt to teach men the full lesson of self-surrender, but merely laid down for them a system of sacrifices, in which they should sacrifice some of their possessions with a view to their large increase in the future; the firm grasp with which a man grips the objects on the maintenance of which his life in the body depends was slowly loosened by the sacrifice of some of them, the return for this not being immediate but lying in the future.

“O Kings! Indra, Varuna, to this our sacrifice be turned by offerings and homage:... O Indra, Varuna, plenteous wealth and food and blessing give us:... This my song may it reach Indra, Varuna, and by its force bring sons and offspring” (Rig Veda 7.84.1, 4-5). Such prayers are found on every page of the samhitas, and thus were men taught to sacrifice what they valued for a future gain. By these sacrifices they were also taught to see that man is part of a great whole, and related to all around him; and that as his own life was maintained by the sacrifice of other lives, so he must repay that debt by sacrificing to others some of his possessions, sacrificing to the devas in the fire which was “the mouth of the gods,” or “the eater of food” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.6), and to men by charitable gifts. In this way the sense of obligation was impressed on them, and the interdependence of lives.

The next step was to train them to sacrifice these same possessions, immediately valuable, for happiness on the other side of death, a far-off invisible reward. “Let him sacrifice who desires swarga.” “Whoever works (sacrifices), pouring libations into the shining of these [the seven flames previously mentioned], at the proper time, him these sun-rays lead where dwells the one Lord of the devas. Saying to him ‘Come, come,’ these resplendent libations carry the sacrificer by the sun-ray, worshipping him and saying the sweet words: ‘This is your pure well-deserved Brahma-world’” (Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.5-6).

### **The higher sacrifice**

A great step forward was made in this sacrificing of the visible to the invisible, of the present to a far-off future. But the object of this training in sacrifices was no more the enjoyment of swarga than the enjoyment of wealth on earth. They had learned to curb their greed for possessions by the practice of giving, and to recognize themselves as owing their lives to the larger life around them; they were thus prepared for the third stage, that of sacrifice as duty, for which no reward should be sought.

Men now began to see that the sacrifice of the lower to the higher was “right,” a duty that was owed in return for the perpetual sacrifice of the higher to the lower, of the life of Ishwara for the maintenance of His children; and further that the body also

owed a debt to the lower creatures who supported it, that ought to be paid by helping and serving them in turn. Then they were ready for the lesson: “Your authority (right) is to action alone, never to its fruits at any time. Never should the fruits of action be your motive; [and] never should there be attachment to inaction in you. Steadfast in yoga, perform actions abandoning attachment” (Bhagavad Gita 2:47-48).

The wheel of life which is ever turning, this interdependence of lives, being thoroughly understood, men see it as an obvious duty to help in the turning, and readily see the unworthiness of trying to live without doing their share of work: “He who here on the earth turns not the wheel thus set in motion, lives full of sense delights, maliciously and uselessly” (Bhagavad Gita 3:16).

This, practiced for long, led up to the last lesson, the complete self-surrender of the man to Ishwara, recognizing himself as only an instrument of the divine will carrying out in the physical world the purposes of that will. “Fix your mind on me, be devoted to me, sacrifice and bow down to (worship; reverence) me. In this way you shall truly come to me, for I promise you—you are dear to me. Abandoning all duties, take refuge in me alone” (Bhagavad Gita 18:65-66).

Thenceforth the whole life is a sacrifice, and the man lives only to do the divine will. Hence he abandons all separate dharmas as dharmas, as having over him no binding force. He has but the one dharma, of carrying out the divine will, and if he fulfills all family and other relationships more perfectly than he ever did before, it is not because they in themselves bind him, but because Ishwara having placed him amid these surroundings as part of Himself, as His representative, he must fully meet all the necessities of the case in this representative character.

During this long training, men were gradually led to see that outer sacrifices of wealth were less valuable than inner sacrifices of virtue, and that the purification of the heart and mind were of more real importance than the external purifications. While these should not be neglected, the neglect of the other was fatal. “He who has undergone the forty-two Samskaras [life-changing and spiritually empowering Vedic rituals], but has not the eight virtues of the Self, will not obtain Brahman, nor will he go to Brahmaloka. But he who has only a part of the forty-two Samskaras, but has the eight virtues of the Self, he will attain to Brahman and go to Brahmaloka” (Gautama Dharma Sutras 8:22-23).

The object of sacrifice is purification, and this has been insisted on over and over again. Says Sri Krishna: “The ignorant, delighting in the word of the Veda, proclaim this flowery speech: ‘There is nothing else.’ Those of desire-filled natures, intent on heaven, offering rebirth as actions’ fruit, performing many and various rites, are aimed at the goal of enjoyment and power. To those attached to enjoyment and power, their minds drawn away by this speech, is not granted resolute (firm; definite) insight in meditation” (Bhagavad Gita 2:42-44). And again: “Better than the sacrifice of material things is knowledge-sacrifice.... No purifier equal to knowledge is found here in the world” (Bhagavad Gita 4:33, 38).

Bhishma speaking of truth and declaring it to be sacrifice of a high order, says: “Once a thousand horse-sacrifices and truth were weighed against each other in the

balance. Truth weighed heavier than a thousand horse-sacrifices” (Mahabharata, Shanti Parvan, 162:26). With regard to abstention from cruelty he says: “Gifts made in all sacrifices, ablutions performed in all sacred waters, and the merit acquired by making all the possible kinds of gifts—all these do not come up to abstention from cruelty (ahimsa). The penances of a man that abstains from cruelty are inexhaustible. The man who abstains from cruelty is regarded as always performing sacrifices” (Mahabharata, Anushasana Parvan, 40-41).

To destroy the sense of separateness is to gain the ultimate fruit of all sacrifices—purification and union with the Supreme. This is the road along which the great rishis have led the true followers of the Sanatana Dharma.

### **The points to be remembered**

1. The world was created and is maintained by a Divine Sacrifice.
2. Sacrifice is essentially giving, pouring forth.
3. Sacrifice is the law of evolution; compulsory in the lower kingdoms, becoming voluntary in the human.
4. Man rises by definite stages from Vaidika (Vedic) sacrifices to self-sacrifice.
5. Sacrifices of virtue and wisdom are more effective than the sacrifices of external objects.

## **VI**

### **The Worlds—Visible and Invisible**

We have followed the jivatman in his evolution, and have seen the laws of his growth, the unfolding of his consciousness. We have now to consider the upadhis (bodies) in which he dwells, and the worlds that he inhabits during his long pilgrimage. These upadhis are related to the worlds, and by them the jivatman comes into contact with these worlds, and is able to gain experience from them and to act in them. The upadhis are only brought into existence to serve the purposes of the jivatman, moved by desire to experience these worlds. That the jivatman’s own desire is at the root of his embodiment is very plainly stated in the Chandogya Upanishad. First comes the statement: “O Maghavan, this body truly is mortal, controlled by death. It is the dwelling of the immortal bodiless atman” (Chandogya Upanishad 8.12.1).

Then the wish to experience is said to lead the atman to form organs for receiving and transmitting to himself the experiences. His wish lies at the root of each, and matter obeys his impulse, and obediently moulds itself into a form suitable for the exercise of the life-function. (Science, in these later days, proves over and over again that an organ is formed under the pressure of the life seeking to function in a particular way.) “He who has the consciousness, ‘may I smell,’ he, the atman, in order to smell, (makes) the organ of smell; he who has the consciousness, ‘may I speak,’ he, the atman, in order to speak, (makes) the voice; he who has the consciousness, ‘may I hear,’ he, the atman, in order to hear, (makes) the organ of hearing; he who has the

consciousness, ‘may I think,’ he, the atman, (makes) the mind, his divine eye...” (Chandogya Upanishad 8.12.4-5).

It is by this subtle organ, the mind, that he sees and enjoys, for the grosser matter cannot affect his subtle essence. The Shruti continues: “He, verily, this (atman), by the divine eye, the mind, sees and enjoys these (objects of) desires.”

Here is, at once, the psychology and physiology connected with the jivatman. He is a conscious being, and that consciousness, seeking external experiences, fashions senses and sense-organs for contact with the outer worlds, and a mind of nature more akin to itself as a bridge between the outer and the inner. It is these and the worlds to which they are related, that we have now to study.

Sri Krishna speaks on exactly the same lines, reminding us further of the essential identity between the jivatman and the Supreme Ishwara: “A fragment of myself, becoming an eternal jiva (spirit; being) in this world of jivas, draws to itself the senses, and the mind as the sixth sense, abiding in Prakriti.... Presiding over hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell as well as the mind, this one [Ishwara] experiences the objects of the senses.” (Bhagavad Gita 15:7, 9)

### **The three worlds and the seven**

There are three worlds in which the jivatman circles round on the wheel of births and deaths. These are bhurloka, or bhuloka, the physical earth; bhuvarloka, the world next to the physical, and closely related to it but of subtler matter; swarloka, or swarga, the heaven-world. Beyond these are four other worlds, belonging to the higher evolution of the jivatman: mahaloka, janaloka, tapaloka, and satyaloka. The first three lokas, or worlds, perish at the end of a day of Creation, a day of Brahma, and are reborn at the dawn of the succeeding day. The others persist, but as mahaloka is rendered untenable and deserted by all its inhabitants, four lokas may be regarded as perishing at the Night of Brahma, while three—janaloka, tapaloka, and satyaloka—remain. All these seven lokas are within the Brahmanda.

These lokas mark the stages of evolution of the consciousness of the jivatman; as his powers unfold, he becomes conscious of these lokas one after the other, and becomes able to feel, think and act in upadhis made out of the bhutani, the bhutas or elements, which correspond to these stages of consciousness. Each loka, as a state, represents a form of the consciousness of Ishwara; and, as a place, represents a modification of prakriti, expressing that state of consciousness. As the jivatman is of the nature of Ishwara, he is capable of realizing these seven states of consciousness, and of thus living in touch with the seven worlds or modifications of prakriti, which correspond to them. These seven, as said above, make up the Brahmanda, the World Egg, within which the creative work of Brahma proceeds.

“Above the earth is bhurloka, then bhuvarloka beyond. Then next is swarloka, and janaloka beyond. Yet beyond is tapaloka, and again beyond is satyaloka. Then beyond is Brahmaloaka, like burning gold. All this is made, one within the other; when that perishes, all perish, O Narada! All this collective universe is like a water-bubble, transient” (Devi Bhagavata 9.14-16). Here “Patala” is made to cover the seven Talas

and Mahaloka is omitted, Brahmaloaka being added at the end to make up the seven.

Let us examine these words more closely. The first three, Bhur, Bhuvar and Swar lokas, are those in which the jivatman lives during his long evolution, in which he dwells while on the wheel of births and deaths. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says: “Now verily there are three worlds, the world of men, the world of the pitris, the world of the devas” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.5.16).

These three are called the triloki, the three worlds. Each of these worlds is a definite region, marked off by the nature of the matter of which it is composed. The tattwa that predominates in bhurloka, or prithvi, the earth, is the prithvi tattwa. There are seven modifications of it, prithvi, ap, agni, vayu, akasha—solid, liquid, gaseous, radiant matter, etheric, super-etheric and atomic. In all the combinations which make up these modifications of prakriti, the various aggregations of the anu, the prithvi tattwa, is predominant. In bhuvarloka the apa tattwa is predominant and in the seven corresponding modifications there the aggregations of the anu of that world, this apa tattwa, is the most prominent characteristic. In swarloka the agni tattwa is the ruling power, and all the combinations bear the stamp of this fiery anu. All the bodies of the beings belonging to that region are flashing and luminous, and from this comes the name of deva, “a shining one.” We then come to mahaloka, in which also the agni tattwa is predominant, a world composed only of the three finest and subtlest aggregations of the fiery anu.

The three higher lokas, jana, tapa and satya lokas, are not reached by the jivatman till he is very highly evolved. In janaloka and tapaloka the vayu tattwa predominates, hence all the combinations interpenetrate each other without any difficulty, as gases do down here, and the sense of unity predominates over the sense of separateness.

In satyaloka the akasha tattwa predominates, and the jivatman here attains the shabda-brahman-world, and is on the threshold of mukti. He has reached the limit of the Brahmanda. Beyond it lie the realms of the two highest tattwas, the mahat-tattwa—sometimes called anupadaka, because it has as yet no upadaka, receptacle or holder—and the adi-tattwa, the root of all.

### **Seven states of consciousness**

These seven lokas correspond to seven states of consciousness of the jivatman. The life in man which is consciousness is that of the Self; it is written: “Of atman this life is born” (Prashna Upanishad 3.3). And: “From this these seven flames become” (Prashna Upanishad 3.5).

Again, in the Mundaka Upanishad, the seven worlds are connected with the seven flames, and these flames take the departed soul to the heavenly worlds (Prashna Upanishad 1.2.3-6). And the Devi Bhagavata says: “From whom the seven prana-flames, and also the seven fuels, the seven sacrifices and worlds: to that All-Self we bow” (7.33.49). The seven pranas, or life-breaths, of the body are the representatives of the seven great pranas, the true life-breaths, of the Self, consciousness sevenfold divided in man. This is plainly stated in the Chandogya Upanishad, where it is said that there are five gates out of the heart which lead to heaven, the five pranas, or life-



breaths, each of these leading to a special region, that to which each belongs. Thus prana itself, the chief life-breath, leads to the Sun, here standing for the chief, or highest loka, satyaloka. Vyana, leading southwards, carries to the Moon—here to the dark side of the moon, connected with bhuvarloka. Apana leads to the fire Region, mahaloka, and samana, “which is the mind,” to swarloka. Udana leads to the air region, that of vayu which includes janaloka and tapaloka. The pranas in man correspond to the cosmic pranas, for man is related to, and reflects in every part, the image of Ishwara and His universe.

#### **Four states of consciousness**

In the Mandukya Upanishad, the Self is said to have four states: the jagrat, waking, in which he is called vaishvanara; the swapna, “dreaming,” in which he is called taijasa; the third sushupti, the dreamless sleep, “well sleeping,” in which he is called prajna; and the fourth, that which is Brahman. These three states belong to the seven lokas, as will be clearly seen, if we now consider the deha, the bodies, in which the aspects of consciousness are manifested. We shall return to the aspects of consciousness when we consider them in their several material sheaths.

#### **The bodies (shariras/koshas) of the atman-self**

There are three chief bodies which the atman uses as upadhis: (1) The sthula-sharira, sense or gross body; this is the upadhi of the vaishvanara consciousness. (2) The sukshma sharira, subtle body; this is the upadhi of the taijasa consciousness. (3) The karana-sharira, or causal body; this is the upadhi of the prajna consciousness.

“Atman in the karana (causal body) is prajna; He is taijasa in the sukshma (astral) body; in the sthuladeha (physical body) he is named vishva. Threefold he is thus called.... The Lord also is thus spoken of as threefold, by the names Isha, Sutra (Sutratma) and Viraj. The first (Jivas) is the distributive form, while the Collective Self is the Supreme.” (Devi Bhagavata 7.32.47, 49)

As every man has, then, three upadhis and uses them as the organs of three different forms of consciousness, the Lord has three dehas, upadhis, and three different forms of universal consciousness; these are called Isha, Sutra (Sutratma) and Virat respectively, corresponding to the three human forms of consciousness—prajna, taijasa, and vaishvanara.

These upadhis may be considered as expressions in matter of the three aspects of the Self: will, wisdom and activity. The sthula-sharira is the organ of activity; the sukshma sharira is the organ of wisdom; the karana-sharira is the organ of will. And just as these three aspects express themselves in higher and lower states of consciousness—will and desire, wisdom and knowledge, creation and generation—so are the shariras made up of sheaths, composed of differing densities of matter, according to the subdivision of the consciousness working in each sheath. The three shariras are related to the seven lokas as follows: The sthula-sharira is the upadhi in Bhurloka. The sukshma sharira is the upadhi in Bhur, Bhuvar, Swar, and Mahar lokas. The karana-sharira is the upadhi in Jana, Tapa, and Satya lokas.

The shariras, as said above, are made up of sheaths, and here the Vedantic division of the five koshas, sheaths, is very helpful.

The first kosha is that which is built of the particles of food, and is therefore named annamaya kosha, the food sheath. This is identical with the sthula-sharira, the dense body, and is composed of solids, liquids, and gases, in which the prithvi tattwa predominates. Here the outer expressions of the karmendriyas, the organs of action—hands, feet, voice, generation and evacuation—have their place. Here is the nervous system, with its central organ, the brain, through which vaishvanara, the waking consciousness, acts, and comes into touch with bhurloka.

The second, third and fourth koshas—the pranamaya kosha, life-breath sheath; the manomaya kosha, mind sheath; and the vijnamaya kosha, the knowledge sheath—make up the sukshma sharira, the subtle body.

### **The indriyas**

“The five jnanendriyas, the five karmendriyas, and the five pranas, and manas with vijnana, this is the sukshma sharira, which is called my realm.” (Devi Bhagavata 7.32.41-42).

The student must here notice the word karmendriyas. The absolute *organs*—hands, feet, etc.—belong obviously to the sthula-sharira, but the centers which govern them, the true motor centers, are in the sukshma sharira, as are the sense centers which have as their organs in the sthula sharira the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin. Each indriya is essentially a subtle center in the sukshma sharira, and has an organ in the sthula-sharira. If this be grasped, the student will not be puzzled by the (seemingly) verbal contradictions that he may meet with in his reading.

### **A restatement**

The sukshma sharira is connected with bhurloka by that part of it which is called the pranamaya kosha; this kosha is composed of the subtle ethers of the physical world, bhurloka, and the pranas move in this etheric sheath, the life-currents which carry on all the functions of the body. Of these there are five at work—the remaining two being latent—and these are: prana, the outgoing breath; apana, the incoming breath; vyana, the held-in breath; udana, the ascending breath; samana, the equalizing breath, which distributes the digested food throughout the body. In these pranas the magnetic energies of the body exist, and all bodily energies are modifications of these. “I, indeed, fivefold dividing myself, by my support maintain this (body)” (Prashna Upanishad 2.3). “From whatever limb prana departs, that indeed becomes dried up (withered)” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.3.19). And, as we shall presently see, when prana leaves the body, the body dies. For the purusha asks: “Who is it in whose going I shall go, in whose staying I shall stay? He created prana” (Prashna Upanishad 6.3).

Modern science, it may be remarked, has come to the conclusion that all these energies are movements in ether, and it is this ether, as said above, which forms that pranamaya kosha.

The part of the sukshma sharira connecting it with bhuvarloka and swarloka is the

manomaya kosha, or mind-sheath. This manomaya kosha is composed of matter from these two worlds, and is the upadhi of the lower mind, manas affected by, mingled with, kama. This mind, which is never separated from desires, has in this sheath matter of bhuvarloka, in which desires function, and matter from swarloka, in which thoughts function.

Lastly, the sukshma sharira, by its subtlest particles, is connected with mahaloka, to which pure manas, manas free from kama, belongs, and these particles, of the matter of mahaloka, form the vijnanamaya kosha.

This body, it will be seen, is a very complicated one, yet it is necessary to understand it, if the path of the man after death is to be followed. It is the upadhi of the taijasa consciousness, in which the Self comes into touch with the permanent invisible worlds, the consciousness spoken of sometimes as that of dream. It includes, however, far more than is indicated by the modern use of the word dream, for it includes the high states of trance, attainable by yoga, in which a man may reach mahaloka.

The third sharira, the karana sharira, is composed of the matter of the three higher and relatively permanent lokas, jana-, tapa-, and satya- lokas.

The anandamaya kosha of the Vedantins is the same as this karana sharira, and this is composed of the materials of the three lokas just named. The name covers the three—as there are really three sheaths under one name. In the bodies of the dwellers in janaloka the material of that world predominates and wisdom specially characterizes them, that world being the abode of the Kumaras, the beings whose pure wisdom is untouched by any desire. In the tapaloka the great ascetics and devotees live, and in their bodies the materials of tapaloka predominate, ananda being their chief characteristic. Satyaloka (Brahmaloka) is the home of those whose peculiar functions are in activity, closely allied to the nature of Brahma.

In this third sharira the prajna consciousness works, not affecting the lower bodies; beyond this is the Brahmanda, and the atman rising beyond it unites with Ishwara.

Consciousness, in the annamaya kosha, functions in the brain and is concerned with external activities; it uses at the same time the pranamaya kosha to carry on the life-functions of the body, and affects, by this, all the objects with which it comes into contact; these two koshas leave minute particles of themselves on all the objects they touch, and the rules of physical purity are based on this fact.

Consciousness, in the waking state, also uses the manomaya kosha, by which it desires and thinks, and these three sheaths are active during all waking consciousness. A deep thinker, a philosopher or metaphysician, also uses the vijnanamaya kosha in working out his thoughts, but ordinary men do not get beyond the manomaya kosha.

When the time of death comes, the pranamaya kosha separates from the annamaya kosha, and leaves the latter inert and helpless, fit only for the burning-ghat. Its elements are scattered, and go back into the general store. The presence of prana is necessary for its life. “As long as prana dwells in the body, so long is life” (Kaushitaki Brahmana Upanishad 3.2). This same upanishad describes a dying man, and tells how all the powers of the waking consciousness are gathered up in prana, so that when

prana goes out all these accompany it, and the man, the Self, going out, all these powers go with him. He is then in the karana and sukshma shariras.

The pranamaya kosha, the part of the subtle body made of ethers, soon drops away, and the man enters the pretaloka, the world of the departed, a special region in bhuvarloka. If he has been a bad man, the coarser part of the manomaya kosha is rearranged to form the dhruvam sharira, the strong body (Manu Smriti 12.16), called also the yatana sharira, in which he suffers the results of his evil deeds. If he be a good man, these coarser particles gradually drop away, and in the partially purified manomaya kosha he goes to the peaceful pitriloka, the “watery world,” still a region in bhuvarloka. When the manomaya kosha is quite freed from its desire particles, he goes on into the division of swarga allotted to the departed, sometimes called the moon. “They who depart from this world all go to the moon.... The moon is the gate of swarga” (Kaushitaki Brahmana Upanishad 1.2). And again we read in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that the departed go to “pitriloka, from pitriloka to the moon” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 6.2.16).

The manomaya kosha is called the lunar body, and, as we shall see in a moment, is also called Soma, the moon. This path, from the earth to pitriloka, from pitriloka to the moon, or the part of swarga allotted to ordinary men between death and birth—other than Indraloka, Suryaloka, etc., divisions of swarga gained by special merits—is called pitriyana, the path of the pitris.

From the moon they return to the earth, the first stage being that in which a new manomaya kosha is obtained. This is brought down to bhurloka, where the pranamaya and annamaya koshas are formed, and so rebirth is gained.

“Those who desire offspring and are devoted to almsgiving and rituals, considering these the highest accomplishment, attain the world of the moon and are born again on earth.... They travel by the southern path, which is the path of the fathers [pitris]” (Prashna Upanishad 1.9).

“From... from the world of the fathers [they pass] to the moon.... Having dwelt there as long as there is residue [of good karma] they return again [to earthly rebirth]” (Chandogya Upanishad 5.10.4-5).

### **The path of freedom**

The devayana, the path of the devas, is only trodden by those who do not compulsorily return to the earth during this kalpa. They depart as do the others, but they pass on from the moon, casting off the manomaya kosha, to the deva world, and from that to the sun and the lightning, to Brahmaloka. “In those Brahma-worlds they dwell immemorial years” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 6.2.15. See Chandogya Upanishad 5.10.2.) Shankara remarks that these worlds are not absolutely free from transmigration, but that they will not be reborn within this kalpa. These are they of whom the Vishnu Purana (1.3) says that they dwell in the higher lokas while Brahma sleeps.

One other matter of importance remains in connection with man’s bodies and the seven lokas. By yoga, a man may, during his lifetime, separate himself from his lower

sheaths and rise into the higher worlds; and, far more, he may reach the vidya which liberates. “Now within this Brahmapura (the body) there is a minute lotus-like chamber, and within it a minute inner space” (Chandogya Upanishad 8.1.1). Therein dwells the atman, unobserved by ordinary men. “As those ignorant of the nature of the field pass over a hidden gold mine and do not find it, so all men daily go to this Brahmaloka and do not find it” (Chandogya Upanishad 8.3.2). Leaving the body in sleep, they, as it were, walk over it, but do not know it. But he who knows it, daily retires to this region in the heart, and “Having risen from this body, he attains a splendid body of light, and dwells in his own form. This is the Atman” (Chandogya Upanishad 8.3.4). By yoga this separation is effected, and it is written: “That (purusha) let him draw out from his own body with self-possession, like a grass-stalk from its sheaths” (Katha Upanishad 2.6.17).

This is not the place to enter into details as to yoga. It is enough to know that such high possibilities are within the reach of man, and may be realized by purity, by knowledge and by love.

### **The points to be remembered**

1. The jivatman, seeking experience, forms bodies.
2. He dwells in three worlds, during the cycle of births and deaths.
3. There are seven lokas within the Brahmanda, and seven talas.
4. There are three great shariras, corresponding to three main states of consciousness, and these are subdivided into seven, corresponding to the seven lokas.
5. At and after death, the jivatman throws off the lower koshas, dwelling finally in swarga in the purified manomaya kosha, after leaving pitriloka.
6. The jivatman may, by yoga, free himself from the lower koshas during physical life.

# Part Two

## General Hindu Religious Customs and Rites

### I

#### Mantras: Purification and Power

Certain general principles pervade all religious ceremonies, and these principles must be clearly grasped, otherwise these ceremonies will be unintelligible, and the mind will sooner or later revolt against them. These principles are:

1. Man is a composite being, a jivatman enclosed in various sheaths, each sheath being related to one of the visible or invisible worlds, and therefore also to its inhabitants. He is thus in touch with these worlds, and in continual relations with them.

2. The jivatman and prakriti are in a state of unceasing vibration; these vibrations vary in rapidity, regularity and complexity.

3. The vibrations of the jivatman are rapid and regular, becoming more and more complicated as he unfolds his powers.

4. The vibrations of the matter of the sheaths are continuously affected by those of the jivatman, and non-continuously by the various vibrations which reach each from the world to which its materials belong. In addition, each vibrates continuously according to the fundamental vibration of its world.

5. The jivatman endeavors to impose his own vibrations on his sheaths, so that they may respond to him, and work harmoniously with him.

6. He is constantly frustrated in these attempts by the vibrations that reach his sheaths from outside and set up vibrations in them that are independent of him.

7. He may be very much assisted in his labor by the setting up of vibrations which are in harmony with his own efforts.

These principles must be studied carefully and thoroughly understood.

Then we come to certain special facts, a knowledge of which is also necessary.

A mantra is a sequence of sounds, and these sounds are vibrations, so that the chanting, loud, low, or silent, of a mantra sets up a certain series of vibrations. Now a sound gives rise to a definite form, and a series of forms is made by successive repetitions; these may be rendered visible, if suitable scientific means are taken to preserve a record of the vibrations set up by the sounds. Thus the forms created by a mantra depend on the sequential sounds of the mantra being chanted, since the mantra, as it is chanted, gives rise to a series of forms in subtle matter. The nature of the vibrations—that is their general character, whether constructive or destructive, whether stimulating love, energy, or other emotions—depends on these sequential

sounds of the mantra. The force with which the mantra can affect outside objects in the visible or invisible worlds depends on the purity, devotion, knowledge and will-power of the utterer. Such vibrations are included among the “various vibrations” mentioned under Principle 4 as affecting the sheaths, and are also referred to under Principle 7.

The repeated recitation of a mantra, that is, the repeated setting up of certain vibrations, gradually dominates the vibrations going on in the sheaths, and reduces them all to a regular rhythm, corresponding to its own. Hence the feeling of peace and calm which follows on the recitation of a mantra.

The name of a deva or other being mentioned in a mantra sets up vibrations similar to those present in the deva and his sheaths, and as the mantra is repeated many times, with cumulative effects, the sheaths of the utterer—or of any hearer—gradually respond and, mirror-like, repeat/reflect these vibrations with ever-increasing force.

“Whatever the deva concerned with a mantra, he is the form of it. The mantra of the devaya is therefore said to be the devata” (Yoga-yajnavalkya, quoted in the Ahnika Sutravali, p. 13).

Pingala, the writer on Vedic mantras, divides the metres according to the seven fundamental vibrations, and gives the name of the devata corresponding to each vibration.

As the matter of the sheaths thus vibrates, it becomes easily penetrable by the influence of the deva, and very impervious to other influences. Hence the deva’s influence reaches the jivatman, and other influences are shut out.

If the sheaths contain much coarse matter and some pure, the coarse matter will be shaken out as the sheaths vibrate in reponse to the mantra, and pure matter will be drawn in to replace that which is shaken out.

The magnetic properties of objects are also important in this matter of vibrations. All objects are always vibrating, and thus affect the sheaths of other objects near them. To affect the sheaths in any particular way, it is necessary to choose objects which have the desired vibrations.

All rites and ceremonies ordained by seers and sages are based on these principles and facts, which govern the mantras and the objects used with them. They are all intended to aid the jivatman in reducing his sheaths to obedience, in purifying them, and in making them strong against evil; or else to shape external conditions to man’s benefit, protection and support.

If these principles and facts are understood, the student will see clearly in the prescribed observances, such as the rituals known as Samskaras, an ordered system intended to help the jivatman to unfold his powers more rapidly and to overcome the obstacles in his way.

*[The following extract from the article Japa by M. P. Pandit will complete this section.]*

“Once students of sacred knowledge asked Yajnavalkya: ‘Can we gain life eternal by japa?’ Yajnavalkya said: ‘By the immortal Names one becomes immortal’” (*Jabala Upanishad* 3).

The tradition of japa in India dates back to the ancient times of the Rishis of the

Veda. “*Knowing*, speak His Name,” enjoins Dirghatamas (Rig Veda 1.156.3). “Of all the Yajnas (Sacrifices) I am the Japa Yajna,” declares Lord Sri Krishna to Arjuna (Bhagavad Gita 10:25). “Japa yields the fruit of all other Yajnas,” states the *Tantrasara*.

What is Japa? What is its rationale? What is its process? Japa is the repetition of a mantra, a potent syllable or syllables, a word or a combination of words, done with the object of realizing the truth embodied in the mantra. The object may be mundane like the achievement of certain states of affluence, health, power; or it may be spiritual, say, the attainment of God in any or many of His aspects. In either case the mantra which is chosen for Japa has the necessary power within it and by constant repetition under proper conditions the power can be evoked into operation to effectuate the purpose. The vibrations set up each time the mantra is repeated go to create, in the subtler atmosphere, the conditions that induce the fulfillment of the object in view. The Divine Name, for instance, has the potency to stamp and mould the consciousness which repeats it into the nature of the Divinity for which the Name stands and prepare it for the reception of the gathering Revelation of the Godhead.

At the basis of the Science of Japa is the ancient perception of sages all over the world that Creation proceeds from Sound [*Shabda*]. The universe has issued out of *Nada Brahman*, Brahman [God] as Sound. Each sound has a form, a subtle form which may not be visible to the physical eye. Equally each form in the creation has its own sound-equivalent, the sound which preceded its formation on the subtler planes of existence. When this particular sound is reproduced—even in its transcription on the human level in terms of our speech, *vaikhari* as it is called—it sets in current the very vibrations which brought and therefore can bring that entity into being. This in brief is the principle underlying Mantra (Japa) Yoga.

That sound has form is a truth which is being confirmed today by Science starting from the opposite end. Swami Sivananda, in his book on Japa Yoga, gives interesting information on the subject. He writes:

“Hindu books on music tell us that the various musical tunes, Ragas and Raginis, have each a particular shape, which these books graphically describe. For instance, the Magha Ragha is said to be a majestic figure seated on an elephant. The Vasanta Raga is described as a beautiful youth decked with flowers. All this means that a particular Raga or Ragini, when accurately sung, produces serial etheric vibrations which create the particular shape said to be characteristic of it. This view has recently corroborations from the experiments carried on by Mrs. Watts Hughes, the gifted author of ‘Voice Figures’... (She) sings into a simple instrument, The Eidophone, which consists of a tube, a receiver and a flexible membrane, and she finds that each note assumes a definite and constant shape, as revealed through a sensitive and mobile medium. At the outset... she placed tiny seeds upon the flexible membrane and the air vibrations set up by the notes she sounded danced them into definite geometric patterns. Afterwards she used dusts of various kinds, copodium dust being found particularly suitable. A reporter describing the shape of the notes, speaks of them as remarkable revelations of geometry, perspective and shading; ‘Stars, spirals, snakes, and imaginations rioting in a



wealth of captivating methodical design.’ Such were what were first shown. Once when Mrs. Hughes was singing a note, a daisy appeared and disappeared....She knows the precise inflections of the particular note that is a daisy, and it is made constant and definite by a strange method of coaxing an alteration of crescendo and diminuendo. After the audience had gazed enraptured at a series of daisies, some with succeeding rows of petals, delicately viewed, they were shown other notes and these were daisies of great beauty...exquisite form succeeded exquisite forms on the screen. The flowers were followed by sea-monsters, serpentine forms of swelling rotundity, full of light and shade and details, feeding in miles of perspective....

“While in France, Mme. Finlang’s singing of a hymn to Virgin Mary ‘O Eve Marium’ brought out the form of Mary with child Jesus on Her lap, and again the singing of a hymn to Bhairava (a form of Lord Shiva) by a Bengali student of Banaras gave rise to the formation of the figure of Bhairava with his vehicle, the dog.”

Now this perception of the inherent power of sound, *shabda*, was applied with remarkable success by Indian adepts in Yoga who have reduced their knowledge and experience to an exact Science. The tradition continues to this day and is kept alive by its votaries.

*Editor’s note:* For much more on the subject of mantra and Mantra Yoga see *Soham Yoga: The Yoga of the Self.*]

## II

### Shaucha–Purity

The rules for purifying the body are based on scientific facts as to the annamaya and pranamaya koshas.

The annamaya kosha is composed of solids, liquids and gases, and infinitesimal particles of these are constantly passing off from the body. [Proof of this is the ability of dogs to track the steps of a human being by smell. *Editor.*] Apart altogether from the obvious daily losses sustained by the body in the excrements and sweat, there is this ceaseless emission of minute particles, alike in night and day, whether the body is waking or sleeping. The body is like a fountain, throwing off a constant spray. Every physical object is in this condition, stones, trees, animals, men; all are ceaselessly throwing off these tiny particles, invisible because of their extreme minuteness, and are, as ceaselessly, receiving the rain of particles from others which fill the air in which they live, and which they breathe in with every breath. A continual interchange is thus going on between all physical bodies; no one can approach another without being sprinkled by the other, and sprinkling him in turn, with particles from their respective bodies. Everything a man goes near receives some particles from his body; every object he touches retains a minute portion of his body on its surface; his clothes, his house, his furniture, all receive from him this rain of particles, and rain particles from themselves on him in turn.

The pranamaya kosha, composed of the physical ethers and animated by the life-

energies, affects all around it, and is affected by all around it, not by emitting or receiving particles, but by sending out, and being played upon by, vibrations which cause waves, currents, in the etheric matter. The life-waves, magnetism-waves, go out from each man as ceaselessly as the fine rain of particles from his annamaya kosha. And similar waves from others play upon him, as ceaselessly as the fine rain of particles from others falls on him.

Thus every man is being affected by others, and is affecting them, in the physical world in these two ways: by a rain of particles given off from the annamaya kosha, and by waves given off from the pranamaya kosha.

The object of the rules of shaucha is to make this inevitable influence of one person on another a source of health instead of a source of disease, and also to preserve and strengthen the bodily and mental health of the performer. The annamaya kosha is to be kept scrupulously clean, so that it may send off a rain of health on everyone and everything that is near it; and the pranamaya kosha is to be reached by the mantra-produced vibrations in the etheric matter which permeates the things used in the ceremonies—as etheric matter permeates everything—so that these vibrations may act beneficially on it, and may cleanse and purify it.

The rules affecting bodily cleanliness are definite and strict. On rising, the calls of nature are first to be attended to (Manu Smriti 4.45-52, 56-152), plenty of water being used for cleansing purposes, and then the mouth and teeth are to be washed, and a bath taken.

A man must wash, in some cases bathe the whole body, before taking part in any religious ceremony, and sip water with appropriate mantras. “Being purified by sipping water, he shall always daily worship in the two sandhyas (dawn and sunset) with a collected mind, in a pure place, performing japa according to rule” (Manu Smriti 2.222).

He must wash before and after meals. “Having washed, the twice-born should eat food always with a collected mind; having eaten, let him wash well with water, sprinkling the sense-organs” (Manu Smriti 2.53).

If a man has touched anything impure, a person or an object, “by bathing he is purified” (Manu Smriti 5.85).

“Wisdom, tapasya, fire, mind, water, rites, the sun and time are the purifiers of human beings” (Manu Smriti 5.105).

But no body can be truly pure unless the mind and heart be pure: “The body is purified by water, the mind by truth, the soul by knowledge and tapasya, the intellect by wisdom” (Manu Smriti 5.109).

Further details may be studied in the Smritis, and may be applied by the student to his own life, and having regard to the changed conditions of life. Infectious diseases of all kinds run riot where the rules of individual purity are disregarded, and where houses, clothes and articles in daily use are not scrupulously cleaned. Modern science is re-establishing with infinite labor and pains the facts on which these ancient rules were based, and a clear understanding of the reason for their imposition will render obedience to them willing and cheerful.

### III

## Worship

We have already seen that the work of the devas was recognized and duly honored among the arjans, and that the duty of sacrificing for their support was regularly performed. But the truly religious man's relation with the invisible powers are not confined to these regular and formal sacrifices. Ishwara Himself, the Supreme Lord, will attract the heart of the thoughtful and pious man who sees beyond these many ministers the King Himself, the ruling power of His universe, the life and support of devas and men alike. It is towards Him that love and devotion naturally rise—the human spirit, who is His offspring, a fragment of Himself, seeking to rise and unite himself to his Parent. These feelings cannot find satisfaction in sacrifices offered to devas, connected as they are with the outer worlds, with the Not-Self; they seek after the inner, the deepest, the very Self, and remain craving and unsatisfied until they rest in Him.

Worship is the expression of this craving of the part for the whole, of the separate for the One, and is not only due from man to the source of his life, but is a necessary stage in the evolution of all those higher qualities in the jivatman which make possible his liberation and his union with the Supreme. An object of worship is therefore necessary to man.

That object will always be, to the worshipper, the Supreme Being. He will know intellectually that the object of his worship is a form of manifestation of the Supreme, but emotionally that form is the Supreme—as in truth it is, although the Supreme includes and transcends all forms.

Now a form is necessary for worship. The Nirguna Brahman, the Absolute, the All, cannot be an object of worship. It is not an object, but is beyond all subject and object, including all, inseparable. But from That “words return with the mind, not having reached It” (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.4.1). Words fall into silence, mind disappears; It is all in all.

The Saguna Brahman may be the object of worship for those whose minds are of a metaphysical nature, and who find rest and peace in the contemplation of Brahman in His own nature as Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Universal Self, the One, the Supreme. Such contemplation is worship of a lofty kind, and is peculiarly congenial to philosophic minds, who find in it the sense of peace, rest and unity which they cannot feel in any more limited conception. But to most it is easier to rise to Him through His manifestation as the Lord and Life of His worlds, or through one of the manifestations, as Mahadeva, Narayana, or—more concrete yet—avatars such as Sri Rama or Sri Krishna, or other embodiments. These arouse in them the bhakti, the love and devotion, which the other conceptions fail to stir, and all the tendrils of the human heart wind themselves round such an image and lift the heart into ananda, into bliss unspeakable.

Whether one of these two ways is the better is an oft-disputed question, and the

answerers on either side are apt to be impatient with those on the other, intolerant of the uncongenial way. But the answer has been given with perfect wisdom and all-embracing comprehension by Sri Krishna Himself. Arjuna was troubled by the question five thousand years ago, and asked his divine teacher:

“The constantly steadfast who worship you with devotion, and those who worship the eternal Unmanifest—which of them has the better understanding of yoga?

“The Holy Lord said: Those who are ever steadfast, who worship me, fixing their minds on me, endowed with supreme faith, I consider them to be the best versed in yoga. But those who worship the Imperishable, the Undefinable, the Unmanifested, the Omnipresent (All-pervading), Inconceivable, Unchanging, Unmoving, the Constant—controlling all the senses, even-minded everywhere, happy in the welfare of all beings—they attain to me also.

“Greater is the effort of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest, for the Unmanifest as a goal is truly difficult for the embodied ones to reach. But those who, renouncing all actions in me, intent on me as the highest [goal] worship me, meditating on me with single-minded Yoga. Of those whose consciousness has entered into me, I am soon the deliverer from the ocean of mortal samsara” (Bhagavad Gita 12:1-7).

This is the final answer; both achieve, both gain mukti, but the worship of Ishwara in a form is easier than the worship of Him without a form, and escape from the cycle of rebirth is easier for those who thus worship.

The simplest form of worship is that generally spoken of as puja, in which an image representing some divine form is used as the object, and the being thus represented is adored. Flowers are used as beautiful symbols of the heart-flowers of love and reverence; water is sanctified with a mantra, poured on the image and sprinkled over the worshipper; a mantra, in which the name of the object of worship occurs, is repeated inaudibly a certain number of times, and the invisible bodies are thus rendered receptive of the divine influence, as before explained in the previous section on Mantra. Then the worshipper passes on according to his nature into spontaneous praise or prayer, aspiration and meditation, and becoming oblivious of the external object, rising to the One imaged in that object, and often feeling His presence, becomes suffused with peace and bliss. Such worship steadies the mind, purifies and ennoble the emotions, and stimulates the unfolding of the germinal spiritual faculties.

The use of an image in such worship is often found most helpful, and is well-nigh universal. It gives an object to which the mind can at first be directed and thus steadiness is obtained. If it be well chosen, it will attract the emotions, and the symbols, always present in such an image, will direct the mind to the characteristic properties of the object of worship.

Thus the Shiva Linga is the symbol of the great Pillar of Fire, which is the most characteristic manifestation of Mahadeva, the destroying element which consumes all dross but only purifies the gold. The four-armed Vishnu represents the protecting support of the deity, whose arms uphold and protect the four quarters, and the objects held in the hands are symbols of His creative, ruling, destroying forces, and of the

universe He governs. The Shalagrama is used in the household as the symbol of Vishnu.

When the worshipper passes from the external worship to the internal, the image is reproduced mentally and carries him on into the invisible world, where it may change into a living form animated by the One it represents. [*Editor's Note: In the Appendix I give the process of meditational image worship taught to me by Sri Anandamayi Ma.*] Further, a properly prepared image—sanctified by mantras and by the daily renewed forces of the worshipper's devotion—becomes a strong magnetic center from which issue powerful vibrations, which regularize and steady the invisible bodies of the worshipper, and thus assist him in gaining the quiet and peaceful conditions necessary for effective prayer and meditation.

Apart from these definite uses, the bhakta feels a pleasure in contemplating such an image, similar in kind to, but greater in degree than, any one finds in having with him the picture of a beloved but absent friend.

For all these reasons, no one should object to the use of images in religious worship by those who find them helpful; nor should any one try to force their use on those who are not helped by them. Tolerance in these matters is the mark of the truly religious man.

Another kind of upasana (worship) is meditation. By this a man rises to knowledge; by this he loses himself in the Divine Being he worships; by this he disengages himself from the bonds of action. Without meditation no truly spiritual life is possible.

Manu has declared, after describing the life of the sannyasi: "All this that has here been declared depends on meditation; for no one who does not know the Supreme Self can fully enjoy the fruit of rites."

It is therefore a thing to be looked forward to and prepared for, and every student who desires the higher life should begin his preparation by practicing Yama and Niyama.

## IV The Four Ashramas

The student will have noticed the extremely systematic and orderly arrangement of life which characterizes the Sanatana Dharma. It is in full keeping with this that the whole life should be arranged on a definite system, designed to give opportunity for the development of the different sides of human activity and assigning to each period of life its due occupations and training. Life was regarded as a school in which the powers of the jivatman were to be evolved, and it was well or ill spent according as this object was well or ill achieved.

The life was divided into four stages, or ashramas: that of the Brahmachari, the student, bound to celibacy; that of the Grihastha, the householder; that of the Vanaprastha, the forest-dweller; and that of the Sannyasi, the ascetic, called also the Yati, the controlled, or the endeavorer.

“The Student, the Householder, the Forest-dweller, the Ascetic—these, the four separate orders, spring from the Householder” (Manu Smriti 6.87).

“Having studied the Vedas, or two Vedas, or even one Veda, in due order, without breaking celibacy, let him dwell in the householder order” (Manu Smriti 3.2).

“When the householder sees wrinkles (in his skin) and whiteness (in his hair) and the son of his son, then let him retire to the forest” (Manu Smriti 6.2).

“Having passed the third portion of life in the forests, let him, having abandoned attachments, wander (as an ascetic in) the fourth portion of life” (Manu Smriti 6.33).

This succession is regarded as so important for the due development of the jivatman and the proper ordering of society that Manu says: “A twice-born man who seeks moksha without having studied the Vedas, without having produced offspring, and without having offered sacrifices, goes downwards.”

The offering of sacrifices, we shall see, is the chief duty of the forest-dweller, and therefore indicates the Vanaprastha state.

In rare and exceptional cases a student was allowed to become a Sannyasi, his debts to the world having been fully paid in a previous birth; but these rare cases left the regular order unshaken. Strictly speaking, indeed, even he was not called a Sannyasi, and did not receive the initiations of Sannyasa proper; but was called a Bala-Brahmachari or Naishthika Brahmachari. The great multiplication of young Sannyasis found in modern days is directly contrary to the ancient rules, and causes much vice and trouble and impoverishment of the country.

We will now consider the ashramas in order.

### **Brahmachari (student) ashrama**

The student life began with the Upanayana (investing with the sacred thread—yajnopavita—and initiation into the Gayatri mantra) ceremony, the boy being then committed to the care of his teacher, with whom he lived while his pupilage continued. His life thereafter was simple and hardy, intended to make him strong and healthy, independent of all soft and luxurious living, abstemious and devoid of ostentation. He was to rise before sunrise and bathe and then perform Sandhya during the morning twilight till the sun rose. (If it rose while he was still sleeping, he had to fast during the day, performing japa.) Then he went out to beg for food which was placed at his teacher’s disposal, and was to take the portion assigned to him cheerfully: “Let him ever honor (his) food, and eat it without contempt; having seen it, let him be glad and pleased, and in every way welcome it. Food which is honored ever gives strength and nerve-vigor; eaten unhonored, it destroys both these” (Manu Smriti 2.54-55).

The day was to be spent in study and in the service of his teacher: “Directed or not directed by his teacher, let him ever engage in study, and in doing benefits to his preceptor” (Manu Smriti 2.191).

At sunset he was again to worship—perform Sandhya—till the stars appeared. Then the second meal was taken. Between these two meals he was generally not to eat, and he was enjoined to be temperate as to his food. “Over-eating is against health, long life, (the attainment of) heaven and merit, and is disapproved by the world; therefore let

him avoid it” (Manu Smriti 2.57).

The rules laid down as to his general conduct show how frugality, simplicity and hardiness were enforced, so that the youth might grow into a strong and vigorous man; it was the training of a nation of energetic, powerful, nobly-mannered and dignified men.

“Let him refrain from wine, meat, and from injury to sentient creatures; from lust, anger and greed, gambling, gossip, slander and untruth, and from striking others.

“Let him always sleep alone, and let him not waste his semen; he who from lust wastes his semen, destroys his vow (and its valuable fruits).”

The student will see that all the injunctions of Manu above quoted apply perfectly to the present day.

The great stress laid upon chastity and purity during youth is due to the fact that the vigor and strength of manhood, freedom from disease, healthy children, and long life, depend more on this one virtue of complete continence than on any other one thing, unchastity being the most fertile breeder of disease and premature decay. The old legislators and teachers therefore made a vow of celibacy part of the obligation of the student, and the very name of the student, the brahmachari, has become synonymous with one who is under a vow of celibacy. The purpose of the injunctions quoted above was to keep the lad out of the company and the amusements that might lead him into forgetfulness of his vow, and into temptations for its breach. The simple food, the hard work, the frugal living, all build up a robust body, and inure it to hardships.

Over and over again Manu speaks on this: “Let the wise man exercise assiduity in the restraint of the senses, wandering among alluring objects, as the driver (restrains) the horses” (Manu Smriti 2:88). “Having brought into subjection all his senses, and also regulated his mind, he may accomplish all his objects by yoga, without emaciating his body” (Manu Smriti 2:100).

The Chandogya Upanishad (8.4.3 and 5.1-4) declares that yajna, worship of an ishta-devata, the feeding of the poor, the dwelling in forests, are all summed up in brahmacharya, and that the third heaven of Brahma is only thus obtained.

The practice of self-control and complete continence was rendered much more easy than it would otherwise have been, by the care bestowed on the physical development and training of youth by physical exercises and games of all kinds. In the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, we read of the way in which the youths were practiced in the use of weapons, in riding and driving, in sports and feats of skill. These physical exercises formed a definite part of their education, and contributed to the building up of a vigorous and healthy frame.

### **Grihastha ashrama**

Having thus fulfilled the student period in study and strict chastity, the youth was to present his teacher with a gift, according to his ability, and return home to enter the household life. Then, and then only, was he to take a wife, and the responsibilities of man’s estate. After marriage, great temperance in sexual relations was enjoined,

marital connexion being only permissible on any *one* of ten nights in a month (see Manu Smriti 3.45-49).

Women were to be honored and loved, else no welfare could attend the home: “They must be honored and adorned by fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, desiring welfare. Where women are honored, there verily the devas rejoice; where they are not honored, there indeed all rites are fruitless. Where the female relatives grieve, there the family quickly perishes; where they do not grieve, that family always prospers.” (Manu Smriti 3.55-57). “In the family in which the husband is contented with his wife, and the wife, with the husband, there happiness is ever sure” (Manu Smriti 3.60).

The Grihastha is the very heart of aryan life; every thing depends on him. “As all creatures live supported by air, so the other orders exist supported by the householder” (Manu Smriti 3.77). “Of all these, by the precepts of the Veda-Shruti, the householder is called the best; he verily supports the other three. As all streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the ashramas flow to rest in the householder” (Manu Smriti 3.89-90). Hence the householder is the best of the orders. He has the duty of accumulating wealth—in this the Vaishya is the typical householder—and of distributing it rightly.

Hospitality is one of his chief duties, and in this he must never fail. “The kind word is never lacking in the houses of the good” (Manu Smriti 3.101). “He must ever feed first his guests, Brahmanas, his relatives and his servants, and then he and his wife should eat, but even before these he should serve brides, infants, the sick, and pregnant women” (Manu Smriti 3.114-116).

The householder must daily offer the Five Great Sacrifices. They are offerings for the five orders of sentient beings: 1) worship of devas (gods); 2) offerings for the welfare of departed human souls; 3) human beings—especially the poor, travelers and uninvited guests; 4) non-domesticated, free-roaming animals (this can include insects such as ants); 5) meditation practice—as worship-offering to the Self of the grihastha (also considered as worship of Ishwara). And by Brahmana householders the duty of the monthly shraddhas (rituals for the welfare of departed souls) should be observed (Manu Smriti 4.17).

“The Brahmana should maintain his studies, and not follow occupations which prevent study, but earn his living in some business that does not injure others” (Manu Smriti 4.2). Careful rules are laid down for conduct, which will be dealt with in Part III, as they belong to the general conduct of life, the householder being the typical human being. His special virtues are hospitality, industry, truth, honesty, liberality, charity, purity of food and life. He may enjoy wealth and luxury, provided he gives alms.

### **Vanaprastha ashrama**

The householder may quit the household life and become a vanaprastha (forest dweller), going to the forest when, as before said, he is growing old and has grandchildren. His wife may go with him, or remain with her sons, and he goes forth, taking with him the sacred fire and sacrificial instruments. His duty to the world is



now to help it by prayer and sacrifice, and he is accordingly to continue to offer the five daily sacrifices, together with the agnihotra, the new and full moon sacrifices and others. The rule of his life is to be sacrifice, study, austerity, and kindness to all: “Let him ever be engaged in Veda study, controlled, friendly, collected; ever a giver, not a receiver, compassionate to all beings” (Manu Smriti 6.8).

### **Sannyas ashrama**

This simple ascetic life leads him on to the last stage, that of the Sannyasi, the man who has renounced all. He no longer offers sacrifices, having given all his property away; he lives alone, with trees for shelter, his life given to meditation. “Let him be without fire, without dwelling, let him go to a village for food, indifferent, firm of purpose, a muni of collected mind” (Manu Smriti 6.43).

Then follows a beautiful description of the true Sannyasi: “Let him not wish for death, let him not wish for life, let him wait for the time, as a servant for the order of his master. Let him set feet purified (guided) by sight, let him drink water purified by (being strained through a) cloth, let him speak words purified by truth, let him do acts purified (governed) by reason. Let him endure harsh language, and let him not insult anyone; nor, relying on this (perishable) body, let him make an enemy of anyone. Let him not return anger to the angry, let him bless when cursed; let him not utter lying speech, scattered at the seven gates (*i.e.* speech showing desire for the fleeting and false objects of the five outer senses and manas and buddhi). Rejoicing in the Supreme Self, sitting indifferent, refraining from sensual delights, with himself for his only friend, let him wander here (on the earth), aiming at liberation” (Manu Smriti 6.45-49).

He is to meditate constantly on transmigration and suffering, on the Supreme Self and Its presence in high and low alike, to trace the jivatman through its many births, and to rest in Brahman alone. Thus doing, he reaches Brahman.

### **In sum**

Such were the four Ashramas of Sanatana Dharma, designed for the training of man to the highest ends. In modern days they cannot be completely revived in their letter, but they might be revived in their spirit, to the great improvement of modern life.

The student period must now be passed in school and college, for the most part, instead of in the ashrama of the guru; but the same principles of frugal, hardy, simple living might be carried out, and brahmacharya might be universally observed.

The grihastha ideal, commenced at marriage, might be very largely followed in its sense of duty and responsibility, in its discharge of religious obligations, in its balanced ordering of life, in its recognition of all claims, of all debts.

The third ashrama could not be lived in the forest by many; but the idea of the gradual withdrawal from worldly life, of the surrender of the conduct of business into the hands of the younger generation, of the making of meditation, study and worship the main duties of life—all this could be carried out. And the presence of such aged and saintly men and women would sanctify the whole community, and would serve as a constant reminder of the dignity and reality of the religious life, setting up a noble

ideal, and raising, by their example, the level of the whole society.

[*Editor's Note.* I have seen the vanaprastha ashrama lived in these very times in two places.

The first was in the sacred city of Naimisharanya in the Naradananda Ashram which was comprised of four hundred acres divided into a Brahmacharya Ashram, a Grihastha Ashram, a Vanaprastha Ashram and a Sannyas Ashram. People (including children) were living there, moving from one ashrama to the next. One entire place for the Vanaprastha and Sannyas Ashrams was thickly planted with a kind of giant grass that was about ten feet high, blocking out everything but the sky. In the Vanaprastha Ashram there were cleared areas allotted to each couple. And between them were narrow paths leading to the other vanaprasthas' areas. The vanaprasthas I met were from a prosperous and highly educated background. So I was amazed to see that they were living in clearings about twenty-five or thirty feet square, in the middle of which was a platform about two feet high. On this platform was a thatched hut made of woven mats—all four sides and the slightly pitched roof. There was a "door" made from the same kind of mats. On the platform, at one end of the hut, was a manual water pump. No electricity. That was it. The vanaprasthas I met were cordial, happy and peaceful people, intent on their sadhana. (The sannyasis had only a round clearing twelve or fifteen feet in diameter with a round mat hut about six feet in diameter.)

The second was in Kankhal, just across the Ganga canal between Hardwar and Kankhal. It was actually a moderately large "apartment" complex with a satsang hall on the second floor of one building. One couple living there were old friends of mine from my very first visit to India. When I first met them they were living in Delhi. The husband was a motion picture engineer, a member of the richest family in the state. He and his wife were disciples of a great yogi, Swami Ramananda of Almora. All of Ramananda's disciples were strong yogi-tapaswins, and some years after his mahasamadhi they had bought some land and built the complex named Swami Ramananda Sadhan Dham. (Sadhan Dham means Abode/Home of Sadhana.) My friends lived in a tiny two-room apartment. One room was a kind of living-room kitchen and the other a bedroom. On the living-room kitchen wall there were only two things: a photograph of Swami Ramananda and a framed motto: I Remember Ram and I Live. I Forget Ram and I Die. I met other vanaprasthas there—all peaceful and happy like their Naimisharanya counterparts.

So it can be done right now if someone really wants to.]

### **A way of life leading to immortality**

A life which is well-ordered from beginning to end—that is what is implied in the phrase "the four ashramas." Two of them—namely that of the student and that of the householder—may be said to represent in the life of an individual that outward-going energy which carries the jiva into the pravritti marga. The two later stages—the life of the vanaprastha and that of the sannyasi—are the stages of withdrawal from the world, and may be said to represent the nivritti marga in the life of the individual.

But before that: "He who performs such action as his duty, independently of the

fruit of action, he is a sannyasi and yogi also, not he that is without fire and rites” (Bhagavad Gita 6:1). Such a man lives in the midst of objects of attachment and is yet without attachment, regarding nothing as his own though possessed of wealth. He then becomes the ideal householder, whom the grihastha reflects, and verifies in its fullest sense the dictum of Manu that the householder order is the highest of all because it is the support of all. And the household life is truly lived only where a man sets before himself that high ideal of administrator rather than owner, servant rather than master of all.

So wisely did the ancient ones mark out the road along which a man should tread, that any man who takes this plan of life, divided into four stages, will find his outgoing and indrawing energies rightly balanced. First the student stage, properly lived and worthily carried out; then the householder stage, with all its busy activity in every direction of worldly business; then the gradual withdrawal from activity, the turning inward, the life of comparative seclusion, of prayer and of meditation, of the giving of wise counsel to the younger generation engaged in worldly activities; and then the life of complete renunciation.

In the life of Sannyasa the jivatman lives out his inner detachment and indifference to the prior modes of earthly life, but this detachment and separation are natural and spontaneous, arising from his spiritual vision in which he sees the inner and outer lives as part of the Infinite Life that is Brahman. Thus he is really at one with all life. This is the ultimate stage in life and evolution.

It must not be forgotten that the passing through these ashramas and the reaching of liberation has for its object—as we may see from the stories of mukta in the Puranas and Itihasas—the helping-on of the worlds, and the co-operating with Ishwara in His benevolent administration and His guidance of evolution.

## V The Four Castes

Just as the four ashramas serve as a school for the unfolding of the jivatman during a single life, so do the four castes serve as a similar school for its unfolding during a part of the whole period of its transmigrations.

### **The basis of caste**

It is necessary to see the great principles underlying the caste system in order to estimate its advantages at their proper value; and also in order to distinguish rightly between these fundamental principles and the numerous non-essential, and in many cases mischievous, accretions which have grown up around it, and have become interwoven with it, in the course of ages.

The first thing to understand is that the evolution of the jivatman is divided into four great stages, and that this is true of every jivatman and is in no sense peculiar to those who, in their outer coverings, are arya and Hindu. Jivatmans pass into and out

of the Hindu religion, but every jivatman is in one or other of the four great stages. These belong to no age and to no civilization, to no race and to no nation. They are universal, of all times and of all races.

The first stage is that which embraces the infancy, childhood and youth of the jivatman, during which he is in a state of pupilage, fit only for service and study, and has scarcely any responsibilities.

The second stage is the first half of his manhood, during which he carries on the ordinary business of the world, bears the burden of household responsibilities, so to say, the accumulation, enjoyment and proper disposal of wealth, together with the heavy duties of organizing, training and educating his youngers in all the duties of life.

The third stage occupies the second half of his manhood, during which he bears the burden of national responsibilities, the duty of protecting, guiding and ruling others, and utterly subordinating his individual interests to the common good, even to the willing sacrifice of his own life for the lives around him.

The fourth stage is the old age of the jivatman, when his accumulated experiences have taught him to see clearly the valuelessness of all earth's treasures, and have made him rich in wisdom and compassion, the selfless friend of all, the teacher and counsellor of all his youngers.

These stages are, as said above, universal. The peculiarity of the Sanatana Dharma is that these four universal stages have been made the foundation of a social polity and have been represented by four definite external castes, or classes, the characteristics laid down as belonging to each caste being those which characterize the stage of the universal evolution to which the caste corresponds.

### **Shudra caste**

The first stage is represented by the Shudra caste, in which, as we shall see, the rules are few and the responsibilities light. Its one great duty is that of service; its virtues are those which should be evolved in the period of youth and pupilage—obedience, fidelity, reverence, industry and the like.

### **Vaishya caste**

The second stage is represented by the Vaishya, the typical householder, on whom the social life of the nation depends. He comes under strict rules, designed to foster unselfishness and the sense of responsibility, to nourish detachment in the midst of possession, and to make him feel the nation as his household. His virtues are diligence, caution, prudence, discretion, charity and the like.

### **Kshatriya caste**

The third stage is represented by the Kshatriya, the ruler and warrior, on whom depends the national order and safety. He also lives under strict rules, intended to draw out all the energy and strength of his character and to turn them to unselfish ends, and to make him feel that everything he possesses, even life itself, must be thrown away at the call of duty. His virtues are generosity, vigor, courage, strength, power to rule, self-

control and the like.

### **Brahmana (Brahmin) caste**

The fourth stage is represented by the Brahmana, the teacher and priest, who lives under the strictest of all rules directed to make him a center of purifying influence, physically as well as morally and spiritually. He is to have outgrown the love of wealth and power, to be devoted to study, learned and wise. He is to be the refuge of all creatures, their sure help in time of need. His virtues are gentleness, patience, purity, self-sacrifice and the like.

### **How anyone can determine his caste**

The jivatman who, in any nation, at any time, exhibits outwardly these types of virtues, belongs to the stage of which his type is characteristic and, if born in India as a Hindu, should be born into the corresponding caste. In this age one can only say “should be,” as the castes are now confused and the types are but rarely found. These characteristic virtues form the “dharma” of each caste, but these dharmas are now, unhappily, disregarded.

It is easy to see that the broad dividing lines of classes everywhere follow these lines of caste.

The manual labor class, the proletariat—to use the Western term—should consist of jivatmans in the Shudra stage.

The organizers of industry, the merchants, bankers, financiers, large agriculturists, traders, should be jivatmans in the Vaishya stage.

The legislators, warriors, the judicial and administrative services, the statesmen and rulers, should be jivatmans who are in the Kshatriya stage.

And the teachers, savants, clergy, the spiritual leaders, should be jivatmans in the Brahmana stage.

There are jivatmans of the four types everywhere, and there are social offices of the four kinds everywhere; but now the four types of jivatmans and the four departments of national life—the ashramas—are mixed up in inextricable confusion, so that every nation presents a whirl of contending individuals, instead of an organized community moving in harmony in all its parts.

### **Caste duty/dharma**

Another fundamental principle of caste was that as the jivatman advanced, his external liberty, as seen above, became more and more circumscribed and his responsibilities heavier and heavier.

The life of the Shudra was easy and irresponsible, with few restrictions as to food, amusement, place of residence or form of livelihood. He could go anywhere and do anything.

The Vaishya had to bear the heavy responsibilities of mercantile life, to support needful public institutions with unstinted charity, to devote himself to business with the utmost diligence; and he was required to study, to make sacrifices, to be pure in his

diet, and disciplined in his life.

The Kshatriya, while wielding power, was worked to the fullest extent, and his laborious life, when he was a monarch, would alarm even a diligent king of the present day. The property, the lives of all, were guarded by the warrior caste, and any man's grievance unredressed was held to dishonor the realm.

Heaviest burden of all was laid on the Brahmana, whose physical life was austere and rigidly simple, who was bound by the most minute rules to preserve his physical and magnetic purity, and whose time was spent in study and worship.

Thus the responsibility increased with the superiority of the caste, and the individual was expected to subordinate himself more and more to the community. The rigid purity of the Brahmana was far less for his own sake than for that of the nation. He was the source of physical health by his scrupulous cleanliness, continually purifying all the particles of matter that entered his body, and sending forth a pure stream to build the bodies of others, for health and gladness are contagious and infectious, for the same reasons as disease and sorrow. The rules which bound him were not intended to subserve pride and exclusiveness, but to preserve him as a purifying force, physical as well as moral and mental.

The whole purpose of the caste system is misconceived when it is regarded as setting up barriers which intensify personal pride, instead of imposing rules on the higher classes, designed to forward the good of the whole community. As Manu said: "Let the Brahmana flee from homage as from venom: let him ever desire indignity as nectar" (Manu Smriti 2.162).

### **Scriptural prescriptions**

Let us now study some of the statements made on this subject in the Shruti and Smriti.

The general principle laid down above as to the universality of the four great stages and as to their being founded on natural divisions is enunciated by Sri Krishna: "The four castes were emanated by me, by the different distribution of the energies (attributes) and actions; know me to be the author of them" (Bhagavad Gita 4:13).

It is this distribution which marks out the castes, and it is not, of course, confined to India. But in the land in which settled the first family of the aryan stock, the Manu established a model polity or social order, showing in miniature the course of evolution, and into this were born jivatmans belonging to the different stages, who exhibited outwardly the characteristics of the several castes, and thus formed a truly model state. This was "the golden age" of India, and the traditions of this still linger, the splendid background of her history.

When humanity is symbolized as a vast man or when the Ishwara is spoken of as emanating men, then we have the following graphic picture of the four castes: "The Brahmana was His mouth; the Rajanya (Kshatriya) was made His two arms; His two thighs the Vaishya; the Shudra was born from His two feet" (Rig Veda 10.90.12). The teacher is the mouth, and the ruling power the arms; the merchants are the pillars of the nation, as the thighs of the body, while all rest on the manual worker. As we see

the facts and necessities of social organization, we cannot but recognize the inevitableness of the division, whether it be represented or not by a system of four castes.

The virtues that constitute the four castes are thus described by Sri Krishna: “Of the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas, as also the Shudras, the duties (karmas) are distributed according to the qualities of their swabhava. Tranquility, self-restraint, tapasya, purity (cleanliness), patience, uprightness (honesty; sincerity), knowledge, realization (vijnana), belief in God—these are the duties of Brahmins, born of their swabhava. Valor, splendor (majesty), steadfastness (courage), skill (virtuosity), not fleeing in battle, generosity and lordliness of spirit are the duties of Kshatriyas, born of their swabhava. Agriculture, cow-herding and trade are the duties of the Vaishyas, born of their swabhava, and the Shudras’ duty is doing service, born of their swabhava” (Bhagavad Gita 18:41-44). Thus clearly are outlined the dharmas of the four castes, the qualities which should be developed in each of the four great stages of the pilgrimage of the jivatman through samsara.

Manu explains the occupations of each caste very clearly: “He, the Resplendent, for the sake of protecting all this creation, assigned separate karmas to those born of His mouth, arms, thighs and feet. Teaching and studying the Veda, sacrificing and also guiding others in offering sacrifices, gifts and receiving of gifts, these He assigned to the Brahmanas. The protection of the people, gifts, sacrificing, and study of the Vedas, non-attachment amid the objects of the senses, these He prescribed to the Kshatriyas. The protection of cattle, gifts, sacrificing, and study of the Vedas, commerce, banking, and agriculture, to the Vaishyas. The Lord commanded one karma only to the Shudras, to serve ungrudgingly these castes” (Manu Smriti 1.87-91). Thus the Brahmanas alone might teach the Vedas, but the duty of studying them belonged equally to the three twice-born castes.

A man who did not outwardly follow the dharma of his caste was not regarded as belonging to it, according to the teachers of the ancient days. We have already seen that ignorant Brahmanas were mere ashes, unfit for the discharge of their duties.

And even more strongly Manu says: “As a wooden elephant, as a leathern deer, such is an unlearned Brahmana; the three bear only names” (Manu Smriti 2.157). “The Brahmana who, not having studied the Vedas, labors elsewhere, becomes a Shudra in that very life together with his descendants” (Manu Smriti 2.168). And again: “The Shudra becomes a Brahmana and a Brahmana a Shudra (by conduct). Know this same (rule to apply) to him who is born of the Kshatriya or of the Vaishya” (Manu Smriti 10.65).

So also Yudhishtira taught the fundamental distinctions, without the existence of which caste becomes a mere name: “Truth, gift, forgiveness, good conduct, gentleness, austerity, and mercy, where these are seen, he is called a Brahmana. If these marks exist in a Shudra and are not in a twice-born, the Shudra is not a Shudra, nor the Brahmana a Brahmana. Where this conduct is exhibited, he is called a Brahmana; where this is not, he should be regarded as a Shudra” (Mahabharata, Vana-parvan, 180.21, 25-26).

In the Vishnu Bhagavata we read: “What is said as to the marks of conduct

indicative of a man's caste, if those marks are found in another, designate him by the caste of his marks [and not of his birth]" (Vishnu Bhagavata 7.11.35). Commenting on this Shridhara Swami says: "Brahmanas and others are to be chiefly recognized by Shama and other qualities, and not by their birth alone.... By birth every one is a Shudra. By Samskara he becomes twice-born."

Further it must be remembered: "The Vedas do not purify him who is devoid of good conduct." (Vashishtha Smriti 6.3).

So also we find that the preceptor Haridrumata of the Gotama gotra, approached by Satyakama, desirous of becoming his pupil, asked him his gotra; the boy answered that his mother did not know his gotra, for he was born when she was engaged in waiting on guests [so she did not know who was his father], and he could only go by her name; he was therefore merely Satyakama, the son of Jabala. Haridrumata declared that an answer so truthful was the answer of a Brahmana, and he would therefore initiate him. (Chandogya Upanishad 4.4)

### Change of caste

Much question has arisen as to the possibility of a man passing from one caste to another during a single life. It is, of course, universally granted that a man raises himself from one caste to another by good conduct, but it is generally considered that the conduct bears fruit by birth into a higher caste in the succeeding life. The texts quoted in support of passage from one caste to another will mostly bear this interpretation, just as by degradation from one caste to another rebirth in a lower caste was generally meant.

But there are cases on record of such passage during a single life. The history of Vishwamitra, a Kshatriya, becoming a Brahmana is familiar to every one (see Ramayana, Bala-kanda, 57-65), but equally familiar are the tremendous efforts he made ere he attained his object—a proof of the extreme difficulty of the change. Gargya, the son of Shini, and Trayyaruni, Kavi and Pushkararuni, the sons of Duritakshaya, all Kshatriyas, became Brahmanas, as did Mudgala, son of Bharmyashva, also a Kshatriya, Vitahavya, a Kshatriya, was made a Brahmana by Bhrigu, in whose ashrama he had taken refuge (Mahabharata, Anushasana-parvan, 30).

The truth probably is that changes of caste were made in the ancient days, but that they were rare, and that good conduct for the most part took effect in rebirth into a higher caste. Even the famous sloka: "Not birth, nor Samskaras, nor study of the Vedas, nor ancestry, are causes of Brahmanahood. Conduct alone is verily the cause thereof" (Mahabharata, Vana-parvan, 313.108) may apply as well to rebirth into a higher caste as to transference into it. In ancient days the immediate present was not as important as it is now, the continuing life of the jivatman being far more vividly kept in mind, and the workings of karmic law more readily acquiesced in. Nor were the divisions of castes then felt to be an injustice, as they now are when the dharmas of the castes are neglected, and high caste is accompanied by a feeling of pride instead of by one of responsibility and service.



### **The present day**

Innumerable subdivisions have arisen within the great castes, which have no foundation in nature and therefore no stability nor justification. By these much social friction is caused, and petty walls of division are set up, jealousies and rivalries taking the place of the ancient co-operation for the general good. The circles of inter-marriage become too restricted, and local and unimportant customs become fossilized into religious obligations, making social life run in narrow grooves and cramping limitations, tending to provoke rebellion and exasperate feelings of irritation. Moreover, many of the customs regarded as most binding are purely local, customs being vital in the South which are unknown in the North, and vice versa.

Hence Hindus are split up into innumerable little bodies, each hedged in by a wall of its own, regarded as all-important. It is difficult, if not impossible, to create a national spirit from such inharmonious materials, and to induce those who are accustomed to such narrow horizons to take a broader view of life. While a man of one of the four castes, in the old days, felt himself to be an integral part of a nation, a man of a small sub-caste has no sense of organic life, and tends to be a sectarian rather than a patriot.

At the present time a man of any caste takes up any occupation, and makes no effort to cultivate the characteristic virtues of his caste. Hence the inner and the outer no longer accord, and there is jangle instead of harmony. No caste offers to incoming jivatmans physical bodies and physical environments fitted for one caste more than for another, and the castes consequently no longer serve as stages for the evolving jivatmans. Hence the great value of the Hindu system as a graduated school, into which jivatmans could pass for definite training in each stage, has well-nigh ceased, and the evolution of the human race is thereby delayed.

### **Final conclusions**

The caste system is one on which the student, when he goes out into the world, will find great difference of opinion among pious and highly educated men, and he will have to make up his own mind upon it, after careful study and deliberation. It is the system which Manu considered best for the fifth, or, aryan, race, the Pancha-janas, and in its early days ensured order, progress and general happiness, as no other system has done. It has fallen into decay under those most disintegrating forces in human society—pride, exclusiveness, selfishness, the evil brood of ahamkara wedded to the personal self instead of to the Supreme Self.

Unless the abuses which are interwoven with it can be eliminated, its doom is certain; but equally certain is it, that if those abuses could be destroyed and the system itself maintained, Hinduism would solve some of the social problems which threaten to undermine Western civilization, and would set an example to the world of an ideal social state.

# The Four Purusharthas

The question may well be asked: What is the good of all these institutions of ashramas and varnas, stages of life and caste-classes; of worship, sacrifices, Samskaras; indeed, what is the good of all these visible and invisible worlds, births and rebirths, karma and its consequences; in short, why is there any universe, why is there any life, why do we live, what is the purpose, end, aim, object of life, what is the good of it all?

This question is, no doubt, the question of questions. It is the final question to which all other questions lead up—in which they are all summed up. The answer to it, therefore, is the answer of all answers. The proper understanding of that answer makes it possible to answer all questions that may arise in connection with the human being's life-work. The scriptures therefore duly deal with the question and supply the answer.

We have seen in Section One that behind and beyond everything as the root, source, basis of everything, we have to believe in “the One Existence,” One Supreme Being. Each religion calls It by many names. Different religions and different languages give it different names. In fact, “That Infinite One bears all names whatsoever; It wears all forms that there are in the universe, minutest to vastest; It does all acts, makes all movements, everywhere, in all time” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.6.1-3). Whatever names, forms or acts there are—all belong to It.

The nearest manifestation of It, and the conclusive proof to us of It, is our own consciousness, which appears as self-consciousness: “I Am.” It is not possible to doubt the existence of my Self. In fact, no one ever can, or ever does, doubt It. If any one doubts It, then he, the doubter, is himself It; It exists as the doubter and as the doubt. Behind, beyond, higher, deeper, further than this Ultimate Fact, it is not possible to go. It is the Ultimate Mystery; It is also the immediately clear sun: our Self.

Now this Final Principle of all Life and Consciousness, *as if* for play, amusement, pastime, lila, krida, makes and unmakes, creates and destroys, countless bodies, countless worlds. It, so to say, puts on and puts off appearances just as a human being may put on and put off clothes; or as he may imagine himself now a king and again a beggar, now waking and working, and again sleeping and resting.

This Life-Principle, this Spirit, appears first to descend into matter, and then to re-ascend out of it; to be “born” into a body, to put on a body, to make it grow, then to make it decay, then to cast it off, and, as is said, “die.” This process is repeated endlessly, on all scales of time and space, in minutest atoms and vastest star-systems. Details are sketched, in broad outlines, in the Puranas. This process constitutes what we call chakras, cycles, of involution, evolution, dissolution, re-involution, etc. This has been briefly indicated in Part One of this book. There are many names for the two parts of this cyclical movement.

## The human stage of development

After having passed through very many other living forms referred to before in Part One, Chapter One, the spirit comes to the stage of man. Then it becomes, or rather makes itself, subject to the laws of conscious karma and its consequences.

Now, when the spirit or soul has advanced to a fairly high stage in evolution as man, after many births, it becomes able to ask, and asks itself consciously: What am I? What is all this? Why is all this? What is the meaning and purpose of life?

Slowly it discovers answers, as above, with the help of the teachings embodied in the scriptures by the elders of the race. The “meaning” of life is, as just said, first: play, pastime, lila, krida, then kaivalya, resting quietly in solitude, alone, all-one; first “waking,” then “sleeping,” first “activity,” then “rest.”

The “purpose” of life always is the achievement of happiness, pleasure, joy, bliss. That is clearly the object of “play” as well as “rest.” But, broadly, two kinds of happiness may be distinguished. One is that which arises from contact with the objects of the senses, either in direct or in indirect connection with them. The other is that which arises from complete rest and repose within one’s self, in deep, sound slumber, after tiring of, and retiring from, all sense-objects.

“The rules of conduct, laid down in Vaidika-dharma, are intended to secure both Abhyudaya, worldly joy, and Nihshreyasa, the supreme happiness” (Manu Smriti 12.88). It would be convenient if we called the former by the name of pleasure; and the latter, of happiness; or sense-enjoyment and spiritual bliss respectively.

Because sense-pleasure is not possible without the contrasting background of sense-pain, as light is not possible without darkness, therefore we have pain also in life. “The Supreme Being imposed on all His progeny countless pairs of opposites, beginning with pleasure and pain. All creatures during the period of creative activity are infatuated, crazed, overcome, by the glamor and confusion” (Manu Smriti 1.26). “By desire and aversion rising up through duality’s (dwandwa’s) delusion (moha), at birth all beings fall into delusion” (Bhagavad Gita 7:27).

### **Twofold purpose of life**

In accordance with the meaning and nature of life, the purpose of life becomes twofold; (a) first the securing of pleasure or sense-enjoyment, abhyudaya, prosperity in this world; then (b) the achievement of happiness or spiritual bliss, nihsreyasa, the greatest good. Because the life of the human being is not lived as solitary, but in society, therefore, it is not possible for anyone to achieve either pleasure or happiness without a proper organization of society, and a proper planning out of the individual life. Hence we have the scheme of varnas and ashramas. By the due observance of the rules of this scheme, it becomes possible for every human being to secure a reasonable amount of sense-enjoyment in the first two ashramas, and then gradually to achieve spiritual bliss in the next two.

### **The Tri-varga**

Because refined cultured sense-enjoyment such as befits human beings living in Society is not possible without a reasonable amount of property; and the secure possession and use of such property is not possible without mutual understanding and self-restraint; therefore the purpose of sense-enjoyment, abhyudaya, becomes subdivided into three.

(1) Kama, the pleasure of the senses, and the fine arts, to be rationally enjoyed in the family-life, and as subserved and refined by:

(2) Artha, riches, useful and artistic possessions, property acquired, maintained and used in accordance with:

(3) Dharma, law and religion, which lay down rights and duties.

The order in which the three are usually mentioned is (1) Dharma, (2) Artha, (3) Kama, in order to emphasize the supreme importance of dharma; and then, in the next degree, that of artha, for the preservation and the well-being of society. The next and final purpose, called *niḥśreyasa*, “greatest good, than which there is no greater good,” *summum bonum*, *paramam śhreyah*, is usually not subdivided. Thus we have the three *puruṣārthas*, ends or purposes of life: “what the human being desires.”

The triad of Dharma-Artha-Kama is known as the *Tri-varga*.

### **The Triad of Moksha**

Moksha has its own triad, that of *Sattwa-Rajas-Tamas*; i.e., the transcendence of these three, rising superior to these three, knowing them to be the qualities of the Changeful Many, *Prakriti*, and not of the Changeless Supreme Being, the One Existence, *Paramatman*, the Supreme Self. Another way of explaining this triad of Moksha is that the *Tamas* aspect of it is *bhakti*, universal love; the *Rajas* aspect, *yogaiswarya* (mastery of yoga), *yoga siddhis* (yogic powers), used for the service of living beings; and the *Sattwa*-aspect, *jñāna* or *prajña*, and *virakti* (*vairagya*) or *mukti* proper, extinction of all selfishness, freedom from all selfish desire, and the constant awareness that all life is One Life, though manifesting in conflicting and mutually balancing and neutralizing opposites.

### **The means of accomplishment**

In the light of these four ends of life we can now understand the “good,” the “use,” of all the details of the *Varnasrama Dharma*, *Vaidika Dharma*, *Sanatana Dharma*, or *Manava Dharma*, as it is variously called. They all help us to achieve these ends duly.

*Sanatana Dharma* is so called, because it is the Dharma, the Scheme of Laws, of mutual rights and duties, human and divine, which arises out of the nature of the one and only *Sanatana*, Everlasting—namely the *Paramatman*. “This primeval [Self] is eternal, all-pervading, and immovable” (*Bhagavad Gita* 2:24).

It is called 1) *Vaidika-dharma*, because it is religion based upon *Veda*, “spiritual and scientific knowledge;” 2) *Varnasrama-dharma*, the dharma of *varnas*, vocational class-castes, and of *ashramas*, stages of life; 3) *Manava-dharma*, the Religion of Humanity, ordained by *Manu*, and for all humanity, the race of *Manavas*, “men.”

The main features of this great and comprehensive dharma may be summed up in a Unity, and a few duads, triads, and quartettes thus:

a) *Paramatman* or *Brahman*, “the One without a Second”;

b) *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti*, the One and the Many, the One including countless Seconds;

c) *Ishwara-Jiva-Jagat*, a personal god, souls, and a solar system;

- d) Pravritti and nivritti, evolution and involution, integration and dissolution;
- e) Dwandwas, countless pairs of opposites;
- f) Three gunas, three attributes of matter and three functions of mind;
- g) Three states of consciousness–jagrat, swapna, sushupti, waking-dreaming-slumbering;
- h) Three bodies of man;
- i) Three worlds;
- j) The laws of karma and punarjanma [reincarnation];
- k) Punya [merit] and papa [sin], right and wrong, virtue and vice;
- l) Three rinas, congenital debts:
  - 1) to the rishis (study of the Vedas);
  - 2) to the gods/devas (sacrifices and worship);
  - 3) to the ancestors (to have children);
- m) Four ashramas;
- n) Four castes;
- o) Four Purusharthas, ends of life, which make life intelligible and purposeful to us.

# Part Three

## Ethical Teachings

### I

#### Ethical Science—What It Is

Morality, or Ethics, is the Science of Conduct, the systematized principles on which a man should act. The conduct of man has reference to his surroundings as well as to himself. We have to ascertain what is good in relation to those who form our surroundings, as well as in relation to the time and place of the actor; and we may take a wider and wider view of our surroundings, according to the knowledge we possess. We have also to ascertain what is good for ourselves and in relation to ourselves. What is good for one man may not be good for another man. What is good at one time and at one place may not be good at another time, and at another place.

Ethical Science is therefore a relative Science—it is relative to the man himself and to his surroundings.

The object of morality is to bring about happiness by establishing:

- 1) Harmonious relations between all the jivatmans that belong to any special area;
- 2) Harmonious relations between the members of a family;
- 3) Harmonious relations between the families that make up a community;
- 4) Harmonious relations between the communities that make up a nation;
- 5) Harmonious relations between the nations that make up humanity;
- 6) Harmonious relations between humanity and the other inhabitants of the earth;
- 7) Harmonious relations between the inhabitants of the earth and those of other worlds of the system.

The great circle goes on spreading outwards indefinitely and including larger and larger areas within its circumference. But still, whether the area be large or small, Ethics is “the principles of harmonious relations.” Thus we have family morality, social morality, national morality, international morality, human morality, inter-world morality, and all these concern us. With the yet wider sweeps of the Science of Conduct we are not yet concerned, but the basic principle is the same throughout.

It is obvious that the establishment of harmonious relations between a man and his surroundings, near and remote, means happiness. We are always suffering from the want of harmony, from jarring wishes, from friction between ourselves and others, from the lack of mutual support, mutual assistance, mutual sympathy. Where there is harmony there is happiness; where there is disharmony there is unhappiness. Morality, then, in establishing harmony establishes happiness, makes families and communities and nations and humanity and all dwellers in this and other worlds happy. The

ultimate object of Morality, of Ethics, of the Science of Conduct, is to bring about Universal Happiness, Universal Welfare, by uniting the separated selves with each other and with the Supreme Self. All the Six Darshanas are agreed as to this *summum bonum* of man.

The student must grasp this thought and realize it very clearly. Morality brings about Universal Happiness at last. Let us pause for a moment on this word, "Happiness." Happiness does not mean the transitory pleasures of the senses nor even the more durable pleasures of the mind. It does not mean the satisfaction of the cravings of the upadhis, nor the joys which are tasted in the possession of external objects. Happiness means the deep, inner, enduring bliss which is the satisfaction in the Self. It means perfect harmony, lasting peace.

Happiness is: "When the mind comes to rest, restrained by the practice of yoga, beholding the Self by the Self, he is content in the Self. He knows that endless joy which is apprehended by the buddhi beyond the senses; and established in that he does not deviate from the truth (*tattwatah*: thatness). Having attained this, he regards no other gain better than that, and established therein he is not moved by heaviest sorrow" (Bhagavad Gita 6:20-22).

Nothing less than this is Happiness, and this is the happiness which Morality brings about. The student must not allow his clear vision of this truth to be clouded by superficial appearances, which seem to be at variance with it. However difficult and painful it may sometimes be to do right; however tiresome and burdensome obedience to moral precepts may sometimes be; none the less, in the long run, doing right means to be happy, and doing wrong means to be miserable. "As the wheels of the cart follow the ox," said the great Indian teacher, the Buddha, "so misery follows sin." Thus also speak all the shastras.

All this is inevitable, as we shall see later on.

We have spoken of harmony, of happiness, of right, of wrong, and of the inhabitants of the earth and those of other worlds of the system.

But if we are to go to the root of things, to first principles, we cannot but seek the help of religion. For religion gives us the ultimate data upon which Ethical Science may be built. Morality has only one basis on which it is built up, as a house is built on its foundation. And just as a house will become crooked and fall if it be built on a shaky foundation, so will any morality fall which is not built on that sound basis.

## II

### The Foundation of Ethics, As Given by Religion

The first thing we learn from religion is the Unity of all Selves, and this is the foundation of Ethics. Ethics is built upon:

## The Recognition of the Unity of the Self Amid the Diversity of the Not-Self.

There is but One Self, and all the separate selves are *amsha*, parts or reflections of the One—are the One. “As the sun alone illumines this entire world, so the Lord of the field illumines the entire field” (Bhagavad Gita 13:33). “One God is hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the inmost Self of all” (Swetashwatara Upanishad 6.11).

One sun is shining, and it shines into every separate place, every separate enclosure. There may be a thousand gardens, separated from each other by high walls, but the one sun shines into all, and the light and heat in each are from the one sun, are parts of himself. So the jivatmans in all creatures, separated from each other by the walls of prakriti, the walls of their bodies, are rays from the one sun, sparks from the one fire, portions of the one Atman, the one Self.

We cannot fully realize this, be conscious of it and live in it always, until we have become perfectly pure; but we can recognize it as a fact, as the one all-important fact, and in proportion as we try to make our conduct accord with this fact, we shall become moral. We shall see, as we study morality, that all its precepts are founded on this recognition of the unity of the Self. If there is only one Self, any act by which I injure my neighbor must injure me. A man will not deliberately cut his hand, or his foot, or his face, because all these are parts of his own body, and though a cut on his hand does not directly make his foot ache, he feels the pain from any part of his body. The foot, being ignorant and limited, is not conscious at once of the wound made in the hand, but the man is conscious of it, and will not let the foot carry his body into a place where the hand will be injured. Of course the foot ultimately suffers from the general fever of the whole body caused by a severe injury to any part of it, as ignorance of the unity of the body does not alter the fact of unity. And so the man who believes that the Self is one, in him and in all others, also necessarily believes that in injuring any part he is injuring himself, though, being limited and ignorant, he may not then feel it; and he learns to look on all as parts of one body, and on his innermost Self as the One who uses that one body, and lives and moves in all.

If we could realize this, feel it always, there would be no need of any Science of Conduct, for we should always act for the highest good of all; but as we do not realize it, and feel it very seldom, we need rules of conduct which are all based on this principle, to prevent us from injuring others and ourselves and to help us to do good to others and ourselves.

The great rishis, knowing the supreme fact that the Self of all beings is one, based on this all their precepts, and on this rock they built the morality they taught. The authoritative declarations of the Shruti on general morality are final because based on this fact, and they can be defended by reason and shown to be of binding and universal obligation.

All the laws of nature are expressions of the Divine Nature, and, as one of the aspects of that Nature is chit, the reason can grasp and verify them. They are supremely rational, nay reason itself, and reason in man is fitly concerned with their



study. Now “the reason” must not be confused with the process of reasoning—the passing from one link of an argument to another by logical sequence. This process is only one of the functions of the reason, and is called the ratiocinative faculty, and belongs to the concrete reason, the lower mind. “The reason” is chit and includes all mental processes, concrete and abstract, the perception in the higher as well as in the lower worlds, direct clear vision of truths as of objects. As knowledge is the rightful source of authority, and as the knowledge of the rishis was the product of their reason, working in assonance with the Divine Reason, the Shruti, given to the Hindus through the rishis, are authoritative. Their authority is thus based on reason, on the Divine Wisdom primarily, and on the illuminated human reason secondarily. The rishis, as we saw in the Introduction, have modified the Shruti to meet the needs of special ages, for precepts useful at one time are not useful at another. It is further possible by the use of the reason to distinguish between precepts of universal and those of local and temporary obligation.

The system of morality inculcated in the Sanatana Dharma may therefore be said to be authoritative; for being founded on the recognition of the unity of the Self, and drawing its precepts and its sanctions from that supreme fact, it is capable of appealing to and being verified by the reason, and a perfect harmony can be established between the commands of the Shruti and the dictates of the reason.

This harmony has prevented the arising in India of independent ethical schools such as have arisen in the West, the doctrines of which become familiar to students in their studies in Western moral philosophy.

The scriptures of other nations, which have not stated clearly the unity of the Self, have necessarily been unable to state clearly the highest sanction for morality, and have directed reliance mainly to a divine authority, the source of which is not universally seen as identical in nature with the spirit (jivatman) in man. Hence a certain divorce between authority and reason, injurious to both, and this divorce has led to the growth of two ethical schools that stand in opposition to authoritative, *i.e.*, scriptural morality, and also in opposition to each other.

One of these schools, the intuitionist, finds its basis for morality in intuition, in the dictates of the conscience, but fails to escape from the difficulties involved in the variations of conscience with racial and national traditions, social customs and individual development.

The second, the utilitarian, has its ethical basis in “the greatest good of the greatest number,” but fails to justify the exclusion of the minority from its canon, and to supply a sanction of sufficiently binding force. Besides, what constitutes “the greatest good of the greatest number” is always a debatable point; hence the “canon” is useless as a practical guide.

The student can study these systems in the works of their exponents, and he will do well to understand that the reconciliation of these schools lies in the recognition of the unity of the Self, and the consequent completion of the partial truths on which these are based. He will then see that this principle affords to the teachings of the scriptural school their proper support in reason; that this supplies the intuitionist with the

explanation of the variations of conscience, which is the voice of the jivatman, and depends on the stage of evolution reached and the experiences assimilated; that this shows to the utilitarian that there is no ultimate good for any which is not also good for all, that there is no question of majority and minority, but of unity, and that the sanction of morality lies in this very unity of interests, this identity of nature.

We have, then, as the basis of morality in the Sanatana Dharma, the recognition of the unity of the Self, and therefore the establishment of mutually helpful relations between all separated selves. Every moral precept finds its sanction in this unity, and we shall presently see that the universal love, which is the expression of the unity, is the root of all virtues, as its opposite is the root of all vices.

Universal brotherhood has its basis in the unity; men are divided by their upadhis, both dense and subtle, but they are all rooted in the one Self. Only this teaching, when generally realized, can put an end to wars and serve as a foundation for peace. This alone can eradicate racial and national hatreds, put an end to mutual contempt and suspicion, and draw all men into one human family, in which there are elders and youngers, indeed, but no aliens.

Nor, indeed, can the brotherhood based on the unity of the Self be limited to the human family. It must include all things within its circle, for all, without exception, are rooted in the Self. In the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita Sri Krishna declares: "I am the Self abiding in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings as well" (10:20).

He then names himself as many objects, as sun and moon, as mountain and tree, as horse and cow, as bird and serpent, and many others, and sums up in one all-embracing declaration: "Also I am that which is the seed of all beings. There is nothing that could exist without existing through me—neither animate nor inanimate" (Bhagavad Gita 10:39).

Over and over again He insists on the all-importance of this recognition of the unity of the Self and of the presence of the Self in each and all. "He who sees the Supreme Lord existing in all beings equally, not dying when they die—he sees truly. Truly seeing the same Lord existing everywhere, he injures not the Self by the [lower] self. Then he goes to the Supreme Goal. When he perceives the various states of being as resting in the One, and their expansion from that One alone—he then attains Brahman" (Bhagavad Gita 13:27-28, 30).

All human relations exist because of this unity, as Yajnavalkya explained to his wife Maitreyi when she asked of him the secret of immortality: "Behold! not indeed for the love of the husband is the husband dear: for the love of the Self is the husband dear" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.6.1).

And so with wife, sons, property, friends, worlds and even the devas themselves. All are dear because the One Self is in all. "Behold! not for the love of the all the all is dear, but for the love of the Self verily the all is dear" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.5.6).

"Having known the Auspicious, the exceedingly subtle, hidden in all beings, like butter in cream, having known the Supreme God, the one Pervader of the universe, he is freed from bonds" (Sveshavatara Upanishad Upanishad 4.16).

But it is useless to multiply texts, when the Shruti at every step proclaims the truth. In this and in this alone is the sure basis of morality, for this unity of the Self is the real cause and explanation of love. One Self, embodied in many forms, is ever seeking to draw the forms together in order to again realize Its own unity. This is why the recognition of the unity of the Self by the reason, which is wisdom, shows itself in a world of separate forms as love. So also the manyness of the Not-Self is the cause and explanation of hate, each separate form setting itself up against others. The full significance of this will be seen by the student on maturer study; but he should grasp the fact—which will become clearer as we proceed—that all virtue, all that is good, is the immediate result of the pure love which springs from recognizing the unity of the Self, and that all vice, all that is evil, similarly arises from disregard of this truth, and from the feeling that the Self is not one, but many, as the bodies are many.

### III

## Right and Wrong

The student will remember the description of the triloki in Part One. At the beginning of a new triloki, life-evolution begins. This evolution takes place in all the three worlds, but we may confine ourselves to our earth.

First the life-forms appear. The Puranas speak in veiled words as to how sheath after sheath encloses the life; under the influence of the five forms of avidya (avidya, asmita, raga, dwesha and abhinivesha) we have the process of manifestation, till we find all the forms of creation manifested on our earth. During this process, the idea of multiplying governs all beings. This idea breaks through the innate inertia, the remnant of pralaya tendency with which all beings start. This idea becomes refined and is then called pravritti, or inclination, the desire for objects; the world is then on the pravritti marga, the path of “going forth.”

Beings become materialized, and as they become consciously separate their self-seeking tendencies become very strong. Every such being forms a world in himself, and tries to exclude others. Men live for enjoyment, and they care for the present only. The idea of separateness develops intellect, which works from the standpoint of individuality. This element is necessary in man in order to bring out his individual faculties, and to cultivate them in such a way as will make the intellectual development fairly complete.

But the idea of separateness becomes after a while a drawback to further progress. Man has gradually to transcend it. He has to recognize the unity of all selves and, in practice, to do everything that helps to strengthen the recognition of that unity, and at last makes that recognition a part of his life. This may be called the process of spiritual evolution, and man is then on the nivritti marga, the path of return.

Lastly, pralaya comes and the end of the Brahmanda.

During all but the latest stages of the pravritti marga that which favors separateness is Right, and that which goes against it is Wrong.

Then follows a transition stage, preparing man to enter on the nivritti marga; during that, and on the nivritti marga, that which favors the tendency towards unity is Right, and that which goes against it is Wrong.

When the time of pralaya comes all that helps it will be Right, all that opposes it Wrong.

### **Practical definition of Right and Wrong**

Speaking generally, that which is suitable to the stage of evolution which the world has reached, that which helps it onwards, is Right; that which obstructs and hinders evolution is Wrong. For the will of Ishwara points steadfastly to the highest good, and guides His universe towards good. To work with this will is to be in harmony with the great movement of the world-system, and thus to be carried on with the stream of evolution; while to go against it is like beating against an overwhelming current, which dashes us against the rocks, bruises and wounds us. To do right is to be at peace with ourselves and with God, and is therefore happiness; to do wrong is to be at war with ourselves and with God, and is therefore misery. Hence bad people tend to become, after a time, discontented, irritable, unsatisfied, however outwardly favorable may be their circumstances; while the good are inwardly at peace and contented, even when their outer circumstances are very unfavorable. Here again the essential fact is the same, for the will of Ishwara, being guided by the highest wisdom and love, ever necessarily and constantly points to the highest good—the more and more perfect realization of the unity of the Self amid the endless diversity of forms.

Let us look further into this matter, as the question is all-important.

For this purpose we have to refer back again to the nature of evolution described before. This evolution of the jiva gives rise to that variety of relations and situations between jiva and jiva, out of which the actions arise to which the epithets “right” and “wrong” become applicable; and therefore the nature of “right” and “wrong” depends upon the nature of the scheme of evolution to which the jivas concerned belong, and cannot be described independently of that scheme.

### **Evolution in a world-system**

We have gathered from the first part of this work what evolution means. Generally speaking, a world-system has a life in the same way as a single human being; and as a single human being grows in physical life for the first half of his life-time and decreases in respect thereof during the second half, so too a world-system, a Brahmanda, grows more and more material during the first half of its life, the purvardha or prathama-parardha of the kalpa, and more and more spiritual during the second half or dwitiya-parardha thereof. This process from birth to death, from death to a higher birth, from that to a deeper death and thence again to a still higher birth—repeated endlessly—is the general plan of life and evolution.

In our own world-system, the process takes the shape of a gradual descent of spirit into the dense matter of the mineral kingdom and a reascent therefrom through the arvaksrotas or the vegetable kingdom, the tiryaksrotas or the animal kingdom, the

urdhvasrotas or men, and higher forms, into the realized union of mukti. Coming into still minuter detail we find that amongst men the process reappears as the descent of the primeval and simple-minded childlike human races, governed and guided by divine beings, through growth of materialism and the sense of separateness, and consequent selfishness and exclusiveness in the appropriation of the stores of nature and the gifts of Providence, into the condition of ever-warring tribes. Then a slow re-ascent therefrom, through despotic and military government, to constitutional monarchy and organized society, to reach at last those distant and happy times of universal brotherhood when unselfishness and altruism shall reign supreme, and men will see their common unity far more than their separateness from each other.

Finally, in the individual jiva, we see that evolution, or the life-process, appears as the gathering of experience and information in the first years after birth, then the utilization of that experience for the founding of a family, then the instruction of the new generation and the helping of them to take up the life of the householder themselves, and ultimately retirement from life into sannyasa and the peace of renunciation and of a happy death.

Such being the general order of evolution, that course of conduct which helps it on is Right; all else is Wrong. If we have to go to a certain place, then all elements that make the journey easier and help us to move forward in that direction are good; all obstacles that make it more difficult and retard our progress are evil. If we had a different goal, if we were desirous of going to a place in the exactly opposite direction, then the first-mentioned elements, which would be taking us away from our new goal, would become evil. So long then as we are on the line of our present evolution, the actions that help us forward on it are good and right, and the opposite ones evil and wrong. And in order to find out what is right conduct and what is wrong in any particular situation, we must judge it according to its conduciveness or otherwise to the particular end in view, and judge the particular end again with reference to its congruity with the general goal of human evolution. Without such reference, it is impossible to say what is right and what is wrong. With such reference, on the other hand, we may map out easily the details of our path in life and through evolution and then we shall have at every step a standard of right and wrong by which to guide our actions.

### **The teachings of the rishis**

These details have been supplied to us, out of their knowledge and compassion, by the ancient sages and seers—the rishis. They have left to us a complete outline of the scheme of evolution of our world-system, and have also left to us general rules for so dealing with our own life and the lives of others, not only of the human but also of the lower kingdoms, that the advance of all jivas through the various stages of evolution, mineral, vegetable, animal, human, celestial, etc., shall be made as easy as possible. These general facts and rules are outlined in the various parts of this work.

For instance, the rules of the four ashramas are dictated by the facts and laws of individual evolution; and the rules of the four castes by the facts and laws of human

evolution at large, in the middle stage of law-governed state and social organization and division of labor.

The conditions of the four castes and the four ashramas consist of all the possible situations in the whole life of the present-day humanity, and the Sanatana Dharma therefore provides general rules for all such situations, grouping them into general classes.

### **Varnashram Dharma necessary and natural to all**

The casual observer might think that because there are no expressly recognized castes and ashramas amongst many nations of modern humanity, therefore general conditions are radically different for different nations; but this is not so. Though not expressly recognized, the divisions themselves are to be found everywhere, under other names and forms it may be, but still in all the races of the present day; and that they are not expressly recognized is in some respects productive of inconvenience and waste of time and trouble, economically speaking, to those nations, even as over-recognition and exaggeration are productive of inconvenience and mischief here in India.

The natural conditions of the present evolution unavoidably force upon humanity the relations of teacher and student, ruler and ruled, producer and consumer, master and servant, parent and son, husband and wife, brother and sister, worker and pensioner, employer and employed, soldier and civilian, agriculturist and tradesman, layman and priest, householder and recluse. The Sanatana Dharma, instead of leaving these relations to vague and groping experiments, rationally orders and systematizes them, and teaches generally the duties and virtues proper to each relation and situation, with the injunction that the duties and virtues of two different relations and situations should never be mixed up together indiscriminately, for thus great danger and confusion result: "Better is one's swadharma, though deficient, than the swadharma of another well performed. Better is death in one's own swadharma. The swadharma of another brings danger" (Bhagavad Gita 3:35).

If a king, in the exercise of his office, come to behave as a merchant, and instead of exercising the king's virtues exhibit those of the tradesman; if a judge, in the decision of a case, instead of being guided by the virtue of justice, show active physical fighting as a soldier, or compassion as a priest; if a priest, in his ministrations, behave as an executioner; if one who should be a Brahmachari or a Grihastha in the ordinary course, should without good special reason, become a Vanaprastha or a Sannyasi, or vice-versa; if one who is fitted by nature to be a soldier should become a merchant, or one fitted for study only should take up the work of agriculture—then the whole economy of the state and the nation would be more or less disturbed.

What is right then in one situation is not right in another; and the most general definition that can be given of right and wrong is, that right conduct is that which helps on a known scheme of evolution, to its recognized goal, and wrong conduct is the opposite.

### **An example**

For an instance of how the epithets right and wrong may be applied to the very same action looked at from different points of view, take this case. Two men come together: one confines the other in a closed house by force, takes away all liberty of movement from him, and also all moveable property he may have about him, and places it in the possession of others who help and obey him. This act taken by itself, without any reference to previous facts, is wrong; it hinders the life and evolution of the man confined and that of his family and dependants; in fact it amounts to robbery with wrongful confinement of an aggravated character. But suppose that the man confined had forcibly deprived a third person of some property, and the man who ordered his confinement was a judge, and the closed house a public jail, then the same act becomes the rightful imprisonment of a thief, and the removal of property from his person a necessary act of prison-discipline, all of which is perfectly right and even necessary, for thereby the evolution of society and of the thief himself is generally helped. But yet again, if the imprisoned man had forcibly deprived the other of property not belonging to that other, but to himself, property which that other had stolen, then the action of the judge becomes wrong again, and his order reversible on appeal to a higher judge.

### **For all everywhere**

It is the same on a larger scale in the larger life of the world. The Puranas say that in the beginning of the world, when the immediate object was to multiply the human population and engage it in the life of the household, Daksha Prajapati created certain classes of children, the Haryashvas, etc. The rishi Narada, whose duty it is to bring about certain adjustments of good and evil forces and generally to promote the life of renunciation in our world, commenced his work too soon, and persuaded the Haryashvas to avoid the life of the household and take up the life of the recluse. His action, because of its inopportuneness, was found to be wrong, and he was punished by a curse under which he himself had to be born in the animal and human kingdoms and lead the life of the household with other jivas. So, again, in the earliest days of the race, the worship of Brahma, the embodiment of rajas and action, the cause of sarga, creation, was enjoined. Later on, the worship of Vishnu, the embodiment of sattwa, knowledge and love, the cause of sthiti, maintenance, becomes appropriate. In the last days of a cycle, the worship of Shiva, the embodiment of tamas, vairagya or self-sacrifice and renunciation, the cause of the pralaya, the dissolution of the material world, finds place.

Thus we see that right and wrong are always relative to the surrounding circumstances. If it were necessary to define them generally, without such reference, then the nearest approach to accuracy is to be found in the Sanskrit verse which is on the lips of all Sanskrit-knowing Indians: “Vyasa has said but two things in the whole of the eighteen Puranas: Doing good to another is punya, (right); causing injury to another is papa (wrong).”

As a general rule, when one jiva helps another, makes him happy, then, whether he wish it consciously or not, that happiness comes back to him by the law of action and

reaction; this is expressed by the rule that punya brings happiness. Exactly similar is the case as regards misery and papa.

### **The three gunas in the evolutionary process**

The three processes of creation, preservation and dissolution which have just been described are based upon the three fundamental attributes of the matter side of nature, or prakriti: sattwa, rajas and tamas. To begin with, we have pralayaic inertia due to tamas influencing the matter, or prakritic, side of jivas. Then we have kamic and manasic activity, developing the emotions and the intellect. This is due to the prevalence of rajas, acting on the prakritic basis of jivas. Lastly we have a tendency to free ourselves from distraction, from desires for objects, from selfish pursuits, and to attain calm, peace and bliss, whatever be the outer surroundings at any time. This spiritual evolution is brought about by the prevalence of sattwa in us. Then, on the eve of pralaya tamas overtakes us once again.

Every man has in him a predominance of sattwa, or rajas, or tamas, and his development depends upon the relative proportions of each of these attributes. When a man is predominantly tamasic, he is indolent, inactive, dull and ignorant.

He requires at first a rajasic development. Anything that draws him out, attracts curiosity, and makes him active, is good and right for him. The constant rebuffs and touches of joy that he gets in his active life, the accumulation of painful and pleasurable experiences, develop his intellect.

Under rajasic predominance, a man is eager in material pursuits, his intellect soars high and spreads wide, he goes backwards and forwards, his cravings ever increasing, and his efforts to satisfy them take him through different intellectual channels. Action becomes the rule of his nature. Self—the personal self—becomes the center of all his actions. Like (raga) and dislike (dwesha) are the motive powers which drive him in his actions.

When sattwa asserts itself, man begins to realize the littleness of efforts directed towards the personal self, the transitoriness of worldly aspirations, the unrest and disquietude attending all actions. He takes a calm and broad view of all things. He discriminates between the real and the unreal, the lasting and the fleeting, the bliss eternal and the pleasures of the moment. He loves peace, calm, and quietude.

### **Universal application**

Every man has thus his own evolutionary stage, which is generally indicated by the circumstances attending his birth, but more precisely by the attributes which characterize him. Though particular rules may be laid down for the particular stages of development of a man, such as the varna and ashrama rules of old, yet for the average civilized man in general, some rules of conduct may also be laid down, and these form the general rules of Ethics.

We have now to see how on the basis above sketched a Science of Conduct is built up, a Science which cannot be overrated as to its importance.

For this Science of Conduct is, in truth, considering its relations to human



happiness, the most important study in many ways that can engage human attention; and it is one which to the youth is all-important in its bearing on his own future. For character is that which tells most in human life, and on it chiefly depend both inner happiness and outer success. We have already seen that virtue and happiness are bound up together, and in the life of the world, character is that on which lasting success depends. A man of a brilliant intellect may carry all before him for a time, but if he be found to be a man of bad character, his fellows cease to trust him and he falls into discredit. In every walk of life, character is the thing most sought after and most trusted, and a man of good character is respected and admired everywhere.

The time of youth is the time for improving character, the time when the germs of vices can most easily be eradicated, and the germs of virtues can most easily be cultivated.

Each comes into the world with a character made by his past, and he must work upon this character, his self-created friend or foe. He can work on it at the greatest advantage if he understands clearly what he should aim at and by what means his aim can be reached. He needs to understand the roots of virtues and vices, to learn how to distinguish one from the other, to learn how to cultivate virtues and how to eradicate vices, as a gardener cultivates flowers and eradicates weeds. For each man has a garden in himself, and should learn to be a skillful gardener.

## IV

### The Standard of Ethics

We have already seen that the measure used in Ethics at the present stage of evolution, by which the rightness or wrongness of an action is decided, is the tendency of the action to promote or to hinder Union. The whole tendency of evolution at the present stage is towards the assertion of the unity of all selves, to seek the one Life amidst the diverse forms of life, and thus to follow the path that leads to Union, *i.e.*, the path of Truth. The standard of Ethics is in other words to unite and not to divide. We can unite by the establishment of harmonious relations between all the jivatmans.

It may now be seen why it is said in the first chapter that the object of morality is to bring about happiness by establishing harmonious relations. The “establishment of harmonious relations” which is said above to be the work of Ethics, is now seen to be the leading of the different parts of the great human body to work in harmony with each other. It is no mere figure of speech that all races of men, all nations, make up one great Man; it is a fact. “Purusha,” the Inner Man, the Self, is indeed Purushottama, the Lord, Ishwara Himself. But there is also the Purusha which is His body, and this is Humanity as a whole, and each separate being is a cell in that vast body. All the troubles which make us unhappy, the wars between nations and the quarrels between individuals, the poverty and starvation, the competition and the crushing of the weak, and the countless evils round us, are all diseases of this great body, due to the parts of it getting out of order, and working separately and competitively without a common

object, instead of working together as a unity for the good of the whole.

The moral tendencies of man were classified by Sri Krishna under two broad divisions: divine qualities (daivi sampad) and demonic qualities (asuri sampad). Under daivi sampad, Sri Krishna placed the virtues that go towards bringing about harmonious feelings amongst all beings, towards accentuating a feeling of unity and friendliness, towards securing peace and calm, in fact towards carrying out the law of evolution in its entirety.

“Fearlessness, purity of being, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga [jnana yoga], almsgiving, self-control, sacrifice, self-study (swadhyaya), tapasya, and straightforwardness, non-violence, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquility, without calumny (slander), compassion for beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigor, patience (forbearance), fortitude (courage), purity, absence of hatred (malice), absence of pride—they are the endowment of those born to a divine state” (Bhagavad Gita 16:1-3).

Under asurisampad he placed all the opposite vices—all that tends to divide the jivatmans, and to accentuate the feeling of egotism, of the separated self. He described as asuric those qualities which have their root in and grow out of the delusion of separateness. “Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with the intoxication of wealth, they sacrifice in name only, with hypocrisy (for show), not according to the prescribed forms. Clinging to egotism, power, haughtiness, desire and anger, these malignant people hate me in their own and in others’ bodies. Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the Self: desire, anger and greed. Therefore one should abandon (renounce) these three” (16:17-18, 21).

The whole of chapter sixteen of the Bhagavad Gita should be carefully pondered by the student in this connection.

## V

### Virtues and Their Foundation

#### **The Law of Yajna**

The establishment of harmonious relations means mutual sacrifice of the personal selves. It means that all beings should realize that they form component parts of one Being, and that they must all subordinate themselves to the life of that One Being. Just as there are innumerable cells in the body, but each cell-life subordinates itself to the one life that pervades the whole body, so the life of every being is to be subordinated to the life of the Ishwara of the universe. Different cells have different functions to perform, but each function is a part of the general function of the whole body. As each cell has its fixed place in the body, so each being has a definite place in the universe. There is one general life-current that pervades all beings, and the life of each individual has to conform to the One Life, the life of the One Self, Ishwara. This is the limitation under which we all work, and this limitation is the law of our very being; all beings are mutually linked to one another, and the links impose mutual relations and mutual

sacrifices. All beings are dependent on one another, and they are all dependent on the one great Life. This law of interdependence, of mutual sacrifice, is known as Yajna, and has already been explained in Parts One and Two.

Whatever actions we do, we ought to do them for the sake of Yajna. Thus only can we follow the Great Law. If a man lives for self, and makes an independent center in himself, overlooking the one great center of the universe, he creates bonds for himself and suffers therefrom. "The world is bound by the actions not done for sake of sacrifice. Hence for sacrifice you should act without attachment" (Bhagavad Gita 3:9).

We have seen that the different classes of beings linked together in this universe are five: the devas, the pitris, the rishis, men and animals, and that sacrifices to these classes are a duty, which every man performing actions is bound to discharge. For when sacrifice is imposed by law, there is an obligation to perform it, and hence the performance becomes a duty.

### **The nature of Duty**

In its exact ethical sense duty means an action which is due, which ought to be done, which is owed; it is an obligation to be discharged. Nature is ever restoring disturbed equilibrium, and the universal law of karma, of action and reaction, is the full statement of this fact. She is always balancing her accounts. Duties are the debts a man owes to his fellows, paid to discharge the obligations under which he lies for benefits received. While five duties are mentioned for the purposes of the five daily sacrifices, three of these are called the debts in a specific and larger sense, as permeating the man's whole life. They are the debt to the rishis; the debt to the ancestors; and the debt to the devas. "Having studied the Vedas according to the rules, having begotten sons according to righteousness, having offered sacrifice according to his power, let him turn his mind to moksha" (Manu Smriti 6.36).

The three twice-born castes were directed to pay these debts by passing through the three ashramas, brahmacharya, grihasthya and vanaprastha, each of which, it will be seen, answers to one of the above three duties. The debt to the rishis was paid by studying the Vedas, serving the teacher in the brahmacharya ashrama and by teaching others; the debt to the ancestors was paid by rearing a family and discharging the duties of grihasthya, including danam, charitable gifts; the debt to the devas was paid by yajnam, sacrifice, chiefly in vanaprastha. Sannyasa, the fourth ashrama, sums up the three others on the highest level. For the youngest caste, the shudra, only shushrusha, service, was prescribed as summing up all duties in a single word. Looked at truly, service of the world includes all duties for the highest sannyasi, for he has nothing left to gain for himself. Thus the duty of the youngest becomes also the duty of the eldest, but in the latter case on a much higher level.

We may illustrate the idea of duty by the relation of father and son. The father received in his childhood protection and care from his own parents, and thus incurred a debt; he pays this as parental duty to his son, to whom he, in turn, has given a physical body, which requires from him the fostering care bestowed on his own in his infancy and childhood. The son, having received his body from the father, has the duty of

serving him with that body, and is also incurring a debt during his helpless years to be paid in time to his own children.

### **Virtue and Vice**

Now the quality which dictates the fulfillment of a duty is called a virtue; that which prompts the non-fulfillment, or violation of it, is called a vice. Happiness in any relation depends on the parties to the relation fulfilling their duties to each other; that is, on their practicing the virtues which are the fulfillment of the duties of the relation. Unhappiness in any relation results if one or both of the parties do not fulfill their duties to each other; that is, if they practice the vices which are the non-fulfillment of the duties of the relation. A father and son are happy with each other if the father shows the virtues of tenderness, protection, care for the well-being of the son, and the son shows the virtues of obedience, reverence and serviceableness. A father and son are unhappy if the father shows the vices of harshness, oppression, neglect, and the son shows the vices of disobedience, disrespect and careless disregard. If father and son love each other, the virtues of that relation will be practiced; if they hate each other, the vices of that relation will appear. Virtues grow out of love regularized and controlled by the righteous intelligence that sees more the unity of the Self than the diversity of the Not-Self; vices grow out of hate strengthened and intensified by the unenlightened intelligence, that sees more the separateness of the bodies than the oneness of the Self.

Speaking of virtues and vices, of right and wrong, of good conduct and bad conduct, we must not forget that in whatever way they may find expressions in human conduct they are all based on truth, which embodies the law itself. Sacrifice and duty follow the law; the law itself is an expression of truth. In fact Ishwara Himself is Truth. The devas adoring the Divine Lord when He appeared as Sri Krishna, broke forth: “O True of promise, True of purpose, triply True, the Fount of Truth and dwelling in the True, the Truth of Truth, the Eye of Right and Truth, Spirit of Truth, refuge we seek in Thee” (Vishnu Bhagavata 10.2.26)

Thus virtues have been called forms of Truth. Bhishma describes them as follows: “Truthfulness, equability, self-control, absence of self-display, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of envy, charity, a noble well-wishing towards others, self-possession, compassion, and harmlessness—surely these are the thirteen forms of Truth.” (Mahabharata Shanti-Parvan, 162.8, 9)

Truth is that which IS. As Bhishma says: “Truth is the eternal Brahman.... Everything rests on Truth” (Mahabharata Shanti-Parvan, 162.5). All the laws of nature are expressions of Truth, *i.e.*, they are the methods, the expressions of the nature of That which IS, of the Truth, Reality, Being, the Self or Purusha manifesting amidst the limitations of the Not-Self, Untruth, Non-Being, or Mulaprakriti. They work therefore with undeviating accuracy, with absolute justice and precision. To be true is to be in accord with these laws, and to have nature’s constructive energies on our side and working with us. It is to be working with Ishwara. The intellect has the power of discerning What Is from What Is Not, the power of discrimination, of seeing the Real and the Unreal. Recognizing the Real as stable and permanent, it seeks to grasp it and

thus cultivates the virtues which are the forms of Truth.

Untruth is that which is NOT. All vices are forms of Untruth, even as all virtues are forms of Truth. Hence the overwhelming importance of Truth, which is thus the foundation and essential constituent of all virtues, rather than a separate virtue to be taken by itself.

Truthfulness was in ancient days the leading characteristic of the aryan, and is constantly alluded to as a constituent in the heroic character. Thus, when about to revive the dead child of Abhimanyu, Sri Krishna says: "O Uttara! I speak not falsely, and this shall truly come about. Even now do I revive this child; let all beings behold it. As I have never uttered an untruth, even in play, as I have never turned back from battle, so may this infant live. As I have never known dispute with Arjuna, so by that truth may this dead babe revive. As truth and dharma ever dwell in Me, so may the dead child of Abhimanyu live" (Mahabharata, Ashvamedha Parva. 69.18-19, 21-22). Other heroes repeatedly make the same statement: "My lips have never uttered an untruth." Sri Rama goes into exile for fourteen years in order that his father's promise may remain unbroken. Yudhishtira refuses to struggle for his kingdom before due time, because he has promised to remain in exile.

The effect of these continually repeated precepts and examples was to work into the aryan character a profound love of truth, and this has repeatedly been noticed as a predominating feature of Hindu character.

It must never be forgotten that no character can be virtuous which has not truth for its basis, and that no character can be base when truth is preserved unsullied. It is the root of all true manliness, the glory of the hero, the crown of the virtuous, the preserver of the family, the protection of the State. Falsehood undermines alike the home and the nation, poisons the springs of virtue, degrades and pollutes the character. The liar is always weak and always despicable; scorn and contempt follow him. For the building up of character, truth is the only sure foundation.

Here, again, we come back to our basis of morality, and see why Truth is so all-important. For if it be carefully traced back, every untruth uttered will be found to be ultimately connected with the desire for a separate and exclusive existence, and hence to arise from repulsion, separateness and hate, while every truth uttered is ultimately connected with the desire for the common and united life of the one Self, the Real, whence all love proceeds.

## VI

### Bliss and Emotions

The life of Ishwara permeates all beings and expresses itself as consciousness and bliss through the bodily limitation of these beings. The body becomes more and more complex, the organs become developed, so that the imprisoned life may assert itself more and more. It is the force of life that directs the development of all being. It is that force that breaks through the tamasic inertia of the mineral form, and makes the

mineral matter more and more plastic and capable of receiving impressions from the outside. It is that force which eventually makes a center of Self in all beings, and develops faculties that digest the outside impressions and work them out into tendencies that form the character of man. Ideas of virtues and vices thus arise, ideas of right and wrong, of good and bad.

The life force works itself out by impulses seeking bliss, and by the direction of the guiding intelligence. We need not, in this treatise, go further back than the human stage of development. The impulses of man lead him indiscriminately to various objects in pursuit of pleasure. But the rebuffs of pain make him stop and think. Over and over this happens in life. Over and over again the impulses propel; over and over again intelligence checks. The impulses are thus restrained, directed and refined. Bliss and intelligence act and react on each other and constantly press man onward. One becomes known as Emotion, the other as Intellect. A man may progress continually: he may no longer require a brain, he may no longer require the help of propelling emotions, he may no longer require some particular forms of intelligence and bliss; but intelligence and bliss themselves form part of his life; they are aspects of the Ishwaric life, which he assimilates and calls his own, and they are inseparable from him.

### **Emotions and Intellect**

Emotions lead a man outwards and make him identify himself with the things he sees around him. But intellect forms a center of I-ness, the center of a small circle of personality, forces all experiences to that center, and judges all things from the standpoint of that center. Intellect forms the barrier of selfishness which separates man from man, till at last by wider and wider knowledge, by knowledge embracing the whole universe, the barrier is swept away, all mankind, nay all beings, form one field, one circle; but the center is then removed, and becomes the great center of the universe, the center of Ishwaric existence; man rises above the ahamkara tattwa, the tattwa that causes the limited sense of I-ness. He plunges into Mahat, or the Great Tattwa, and becomes the possessor of universal knowledge.

The emotions of a man, bound down to the personal self, find expression through the indriyas. The indriyas rush out and bring back their experiences to the intellect of man. The experiences that cause harmonious vibrations are recorded by the intellect as pleasurable, and those that produce opposite vibrations are recorded as painful. The register is made in the memory of man, and intellect proceeds to discriminate between what is pleasurable and what is painful in the long run. Emotions thus become trained. Likes and dislikes become the natural expressions of the emotions, under the guidance of intellect which has developed discrimination. The senses become thus indissolubly wedded to the mind, the emotions to the intellect, the indriyas to Mahat, and man becomes normally emotional-intellectual, or kama-manasic. This is essentially necessary at this stage of his progress.

Thus man likes in the beginning whatever is sweet and dislikes whatever is bitter. But experience tells him that too much of a sweet thing is as bad as a bitter thing, Temperance in time becomes a normal emotion in a developed man. What is sweet in

the beginning becomes sometimes bitter in the end; what is apparently sweet is sometimes really bitter. “That happiness which is like poison at first, but like amrita in the end, born of the light of one’s own Self (atmabuddhi), is declared to be sattwic. That happiness arising from the contact of the senses with their objects, which in the beginning is like amrita but changes into that which is like poison, is declared to be rajasic” (Bhagavad Gita 18:37-38).

As these experiences are repeated, man learns prudence, and prudence becomes a normal emotion in man. To rush out to do a thing on the first impulse sometimes brings on disastrous results. To lose the temper brings more disharmonious than harmonious experiences. Forbearance and toleration become thus normal emotions in man.

Emotions, rightly directed by the intelligence, are virtues. In the culture of emotions lies the formation of a man’s character, his ethical development. Emotional culture is the highest culture of man, and the training of likes and dislikes is his best evolution. The man of cultured emotions is propelled by them to do what he thinks right; he becomes patriotic, he becomes philanthropic, he becomes compassionate, he becomes friendly to all beings. His emotions become predominantly those of love, and he takes an ever wider and wider range in the manifestation of that love. And when the barrier of personality is swept away, when the ahamkaric mind becomes manas, or the reflection of the Universal Mind, the emotions also break through the barrier of indriyas and ascend to buddhi, and reflect the life of Ishwara within. Verily then the Trinity of Atman, Buddhi and Manas becomes a unity, and the man a jivanmukta.

We now understand why Ethical Science is particularly concerned with the emotions, and hence with the bliss aspect of Ishwara.

There are many ways of showing why happiness should follow right conduct, and unhappiness wrong conduct, but they are all modifications of the one essential reason, that, as there is but One Self in all, to hurt or help another is virtually to hurt or help oneself.

### **Knowledge and Bliss**

It is written in the Shruti: “Brahman is knowledge and bliss” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 5.9.28). Over and over again the “bliss of Brahman” is spoken of, and bliss is said to be His nature. In fact the threefold nature of Ishwara, of the Saguna Brahman, is expressed in the epithet, Sat-Chit-Ananda. Bliss is thus the very nature of the jivatman, since his nature is that of Brahman; he, too, is bliss. But we learn further that the Saguna Brahman is spotless, and pure (Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.10). Therefore only the pure, the good, is of His nature, and is compatible with His bliss. So then must the essence of the jivatman be purity, and it is written of it: “Let him know it, pure and immortal” (Katha Upanishad 2.6.7). Thus purity and bliss are of the nature of the jivatman and are inseparable, for unity is purity, and the feeling of unity is the feeling of bliss.

Each jivatman being of the nature of the one Self it is ever, when embodied in a separate form, seeking union with the Self in other forms. This search for unity, for the

bliss of union, is instinctive, and results, when the union is found, in perfect happiness. In this everyone is alike. Men differ in most things, but in their longing for happiness they are all alike. Every man, woman, boy and girl wants to be happy. They seek happiness in many different ways, but they all seek happiness. The jivatman, blinded by his body, chooses the wrong things very often, but the motive of his choice is always the same, the desire to be happy. It is his nature to be happy, and he is always trying to express that nature. Through the whole of his long pilgrimage he is searching for happiness. This is his root-motive, the object at which he invariably aims. If he does a painful thing, it is in order to gain a greater happiness. If he endures toil and discomfort, it is because the result of the toil and discomfort will be happiness. Happiness is his end; everything else is only the means to that end. A life of austerity and continued self-denial and suffering is embraced in the belief that it will lead to supreme bliss. The whole of evolution may be described in the words: "A search for happiness." Continually disappointed, with unwearied perseverance man returns again and again to the search, until at last he recognizes that purity, wisdom, bliss, are one and indivisible. Then he goes to Peace. For purity, wisdom and bliss, Sat, Chit and Ananda, are the very nature of Ishwara, His own Self.

Thus Ethics leads us to the highest religion, to the realization of the highest truths, and when Ethics reaches its goal, the barrier between Ethics and Religion vanishes away, Ethics becomes Religion and Religion Ethics. The goal of both is Ishwara and Ishwaric life. This is why the Hindu ethical system is a branch of the Hindu religion, and why one cannot be separated from the other.

## VII

### "Self-Regarding" Virtues

We have already seen that Ethics has as its object the establishment of harmonious relations. These relations are concerned with the surroundings of a man—his home, city, nation, etc.—and also with his own body. Now the body of a man, according to the scriptural teachings, is, as we have seen, a complex one, consisting of several sheaths, or koshas. It is enough to remember here that we have the physical sheath, in which prana functions, the sheath of the indriyas or senses (the sensuous or kamic sheath), the mental sheath, and the buddhic sheath. Ethics concerns itself at present with the physical, the kamic, and the mental sheaths. For when the buddhic sheath is reached, man becomes divine, and the present limit of ethical teachings is crossed.

Ethical teachings have therefore reference to the lower sheaths of a man's body, and to the different classes of beings, who form his surroundings. The different classes of beings, as we have already seen, are the devas, the pitris, the rishis, men in general, and the lower animals, *i.e.* beings both higher and lower than man, as well as the whole of mankind. We have thus, in the first place, duties which we owe to the sheaths of our own body, and in the next place, duties that we owe to devas, pitris, rishis, mankind and the lower animals.



When the body becomes entirely harmonious with the Self within, it becomes a true and subdued vehicle of the life of the atman, which is an aspect of the life of Ishwara. When the surrounding universe becomes harmonious with the Self within, the life of Ishwara flows out to the universe from the center of the Self. Man then becomes fully an expression of the Law, the voice of Ishwara. Towards that goal we should all strive, and to that goal ethics must lead us.

### **Our bodies (shariras)**

Now let us turn to our body, or bodies, if the term be preferred.

First, the Sthula Sharira. The physical body must be kept clean and healthy. Cleanliness and health mean harmony and order. Man is better able to do work with a clean and healthy body. He remains cheerful and bright. The diseased man cannot give attention to work. He is uneasy in mind. The disharmony and disorder of one sheath also react on the other sheaths of the man.

The body should be kept up by means of sattwic food. For the food retains its essential magnetic properties after its conversion into blood, and produces corresponding effects on the indriyas and the mind. The Bhagavad-Gita says: "Foods increasing life, purity, strength, health, happiness, cheerfulness, flavorful, smooth, firm and substantial (hearty) are liked by the sattwic. Foods that are pungent, sour, salty, excessively hot, harsh, astringent and burning, producing pain, grief, and disease are liked by the rajasic. That which is stale, tasteless, stinking (putrid), leftover [to the next day because there was no refrigeration in ancient India], uchchishta [the remnants of food eaten by others; actual leavings from someone's plate], impure (foul), is the food the tamasic like" (Bhagavad Gita 17:8-10).

We have already seen that the higher evolution is brought about by the predominance of sattwa, and that sattwa means harmony.

Secondly, the sukshma sharira. The indriyas, through the heredity of our past existence, are largely guided by animal appetites, which are distinctly rajasic. We should therefore subdue our indriyas. We may see, hear, smell, taste and touch, but we should not ascribe our likes and dislikes to the object of the senses. We must *sense* as a matter of course, but the sensing must not be vitiated by personal likes and dislikes, which form a barrier between ourselves and the external world and make harmonious relations impossible. Every man makes a world to himself, by means of his likes and dislikes. Thus many worlds are formed, each different from the other, and all different from the world as it is, the world of Ishwara. Men are jaundiced by the tint and taint of their personalities and, blinded by the distractions of rajas, they do not see the Law, the word of Ishwara.

### **Desire and distraction**

Therefore our mind should not be guided by the indriyas, but the mind should be guided by its own discriminative faculty, and should then subdue the senses. The indriyas are divided into organs of perception and organs of action (the latter belonging to the sthula sharira). There is no harm done by the perception of objects, if the

perception be not followed by likes and dislikes. Raga and dwesha drive us helplessly along, using the karmendriyas for their own satisfaction. “Attraction and aversion are inherent in the contact of the senses with sense-objects. One should not come under the power of these two—they are indeed his enemies” (Bhagavad Gita 3:34).

Affection and aversion, raga and dwesha, form the desire-nature of man. This, emotional in its origin, has to be controlled. The emotional nature has to be purified. Raga is to expand into universal love. Dwesha is to be eliminated entirely in personal relations, in relations between man and man, between one being and another being, and is to be retained only as an abstract dislike for anything that goes against the law, against the will of Ishwara. But this abstract dislike is not at all to interfere with the universal love of all beings. It is only to make a man strong in his purity, in his rejection of all that is evil. He should dislike evil ways, but not evil men.

The mind, when wedded to the indriyas, becomes rajasic. When wedded to buddhi, it becomes sattwic. The mind of an average man is normally rajasic at the present day. He should make efforts to change it to sattwic. We have already said that the mind should give up personal likes and dislikes, raga and dwesha. Raga and dwesha form the impurities of the mind, and when they are given up the mind becomes purified.

There is another dosha, or fault, of the mind. It gets distracted. It applies itself to a number of outside objects. It runs away from this matter to that matter, and it can with very great difficulty be tied down to one. The mind is compared to a chariot, which is constantly being drawn away in ten different directions by ten horses, which are the ten indriyas. This vikshepa, or distraction of the mind, has to be checked. The mind has to be concentrated, to be made one-pointed. When the impurities and distraction of the mind are removed, it becomes sattwic. Then it reflects the Self within, and causes harmony and bliss. This is harmony with the universe, or harmony with the divine law as manifested in the universe.

The first step towards removing distraction is to deal with abstractions more than with concrete objects; we must generalize truths, and come at last to the highest Truth, the one reality, Ishwara, and grasp Him firmly. Then all the universe appears as His manifestation, all works as His action, all laws as His law. Varieties disappear. Diversities fade away. Harmony prevails.

### **Training the mind**

The training of the mind is man’s most important duty, and next to this follows the control of speech and actions. At the same time he must not neglect his physical body. All the vehicles forming his body must be controlled and made harmonious with each other. The tenfold law, as laid down by Manu, gives some of the characteristics needed: “Endurance, patience, self-control, integrity, purity, restraint of the senses, wisdom, learning, truth, absence of anger, are the ten signs of virtue” (Manu Smriti 6.92). In briefer form: “Harmlessness, truth, integrity, purity, control of the senses, says Manu, is the summarized law for the four castes” (Manu Smriti 10.63).

In the Bhagavad Gita an exhaustive list of these general characteristics is given: “Fearlessness, purity of being, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga (jnana yoga),

almsgiving, self-control, sacrifice, self-study (swadhyaya), tapasya, and straightforwardness, non-violence, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquility, without calumny (slander), compassion for beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigor, patience (forbearance), fortitude (courage), purity, absence of hatred (malice), absence of pride—they are the endowment of those born to a divine state” (Bhagavad Gita 16:1-3). Some of these virtues would fall into one or other of the three classes already spoken of, but for the most part they belong to the jivatman as his general expression of the love emotion, and as the balance of his own nature, the due control of his energies.

The essential importance of Truth has already been dwelt upon. As a general virtue it appears as truthfulness, honesty, integrity and uprightness. Its utter indispensability is concentrated by the wisdom and experience of ages into short sayings, such as: “Honesty is the best policy,” “Truth alone prevails, not falsehood.”

### **Self-control is mastery**

The virtue of Self-control or Self-restraint mentioned in each of the above quotations, is the general reining-in of all the energies of the mind, desire-nature, and physical body, the holding of them all in due submission, so that each is allowed or refused exercise at the will of the man. It implies that the man is conscious of the difference between himself and his lower upadhis, and no more identifies himself with his lower nature than a rider identifies himself with the horse on which he is sitting. The contrast between an uncontrolled man and a self-controlled man is very much like the contrast between a bad rider on an unbroken horse, and a good rider on a well-broken horse. In the first case, the horse rushes about, carrying his helpless rider, plunges violently, and gives his rider a bad fall; in the other case, the man sits easily, guiding the docile steed in any direction, galloping or standing still, leaping or walking, every motion of the rider obeyed by the horse.

So necessary is self-control, that the teachers of morality are continually recurring to it and enforcing it. Manu dwells on its necessity and explains that action has three roots, and that control of each generator of action must be gained. “Action is born of mind, speech and body” (Manu Smriti 12.3). Each of these, mind, speech, and body, must be brought under complete control, and then success is sure. “He is called the holder of the tridanda (three staffs) in whose reason these are fixed—control of speech, control of mind, control of body. The man who lays this triple rule (over himself) amidst all creatures, he verily dominates desire and wrath, and goes to perfection” (Manu Smriti 12.10-11).

### **Control of the mind and senses**

Of these three, control of the mind is the most important, as speech and action alike depend on the mind. Manu says again: “Let the mind be known as the instigator” (Manu Smriti 12.4). Once let the mind be brought under control, and all else follows, but here lies the great difficulty, owing to the extreme restlessness of the mind. Arjuna placed this difficulty before Sri Krishna five thousand years ago: “The mind is truly

unstable, troubling, strong and unyielding. I believe it is hard to control—as hard to control as the wind” (Bhagavad Gita 6:34). And no answer can be given to this, save the answer given by the divine teacher: “Without doubt the mind is hard to control and restless; but through practice (abhyasa) and dispassion (vairagya) it is governed” (Bhagavad Gita 6:35).

Only long-continued effort and perseverance can bring under control this restless vigorous mind, and yet without this control man can never be happy. “Whenever the unsteady mind, moving here and there, wanders off, he should subdue and hold it back and direct it to the Self’s control” (Bhagavad Gita 6:26). If this be done, then happiness is secured, so much so that Sri Krishna makes happiness part of the successful austerity of the mind: “Tranquility of mind, kindliness, silence, self-control and purity of the mental state: these are called tapasya of the mind” (Bhagavad Gita 17:16).

But the most disturbing part of man’s nature is his desires, ever-craving, never satisfied. In fact the more they are gratified, the fiercer they grow. “Desire is verily never quenched by the enjoyment of objects of desire; it only increases further as fire with ghee” (Manu Smriti 2.94).

To bring the senses under control the mind must be used, else will a man ever be restless and uneasy. He must learn to use his mind to control his senses, for through the senses come his chief temptations. And every sense must be brought under control; for one uncontrolled sense may play havoc with the mind: “When the mind is led about by the wandering senses, it carries away the understanding like the wind carries away a ship on the waters” (Bhagavad Gita 2:67).

Manu also lays stress on the danger of allowing even one sense to slip away from control, using a very graphic symbol: “If one sense of all the senses leaks, then understanding leaks through it, as water from the leg of the water-skin” (Manu Smriti 2.99). One open passage is enough to allow all the water to pour out from the water-skin of the water-carrier; and so one uncontrolled sense is opening enough for man’s understanding to flow away from him.

The mind, then, is to be brought under control, and is to be used to control the senses. In the Katha Upanishad the mind is therefore compared to the reins with which a driver pulls in, guides and controls his horses, the horses being compared to the senses, which run away with the body, and the jivatman who dwells in the body. “Know the Self as the occupant of the chariot, the body verily as the chariot. Know indeed the reason as the charioteer, the mind as the reins. The senses are said to be the horses, the objects of the senses the field for them. The Self, joined to the senses and the mind, is the enjoyer—so say the wise. He who is unwise, with the mind ever unapplied, of him the senses are uncontrolled, like the bad horses of the charioteer. He who is wise, with the mind ever applied, of him the senses are controlled, like the good horses of the charioteer. The man whose charioteer is wise, whose mind-reins are used, he only travels to the end of the road, to the highest abode of Vishnu” (Katha Upanishad 3.3-6, 9).

Manu uses the same imagery: “The wise man should make effort to control the senses running amid the alluring objects of sense, as the driver the horses” (Manu

Smriti 2.88). Recounting the five organs of sense and the five organs of action, Manu declares that the control of the mind includes the control of these: “Mind is to be known as the eleventh, belonging by its nature to both; in conquering this, the two sets of five become conquered” (Manu Smriti 2.92).

### **Control of speech**

The control of speech consists in making it respectful to superiors, courteous to equals, gentle to inferiors, and we shall return to this in studying the special virtues. For the moment we may leave it with the general description of right speech: “Speech which causes no distress (agitation), truthful, pleasant (agreeable), beneficial, based on self-study (revealing the Self; instruction in the knowledge of the Self): these are called tapasya of speech” (Bhagavad Gita 17:15). And Manu remarks: “All things are governed by speech: speech is the root, from speech they originate; that man verily who is dishonest in speech, he is dishonest in all” (Manu Smriti 4.256). Thus important is speech said to be.

### **Control of the body**

The control of the body is similarly summed up by Sri Krishna: “Worship [reverence] of the gods, the twice-born (dwijas), teachers and the wise; purity, straightforwardness, brahmacharya and non-injury: these are called tapasya of the body” (Bhagavad Gita 17:14). Control such as this produces a balancing of the mind, calmness, quiet and contentment.

### **The secret of self-control**

The secret of self-control has been said above to be abhyasa and vairagya, “constant practice and dispassion.” The second word is especially significant, and the whole statement should be studied in the light of the slokas quoted from the Katha Upanishad. Buddhi, the pure reason, is there said to be the charioteer, in whose one hand are grasped the many-branching reins of the manas. Buddhi is, as has been said, the faculty which recognizes and realizes the unity of the Self, as the manas is that which cognizes the manyness of sense-objects. The owner of the chariot, the jivatman, should make sure that buddhi drives his chariot, and then the reins and the horses will be well managed.

Now the student who wishes that buddhi should thus drive his chariot, should constantly dwell on the fact of the unity of the Self. “With the buddhi firmly controlled, with the mind fixed on the Self, he should gain quietude by degrees. Let him not think of any [extraneous] thing whatever. Whenever the unsteady mind, moving here and there, wanders off, he should subdue and hold it back and direct it to the Self’s control” (Bhagavad Gita 6:25-26).

This is the abhyasa that he needs. This abhyasa will naturally strengthen vairagya, the absence of desire for personal and selfish ends. Whenever he sees a desire for such personal and selfish ends rising up within himself, he should at once call up before his mental view the injury that he is likely to inflict on others by its indulgence, the evil

consequences to himself in increasing selfishness, and the whole series of disturbances which will flow from his selfishness to the common life of the society to which he belongs. By picturing to himself the consequences of selfishness in his own life and in those of others, and by studying the illustrations of them given in the Puranas, he will gradually strengthen his power of self-control, and will establish himself in that constant mood of righteousness and performance of duty so unceasingly inculcated in the sacred books.

### **Righteousness required**

For that such righteousness only should be followed is reiterated again and again: “The man who is unrighteous, or he who (gains) wealth by falsehood, or he who ever delights in injuring, never obtains happiness in this world. Although suffering by righteousness, let him not turn his mind to unrighteousness; he will behold the speedy overthrow of the unrighteous, of the sinners. Unrighteousness, practiced in this world, does not bear fruit at once like a cow; slowly reacting, it cuts off the very roots of the doer” (Manu Smriti 4.170-172).

In a sense, righteousness is truth; its special significance may be said to be the desire to do what is right, the desire to give every one his due, the desire always to find out the truth and act according to it rather than according to anything else.

To do righteousness is to gain a companion that never fails a man, and when all else deserts him this faithful companion will remain, will cling to him through death, and clothe him with glory in the world beyond the grave. Manu writes hereon as follows: “Giving no pain to any creatures, let him slowly build up righteousness like white ants their hill, that it be to him a companion in the world beyond. Nor father, nor mother, nor son, nor wife, nor kinsfolk remain to accompany him to the next world; righteousness alone remains. Alone each being is born; alone verily he dies; alone he enjoys good deeds; alone also the evil. Leaving the dead body on the ground like a log or a clod of earth, the relatives depart, with averted faces; righteousness alone follows him. Therefore, to gain an unfailing friend let him ever gather righteousness; with righteousness as companion he will cross over the darkness, difficult to cross. It rapidly leads the man who is devoted to righteousness and has destroyed his sins by austerity, to the world beyond, radiant and clad in a celestial body” (Manu Smriti 4.238-243).

This insistence on righteousness as the only way to happiness in this world or in any other is characteristic of the Sanatana Dharma, whose very heart is duty, as justice is its keynote and unalterable law its life-breath. A man obtains every thing that he has duly earned, neither more nor less; every debt must be paid; every cause must be followed by its effect.

### **Contentment**

The virtue of contentment (santosha) springs from a full recognition of this fact, and it is itself the root of happiness, a virtue which every student should endeavor to work into his character: “Let one who desires happiness be controlled and take refuge in perfect contentment; contentment is verily the root of happiness, the opposite is the

root of sorrow” (Manu Smriti 4.12).

The contented man is happy under the most unfavorable circumstances, the root of his happiness being in himself; whereas the discontented man finds food for his discontent, however favorable his circumstances may be. There are always some who are superior in position to, more wealthy, more fortunate than ourselves, and hence reasons for discontent may ever be found by the unwise. To be satisfied with what we have because we have our due is true wisdom, and all dissatisfaction is folly.

### **Personal virtues and society**

We have spoken of virtues as bringing about harmonious relations between jivatmans, but it must not be thought that this excludes the above virtues which at the first glance seem chiefly to concern their possessor, and to aid his own general evolution. For when carefully considered, it will be found that these so-called personal virtues react upon the happiness of others, though in a way not immediately apparent. Life, evolution, virtue and vice, duty—all these things would be impossible with only a single jivatman in existence.

The idea of a community is inseparable from the ideas of these. A so-called duty to self, or a personal virtue, is also ultimately a duty to another, a giving of some help or a saving of some inconvenience to others. For instance if we are unclean, we inevitably make our neighbors uncomfortable when we come into contact with them. When a man says to another: “You owe it to yourself to do so and so,” he really and instinctively means: “You owe this to the evolution of humanity generally as connected, by the unity of the Self, with the evolution of your individual self.” For the evolution of one jiva is inseparable from that of other jivas, and helping or hindering our own progress is also directly or indirectly helping or hindering the progress of others. An unclean or slovenly man injures himself primarily and his fellows secondarily, by lowering the general ideal and influencing their lives indirectly if not actively.

### **Ahimsa: Harmlessness**

The duties to devas, pitris, rishis, men and animals were mentioned in Parts One and Two, and we need only add, before turning to our duties to human beings, that our general attitude should be that of Ahimsa, or Harmlessness.

“Harmlessness is the highest duty,” taught Bhishma (Mahabharata, Anushasana Parvan, Chapter 114). Manu also says: “For the twice-born man from whom no fear arises to any living creatures, for him, freed from the body, there will be no fear from any” (Manu Smriti 6:40).

Ishwara is just, and the harmless man is harmed by none. The yogi can wander without danger among wild animals, because his heart is full of love and he is a source of danger to none. Once again says Bhishma: “The slayer is slain,” but the man who slays none will himself be slain of none. For the harmless man, full of love to all creatures, sees the Self in each and regards each as part of his own body, and such a man is the “friend of all creatures,” and is safe wherever he goes.

We have seen that only by sacrifice can we establish harmonious relations amongst

all beings, and the establishment of harmonious relations, as we have seen, is the very essence of our evolution. Man cannot be selfish. The world is not for one man alone. He may think in his own way and act in his own way. But if he does not conform himself to the Lord, the word of Ishwara, woe falls on him and misery becomes his lot. Through the repeated teachings of misery his obstinate selfishness is removed, and he becomes harmonized with the whole universe.

Let the student bear this principle in mind firmly and steadfastly, and he will easily understand what is said in the next chapter.

*Editor's Note:* Because it is universally understood in India that strict vegetarianism is an essential part of Harmlessness, the authors did not mention it to their Indian readers. But for those outside India—and those in India who have chosen to separate themselves from their ancestral dharma—it must be pointed out that Harmlessness is the basis of all morality and dharma. And its observance absolutely requires adoption of a perpetual and strict vegetarian diet.

## VIII

### Virtues and Vices in Human Relations

We may study the virtues and vices as the outgrowths from love and hate. Love prompts us to make sacrifices, to limit, to restrict ourselves, to subordinate ourselves to the common well-being. This love emanates from the Self within, is an aspect of Bliss, and makes our duty a work of love, our sacrifice a pleasure.

Emotions in their early rushings-forth transgress the law, for the law is not known. But when the law is known and realized, when chit and ananda combine, when the emotion proceeds from a discriminating Self-center, when still later the Self-center becomes a universal center, every emotion becomes a virtue, every emotion becomes a voice of the divine.

As love underlies every virtue, so hate underlies every vice. For union is law, separation is against the law; harmony is evolution, disharmony is the opposite of evolution. If love prompts our mutual relations, we naturally and readily make sacrifices to render those relations harmonious and blissful. Now in considering virtues and vices in human relations, we may classify them as those in relation to superiors, in relation to equals, and in relation to inferiors.

#### **Those in relation to superiors**

The natural superiors of a man are: God; the sovereign; parents; teachers; the aged. (There is no order of superiority intended here. The shastras give different orders.)

There may be what may be called “accidental superiors”—persons who are on a level with a man’s parents and teachers, and persons above him in intelligence and morality, towards whom he would exercise modified forms of the virtues now to be considered. But such adaptations are readily made, and need not change our classification.



## **Virtues arising from love**

The love emotion directed to God will show itself as the virtue of reverence, carried to its highest degree. This will primarily express itself in worship, and secondarily in treating with respect all ideas about God, all things connected with His worship, sacred places and sacred objects. Reverence being due to a sense of His infinite superiority, attracting love by virtue of His supreme wisdom and compassion, it will naturally be accompanied by humility, the willing recognition of comparative littleness, unassociated with pain and coupled with the readiness to submit to guidance; by faith in and therefore submission, to His wisdom; and by devotion and gratitude responding to His compassion leading to complete self-sacrifice in His service. The steady cultivation of these virtues, the fruits of love directed to God, comprise our duty to Him: Reverence, Humility, Faith, Submission, Devotion, Gratitude and Self-Sacrifice.

There are many examples of great devotees in the Hindu books, men who showed these virtues to the fullest extent, and have set examples of love toward God which should be studied in order that they may be imitated. Bhishma's noble hymn to Sri Krishna, uttered as he lay wounded on the battle-field, and which drew Sri Krishna to his side, should be carefully read and thought over.

Salutations to You, O divine Krishna!

You are the origin and the dissolution of all the worlds.

You are the Creator and the Destroyer.

You, O Hrishikesa, cannot be vanquished by anyone.

The universe is Your handiwork.

You are the soul of the universe and the universe has sprung from You.

Salutations to You! You are the end of all created things.

You are above the five elements.

Salutations to You who are the three worlds and also beyond the three worlds!

O Lord of Yogins, salutations to You who are the refuge of everything!

O Best of beings, what You say about me has enabled me to behold

Your divine attributes as manifest in the three worlds.

Govinda, I also see Your eternal form.

You stand barring the seven paths of the Immeasurable Energy.

The sky is Your head, and the earth Your feet.

The points of the compass are Your two arms.

The sun is Your eye, and Shakra [Indra] constitutes Your prowess.

Attired in yellow robes that resemble the hue of the atasi flower,

You appear to us like a cloud charged with flashes of lightning.

O best of Devas, think of what would be good for this insignificant self which is devoted to You,

Which seeks your protection, and which desires to find a blissful end.

(Mahabharata, Shanti Parvan, Chapter 47)

Prahlada, triumphant by devotion over all attacks, prayed: “In all the thousand births through which I may be doomed to pass, may my faith in Thee, Achyuta [Krishna], never know decay. May passion, as fixed as that which the worldly-minded feel for sensual pleasures, ever animate my heart, always devoted unto Thee” (Vishnu Purana 1.20).

Of such devotees Sri Krishna says: “Those great souls that abide in their divine nature, worship me single-mindedly, knowing me as the eternal Origin of beings. Always glorifying me and striving with firm vows, bowing to me with devotion, always steadfast, they worship me. And others, sacrificing by the sacrifice of knowledge, worship me as One and Manifold, variously manifested, facing in all directions [omnipresent and omniscient]” (Bhagavad Gita 9:15).

And again: “I am the origin of all; from me everything proceeds—thinking thus, the wise, endowed with meditation, worship me. With minds and lives intent on me, enlightening (awakening) one another, and speaking of me constantly, they are content and rejoice [in me]. To them, the constantly steadfast, worshipping me with affection, I bestow the buddhi yoga by which they come to me” (Bhagavad Gita 10:8-10).

The cultivation of devotion is by meditating on the object of devotion, by worshipping Him, by reading about Him, and by listening to, talking to and associating with those who are superior in devotion. In this way devotion increases. “Those who, renouncing all actions in me, intent on me as the highest [goal] worship me, meditating on me with single-minded Yoga—of those whose consciousness has entered into me, I am soon the deliverer from the ocean of mortal samsara” (Bhagavad Gita 12:6-7).

Submission to the divine will grows easily out of devotion, for we always readily desire to yield where we recognize and love the superior. Wisdom and compassion invite submission, for the wisdom will choose the best, and the compassion the least painful path for us. Where wisdom and compassion are perfect as in God, complete submission is the natural answer; and when all the events of life are seen as under His guidance, they can be accepted cheerfully and contentedly. The attitude of man in this respect to God should be that of a loving child to a wise and tender Father, carried to a far higher degree. “I am the Father and Mother of this world, Establisher, Grandfather, the object of knowledge (the to-be-known), the Purifier..., the Goal, the Sustainer, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend” (Bhagavad Gita 9:17-18).

Towards such a One gratitude springs up, ever increasing with increasing knowledge; and self-surrender, self-sacrifice, is but the culmination of reverence. By daily offering of all our acts to God, the spirit of self-sacrifice is cultivated, and as it becomes perfect the lower self is conquered and the Supreme Self is seen. “Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer [in sacrifice], whatever you give, whatever tapasya you practice, do that as an offering to Me” (Bhagavad Gita 9:27).

### **Vices arising from hate**

As these virtues are the branches of reverence springing from love, so do corresponding branches of vices grow out of fear, which springs from hate in the

presence of a superior. A constant attempt is made to belittle the superior, to pull him down to our own level, so that we may no longer have reason to fear him. For when we are in face of a superior whom we regard as an enemy, we are naturally inclined to dread the exercise of his power, which we feel ourselves unable to resist, and we long to lessen this hostile power or to escape from its reach.

The hate emotion directed to God reveals itself in attempts to lessen the feeling of His greatness, to diminish the recognition of His powers. Irreverence is the commonest vice of this class, flippant careless speech and manner about sacred objects and sacred places, foolish jokes and idle laughter in speaking of the religious beliefs of others. This passes on into the vice of profanity in coarse natures, and both are destructive of the finer emotions and should be sedulously guarded against. This dulling of the finer emotions leads on to complete alienation from religion, for God can only be reached through these finer emotions and by the virtues we have seen to be the offspring of love; and as a man is driven further and further away by the repellent action of hate, he loses all sense of the divine Presence, and often lapses into entire ethical unbelief, which leads to evil living. “‘The world,’ they say, ‘is without truth, without a basis, without God’” (Bhagavad Gita 16:8).

### **Reverence for the sovereign**

Reverence for the sovereign, the head of the State, comes naturally after reverence to God, the representative of whose power, justice, and protection he is on earth, if he be a true king, intent on the welfare of his subjects, always subordinating and sacrificing his own personal comforts and interests to those of his people, as did the ancient divine kings, who give us the ideal of kingship. The virtues spoken of above should be repeated in a lesser degree, in a subject's relation to his king. The virtues of loyalty, fidelity and obedience are those which make a good subject, and the necessity of these for the prosperity of a nation is strongly insisted on.

Manu says that the king was made by God to protect the world, and was made of particles taken from the Devarajas: Indra, Vayu, Yama, Surya, Agni, Varuna, Soma and Kubera. As Indra, he is to shower benefits on his kingdom; as Vayu, to know all that goes on; as Yama, to control his subjects; as Surya to take taxes; as Agni, to be full of brilliant energy; as Varuna, to punish the wicked; as Soma, to give joy to his subjects; as Kubera, to support his people (Manu Smriti 7.3-4 and 9.303-311).

Bishhama's discourse on the duties of king and subjects is most instructive; the king is to stand as a god to his people, he being their protector and the guardian of all (Mahabharata, Shanti Parvan, chapters 56-91). The Itihasas are full of statements as to the blessings enjoyed by a loyal people ruled over by a good King.

[*Editor's Note.* The reader may think that the references to monarchy and monarchs in this book are outdated and futile, without any merit. But, as I have seen and known genuine and admirable vanaprasthas, so I have seen in modern India rajas, maharajas, ranis and maharanis, that were worthy of their titles, and whose influence was dharmic and beneficial. Firstly, their personal characters were admirable and of a nobility that proved their relevance and benefit even though the evil forces of the socialist Congress

Party did all they could to destroy them before and after India gained its independence. The rajas and maharajas had been assured that they would comprise the equivalent of the British House of Lords in the Indian Parliament, therefore they endorsed the struggle for independence only to find that they were not only left without any power, they were actively persecuted and reduced to paupery in many cases. For example, they were not permitted to own more than two hundred and fifty acres of land, and therefore thousands of acres were confiscated by the corrupt government of Jawaharlal Nehru and his henchmen. Nevertheless, dharma is an ingrained virtue, and I encountered it in the various kings, queens and princes I met during my pilgrimages to India.

One of my royal friends lived solely for the welfare of those in his kingdom. When I would walk with him in the main city of his realm, the people would come flocking around him like children to their beloved father. Many came to tell him of their problems and he listened to all and did what was needful. When I went into a local post-office-cum-bank, the workers there told me of all the things he had done for the economic upliftment and eventual prosperity of his kingdom, including the establishment of that post office and bank.

Interestingly, he had not always been a father to the people, but selfish and spoiled. When he visited Mahatma Ghandi, Ghandiji asked him about his involvement in the welfare of his people. The raja replied that he had no interest in “his people” or their welfare. Ghandiji told him that he really did care, but did not realize it—implying that as a raja such caring was in his very blood. When the raja contradicted him, Ghandiji told him to make an experiment. He should have a sumptuous meal prepared for himself, go to a village, have his servants set up a table and put out all the food. Then he should sit there and eat it all in front of the people, giving them none. He said it would be easy. So upon his return he did just that. Or tried to. But when he saw the people standing around, half-starved, as he sat at the laden table, his heart broke and he began to cry. He had the food distributed all around, went back home and dedicated his life to the welfare of everyone in his kingdom. And being a true kshatriya monarch, he succeeded. So when I met him he was happy and beloved by all, living in Ghandhian simplicity and charity—a true king, however much the adharmic government might deny it and call him an “ordinary citizen.” No raja or rani I met was ever ordinary.]

As loyalty is insisted on, so are the corresponding vices of disloyalty, treason and rebellion condemned, and the miseries are described of kingdoms that are a prey to anarchy.

## **Patriotism**

Closely attached to the virtue of loyalty is that of patriotism, in which the country is thought of as a collective whole, a living individual, to whom service is due. The king, in fact, is the embodied majesty of the nation, and loyalty to him grew out of patriotism of the purest kind. Patriotism is a virtue that has its roots in several emotions; it grows out of veneration for the past of the country, admiration of its saints, heroes and warriors, its great men of every kind, of its strength, power and

splendor; it identifies itself with the country by sympathy, feeling its joys and sorrows, its successes and reverses, its prosperity and adversity, as its own; it loves its natural beauties, and rejoices in its artistic and mechanical triumphs. The motherland, the country as a whole, is looked up to as an ideal, as an object of reverence, to be served and worked for above and beyond all else.

Though, as a whole, the country is greater than the patriot, the patriot has the power of helping his country by his service; he gladly sacrifices ease, comfort, wealth, life itself, on the altar of his country. As a tender father seeks the good of his family so the patriot seeks the good of his land, and puts its interests before his own. The virtue of public spirit is but another name for patriotism, and the public-spirited man is the man who will exert himself for a public object even more earnestly and diligently than for a private one.

The very expression “public spirit” instinctively embodies the truth that has been referred to so often as the very basis of morality—the unity of all. Public spirit is the common spirit, the spirit of all the public, the spirit which is one in all the public; and the public-spirited man is he who—consciously or unconsciously—realizes the oneness of the Self in all the members of that public to which he belongs; who feels that the good and the evil of each are the good and the evil of all the members of that public, and who acts accordingly, endeavoring to ameliorate the conditions of life for all.

As in the case of virtues and vices towards God, so in the case of virtues and vices to the state and its ruler, it must be borne in mind that no man can free himself from the duty of incessantly endeavoring to base his mental attitude and his outer actions on the best reason he can reach up to, nor can he free himself from responsibility for acquiescence in flagrant injustice, or for allowing himself to be carried away by any mere public opinion which he knows to be wrong, or has not taken the trouble to test, although feeling that its accuracy is doubtful. There is a false loyalty—the lip-loyalty of the flatterer—which is far more dangerous and sinful than the apparent opposition of the honest counsellor, who gives unpleasant but wholesome advice, and there is a false patriotism that merely yields to the prejudices of the ignorant. “Easy to find, O King! are the men that always speak the words that please. Difficult to find are the men, both those that hear and those that speak, the words that are not pleasant but wholesome” (Ramayana 6.16.21).

These virtues of patriotism and public spirit, directing the mind to ends beyond those of the personal separated self, are enlarging and ennobling to the character, and train the man to see a larger Self, and so to make some progress towards the recognition of the One. The public-spirited patriotic man is nearer to God than the man whose interests are restricted within a narrower area, and gradually he will widen out from love of country to love of humanity. Happy is the land whose sons are patriotic; she is sure to rise high amid the nations of the earth.

### **Duties to parents and teachers**

We have now to consider the duties owed to parents and teachers, who also stand as superiors. These will include those that are shown to God and the king, and we may

add to them the virtues of gentleness, trustfulness and teachableness. Perhaps no virtues are more strongly insisted on than those that a child owes to his parents and teachers, and down to the present time none are more characteristic of the true aryan.

“The suffering which the mother and father endure in the birth of children cannot be compensated, even in a hundred years. Let him do always what is pleasant to these two, and also to the acharya; in the satisfaction of these three all (the fruit of) austerity is obtained. The service of these three is called the highest austerity; without the permission of these let him not perform other duties. For verily these are the three worlds and the three ashramas; these also are said to be the three Vedas and the three fires. The householder who neglects not these three will conquer the three worlds, and in a shining body he will rejoice, as a deva, in heaven. All duties are honored by him who honors these three; for him who does not honor these all rites are fruitless. As long as these three live, so long let him not do ought else; let him ever do service to them, intent on what is pleasant and beneficial. In (honoring) these three all is achieved that should be done by man; this is plainly the highest duty; all other is called a lesser duty” (Manu Smriti 2.227-230, 232, 234-235, 237).

Teachableness and obedience to the teacher are insisted on, and many rules were given intended to impress on the student the duty he owed to his preceptor. He was to be ever serviceful and careful not to offend, regarding the guru as his father in the highest sense. “Of the progenitor and the giver of the knowledge of Brahman, the giver of the knowledge of Brahman is the more venerable father; for the birth of the Brahman in the Brahmana is verily eternal, both here and after death” (Manu Smriti 2.146). Only to the dutiful pupil was knowledge given: “As a man by digging with a spade obtains water, so he who does service obtains the wisdom enshrined in his guru” (Manu Smriti 2.218).

The vices which grow out of hate in relation to parents and teachers include, as do the virtues, those named under the relation to God and the king, and we may add to them those of suspiciousness, cowardice, falsehood and insolence. Where there is fear of one stronger than ourselves, suspicion inevitably arises, the expectation that he will use his power for our injury and not for our benefit. There is perhaps no greater poisoner of human relations than constant suspiciousness—the suspicious nature—for it casts a false appearance over everything, distorts and exaggerates actions, and attributes evil motives to the most harmless acts. A suspicious nature sees hidden malevolence everywhere, and is always miserable because always afraid. Cowardice engenders falsehood, the putting on of a false appearance for the sake of protection against a dreaded exercise of hostile power. When we come to study the reaction of the emotions of one person on those of another, we shall see that oppression on the part of the strong leads to the growth of these vices in the weak, and that these are the vices characteristic of the slave and the downtrodden.

Arrogance and superciliousness are attempts of the inferior to diminish the distance between himself and the superior, and are the reverse of the virtues of humility and teachableness. They render impossible any happy and mutually beneficial relation between parents and children, between teachers and pupils. The sweet natural ties

which grow out of the love emotion are violently disrupted by these evil growths of the hate emotion, and they destroy the peace and happiness of families, as, when carried to a higher degree, they destroy the prosperity of states and the influence of religion.

The general attitude of the inferior to the superior is summed up by Manu as being that which is shown to the teacher: “Such also constantly is his conduct among teachers of learning, relatives, among those who hold him back from unrighteousness and give him counsel. Among his superiors let him ever follow the same behavior as with his teacher” (Manu Smriti 2.206-207).

In cultivating the virtues and weeding out the vices above mentioned, the young man should not forget one important consideration. His parents are given to him by his *prarabdha* karma, while this is not completely the case with his teacher, the element of present choice also entering into the latter relation for the most part. While therefore the duty of reverence and trust and submission without reserve, short of what involves the commission of a positive sin, is desirable towards parents, even if they are not as loving and considerate as parents ought to be, that duty is influenced by certain other considerations in the case of the teacher. The teacher is chosen either by the parents for the student in the days of youth, or by himself when he reaches years of discretion. In the first case, the authority of the teacher is the authority of the parents, delegated to him by them. If any doubt arises in the mind of the student as to whether that authority has been duly exercised, the student should at once consult his parents and abide by their decision. In the second case, should such a doubt arise, he must exercise his own judgment, as he did when first he chose the teacher, and if teacher and student duly understand their respective duties then the wisest and most useful course is for the student to say clearly and respectfully to his teacher: “Sir, there is such and such a doubt in my mind; kindly remove it;” and for the teacher to remove the doubt either by convincing the student of the rightness of the course adopted, or by altering that course, if indefensible.

The above is important to bear in mind, as the abuse of authority and the misplacing of trust are unfortunately but too common in the world. In India especially, where the spirit of devotion to teachers is strong, having come down from the time when the teacher was a true teacher, there is exceptional danger of the misplacing of faith, and consequently there is exceptional need for preserving a balance of mind and for rejecting false claims.

### **Respect for the aged**

To the aged respect is the virtue which should ever be shown by the young, and they should ever be regarded and treated as superiors. “He should not take the bed or the seat belonging to a superior; and he who is occupying a bed or seat should rise and salute him. A young man’s *pranas* rise upwards when an old man approaches; rising, and saluting, he again recovers them. He who ever salutes and shows reverence to the aged, obtains an increase of four things: life, intelligence, fame and strength” (Manu Smriti 2.119-121).

That obeisance to the aged is even physically beneficial to the young man is hinted

in these slokas. By one of the laws of nature there is always a tendency towards equilibrium; as heat radiates from the warmer to the cooler, so strength and vitality go out from the stronger to the weaker. It has been proved by ordinary medical science that invalids draw vitality from the vigorous, the feeble draw life from the healthier and stronger, and a large portion of the cures effected by magnetism are due to this fact. In accordance with this law, the pranas of the young move out towards the old and the feeble; but when the young man rises and makes obeisance, he at once creates in the mind of the elder the mood of benevolence and of giving instead of taking, and this mood sends back those pranas to the younger man.

“Let him salute the aged, let him give them his own seat, let him sit by them with folded hands, let him walk behind when they leave” (Manu Smriti 4.154). This reverence shown to the aged is one of the most gracious virtues of youth and manhood, and one who shows it wins love and approval from all. It is naturally accompanied with modesty, a virtue which is a lesser degree of humility.

### **Final reflections**

Good manners to a superior involve respect, modesty, truthfulness, readiness to render service, an absence of fear, suspicion and conceit. A youth who shows those virtues will always meet with favor, and will enjoy many opportunities of improvement in the company of his elders and superiors. Such a youth is always welcome, and his elders will take pleasure in helping and guiding him, and giving him the benefit of their experience.

The vices which show themselves in relation to the aged include those noted in connection with the other classes of superiors, and disrespect and conceit may be added. The latter vice is peculiarly likely to arise, because the strength and vigor of the youthful body give it a physical superiority over the body of the aged, more obvious than the inferiority in experience and ripeness of judgment. Impatience is another vice that shows itself in this connection, the swift activity of youth being apt to chafe against the slowness of the aged.

No virtues need cultivation more in modern life than those dealt with in this chapter, for in the rush and hurry of the present day, and the self-assertiveness that flourishes in a competitive civilization, these are the virtues most likely to disappear.

Religious virtues have decayed with the growth of misunderstood scientific facts, and reverence and faith towards God have been depreciated as weakness and credulity. But religious virtues are the foundation-stones of a strong character, and are found in history in heroes and not in base and degenerate men.

Still more, perhaps, is visible the decay of a high-minded loyalty to the monarch, and a patriotic fidelity to the State. This, as the student will learn from the careful study of history, is due to internal organic reasons, mainly the failure in duty to each other, first of rulers and then of the ruled, after the divine dynasties of kings were withdrawn, in order that humanity might be left to learn by painful experience how to stand on its own feet, with many falls and struggles, like an infant.

The spread of general though superficial knowledge, the growth, through bitter



conflicts, of democratic institutions and the passing of authority into the hands of a majority—in the absence of the wise and experienced, or because of their inability to take up their duties—have hidden the true rights and duties of the sovereign from careless eyes and minds. The one-sided exaggeration of the instruments of administration—cabinets, councils, parliaments, republican senates and congresses—has veiled the governor, the king himself.

In the course of these experiments of humanity, there have arisen, in consequence of the mistakes due to inexperience and selfishness, increasing poverty and distress, the strife of labor and capital, the growing disorganization of society. The remedy for these lies in restoring right feeling between king and ministers and governing bodies and people, in restoring right feeling between all the limbs and organs of the State, and in each and all performing their respective duties of protecting and ruling, advising, administering, and helping with loyalty, fidelity and obedience; in restoring, in fact, the ancient system on a higher level, with fuller knowledge, according to the law of cyclic growth. Perhaps it may be for aryan youths, trained up in the ancient virtues, to restore to modern life the ideal of the true citizen, and to set again the example of the true gentleman, pious to his God and loyal to his king and country.

That this may be so, it will be well to begin with the cultivation of these virtues in the family, where the father and the mother represent the superiors. The decay of reverence, obedience, respect and serviceableness to them is only too patent in modern Indian life. Here every youth can at once begin to copy the old ideals, and to restore in his own home the ideal of the perfect son. Eager attention to their wants, prompt and cheerful obedience to their wishes, frank confidence in their good will, trustful reliance on their deliberate judgment—these virtues will lay the foundation of the strong, dutiful, orderly character that will make a good citizen and a patriot.

In his relations to his teachers also, the student should strive to practice the appropriate virtues; and different as are the modern conditions between teacher and pupil from the ancient ones, yet the appropriate virtues might be cultivated, and the relation would then gradually again take on the affectionate intimacy of the older time.

To the aged also, the Indian youth should show unvarying respect, consideration and readiness to serve, utilizing his physical advantages to supply their weaknesses, looking on aged men as his fathers, on aged women as his mothers, and showing ever to them the loving duty of a son.

Let, then, the young man study these virtues, and build them into his own character by repeated effort, earnest, deliberate and well-reasoned thought, and with reliance on the Divine Self. Then shall his own life be useful and honorable, and his motherland the better for his work.

## IX

### Virtues and Vices in Relation to Equals

We have now to consider how love and hate work out in the relations that arise

between equals in the family and in society, binding them together or driving them apart accordingly as love or hate prevails. The relations between husband and wife, brothers and sisters, and between relatives of the same generation, those between friends, acquaintances and members of a society of similar age and standing, give rise to emotions which are rendered permanent as virtues and vices, constantly active in the family and in the community.

### **The family**

The virtues belonging to the family among those of the same generation are those which gradually lead the jivatman to recognize his unity with others, and so prepare him for the recognition of the One Self in all. He finds himself surrounded by a small band of jivatmans whose conditions, interests, hopes and fears are much the same as his own, with whom he enjoys and suffers, rises and falls, is prosperous and unsuccessful, from whom his own interests cannot be disjoined. As he practices the family virtues and sees the happiness ensured by the practice, or as he falls into the family vices and sees the sorrow and discomfort arising from them, he gradually learns that to bring about general happiness he must treat all men as his brothers, as members of one family, and that the miseries that afflict humanity all have their root in the neglect of the practice of brotherliness.

Affection, or love between equals, is the form of the love emotion here to be cultivated. It will show itself in kindness of thought, speech and action. Kindness of thought is at the root of kindness of speech and of action, and one who guards himself against all harshness of thought will not err in speech or in act. We have already seen what great stress Manu lays on control of speech and sweetness. Gentleness of speech should be cultivated in all family relations as well as in those of the outer world: "He whose speech and mind are pure and ever carefully guarded, he obtains all the fruit that is obtained by means of the Vedanta. Let him not, even though distressed, cut another to the quick (by his speech), nor meditate acts of hostility to others; let him never utter the malignant word that disturbs (the mind of the hearer)" (Manu Smriti 2.160-161).

This injunction, addressed primarily to superiors in their intercourse with inferiors, covers all human intercourse, and is perhaps nowhere more needed than in family relations, where close knowledge of the weakness of each is apt to barb the tongue to cutting speech. Again the right family relations are well sketched in the following: "Let him not be aimlessly restless with his hands and feet, nor with his eyes, nor crooked (in his conduct), nor aimlessly restless with his tongue, nor meditate acts of hostility to others. With the priests, acharya, maternal uncle, guest, dependent, children, the aged sick, physician, kinsfolk, connections by marriage, relatives; mother, father, female relative, brother, son, wife, daughter, servant-folk, let him not enter into altercation" (Manu Smriti 6.177, 179-180).

And, after recounting the different worlds with which the persons above-named are connected, as representing in the organization of human society the position of the worlds in the organization of the Brahmanda, so that if a man be at peace with them he

is at peace with these worlds, Manu concludes: “The elder brother is the same as the father, the wife and the son are one’s own body. The servant-folk are one’s shadow, the daughter is most deserving of compassion; therefore, though slighted by these, let a man bear it ever undisturbed” (Manu Smriti 4.184-185).

### **Husband and wife; fathers and sons; brothers**

The right relation between husband and wife, between father and sons, and between brothers, is beautifully shown in the Ramayana. Dasharatha shows us the ideal father; his four divine sons Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna show the ideal brothers; and Sri Rama and Sita portray the ideal husband and wife. These are the models a youth should set before himself, and he should shape his conduct on these.

Of the good wife, Manu says: “There is no difference whatsoever between Sri (Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity) and the wife in the house, who is the mother of the children, who brings good fortune, who is worthy of worship, the light of the home. Of the bearing of children, the protection of those born, the continuance of the world-process, woman is evidently the only source. Children, religious ceremonies, service, marital happiness, heaven for one’s ancestors and oneself, depend on the wife. She who, ruling her mind, speech and body, wrongs not her husband, she obtains the (heavenly) world with her husband and is called by the virtuous a *sadhvi* [a female *sadhu*]” (Manu Smriti 9.26-29). “This is the extent of the man, his wife, himself and his children; Brahmanas thus declare that the husband and wife are known as the same” (Manu Smriti 9.45).

This view of a family as a unit, as really one life, is the view which alone gives a sure foundation for the family virtues, and the indissolubility of the marriage tie among arjans grows out of this idea. Father, mother and children are one, and each should love the other as himself; what pleases one should please all: what saddens one should sadden all. All the virtues can be practiced in the family, which is a little world in itself; the parents represent the superiors, the children among each other the equals, the children to the parents the inferiors. A youth who cultivates the virtues in his home will be ready to show them in the wider field of the world, and will be equipped for the duties of a good citizen. He can practice there all that he will require in his manhood, and develop all the qualities which will make him a faithful friend, an honorable, courteous and upright gentleman, a brave and unselfish patriot.

Tender affection between brothers and sisters lies at the root of family prosperity, and we may see in the story of the Pandavas how this consoled them in adversity and raised them finally to the height of prosperity.

### **People in general**

Courtesy and consideration for the feelings of others are enjoined as general principles of conduct, and noble bearing and manners have ever been held to be characteristic of the true aryan. Thus speech must be true, but also pleasing: “Let him speak the true, let him speak the pleasing, let him not speak an unpleasing truth, nor speak a pleasing falsehood; this is the ancient law” (Manu Smriti 4.138).

Of course, there are occasions when it is the plain and positive duty of the person concerned to tell the truth even though it be unpleasant, as when a person in authority rebukes or corrects a subordinate. But even in such cases he should speak gently, and such instances of special duty do not justify uncalled-for and rude language or sharpness, which only mar the due effect of the rebuke and prevent its entering into the heart of the reproofed.

### **Good manners**

Good manners are very apt to be undervalued in modern times, partly because of the hurry and rush of modern civilization, and partly from ignorance. But this undervaluing is a mistake. Good manners spring from a good heart and a gentle nature, and show kindness and refinement of character. They imply self-control and a sense of self-respect and dignity, and many difficult social situations, which cause quarrels among ill-mannered people, are passed through without any trouble or ruffle by the nobly mannered. Soft words, courteous gestures, pleasant smiles, dignified bearing, make social intercourse refreshing and a source of enjoyment, and the young Hindu should sedulously cultivate the noble manners of the elder generation, and thus sweeten the tone of modern society. Even gold becomes more beautiful by being refined and a noble and strong character is beautified by courtly bearing.

### **Guests**

Hospitality is a virtue on which great stress is laid, and the guest must ever be honored as a deva. "Let him offer to the guest who has come a seat, water and food, hospitably according to his power, in accordance with the rule. Grass mat (for seat), room, water and, fourthly, a kind word—these are never wanting in the houses of the good. The guest sent in the evening by the (setting) sun must not be sent away by the householder; whether arrived at a convenient or inconvenient time, he must not remain in the house unentertained" (Manu Smriti 3.99, 101, 105).

That there was as much travel, with its beneficent results, in ancient India as there is now, when the means of locomotion were not so easy and rapid as they are today, was due solely to the general prevalence of this virtue, and the regarding of hospitality as an essential part of religion.

The continuous pilgrimages from shrine to shrine and from city to city—with all their educative effects in broadening men's minds and experience, and in promoting affection and good will between different and distant communities, by bringing them into familiar intercourse with each other—were only made possible by the generous provision of houses of rest (dharmashalas), and of food and clothing on an immense scale, by the voluntary hospitality and charity of the well-to-do.

### **Other necessary virtues**

Uprightness, fair dealings, trust, honor, straightforwardness, urbanity, fidelity, fortitude, endurance, co-operation—these are virtues which are necessary for a happy and prosperous social life. Where these are found, the life of a community or of a

nation is peaceful and contented, and men who exhibit these virtues in their characters make good citizens and lead happy lives.

Readiness to forgive injuries is a virtue necessary for peaceful living, for all at times do some wrong to another, moved by passion, or envy, or some other evil emotion. Readiness to forgive such wrong is a sign of a noble disposition, and magnanimity includes this readiness, as well as the large-heartedness which makes allowance for the weaknesses of others, and takes a generous view of their motives and actions.

Toleration is an allied virtue that may be practiced towards equals or towards inferiors—the recognition that the Self expresses itself in many ways, and that none should seek to force on another his own views or his own methods. Tolerance has always been a characteristic of Hinduism, which has never sought to convert men from their own faith, nor to impose on those within its own pale any special form of intellectual belief. The variety of philosophic views embraced within its circle, as shown in the six Darshanas, testifies to the tolerance and wide-mindedness which have ever marked it. This tolerance is based on the belief in the One Self, and the reverent acceptance of the infinite variety of Its intellectual manifestations. Hence Hinduism has ever been permeated by the large-hearted toleration which is the very spirit of Ishwara. All are His; all paths by which men seek God lead to Him; as men walking from opposite quarters reach the same city, though walking in opposite directions, so men from all quarters, seeking God, meet in Him at last. It is foolish and childish, then, to quarrel about the ways. “In whatever way men resort to me do I thus reward them. It is my path which men follow everywhere” (Bhagavad Gita 4:11).

Even when want of sufficient growth and knowledge keeps men away from the higher and attached to the lower manifestations of Deity, even then it is the One Ishwara who inspires their faith in the lower forms suited to their undeveloped intelligence, and it is He who gives the perishable fruit on which their desires are fixed. “Those whose knowledge has been stolen away by various desires resort to other gods, following various religious forms (rites; disciplines), impelled thus by their own natures (prakritis). Whoever wishes to worship whatever form with faith, on him I bestow immovable faith. He who, endowed with this faith, desires to propitiate that form, receives from it his desires because their fulfillment has been decreed by me. But temporary is the fruit for those of small understanding” (Bhagavad Gita 7:20-23). “Even those who with devotion worship other gods also worship me, though with a mistaken approach. Truly I am the Enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices; but because they do not know (recognize) me in truth they fall [back into rebirth in this world]” (Bhagavad Gita 9:23-24).

Such is the noble and liberal teaching of Hinduism, and it should shape the thoughts of every true aryan, so that he may never fall into the error of trying to belittle or injure any of the religions of the world. Let him be tolerant even to the intolerant, and thus set a good example.

This tolerance of the religious beliefs, views, and bona fide opinions of others should not be misunderstood to mean toleration of and acquiescence in the active infliction of wrong by the wicked on the righteous and the innocent. A good man,

while forgiving as far as possible wrong done to himself, should endeavor to set right—by gentle means at first, and, if these do not succeed, then by stern ones in accordance with the law of the land—all wrong inflicted on others. Such is the duty that Sri Krishna expressly laid upon Arjuna, with the whole weight of the wisdom embodied in the Bhagavad Gita. Nor should any action be mistaken for intolerance which is only of the nature of counseling or education, even though it be the education of public opinion, or constitutional and sober endeavor to wean men from injurious ways, or a thoughtful discussion with the express object of eliciting truth. What is condemned is only the bigoted pride which imagines itself to be in sole possession of Truth, and would visit with punishment the slightest deviation from the course laid down by itself.

### **Other vices to avoid**

The vices which grow out of the hate emotion when it prevails among equals correspond on the side of evil to the virtues we have been studying on the side of good. It may almost shock the student to see very common faults of character classed as the fruits of the hate emotion, and yet if he thinks a little he will see that they have the marks of that emotion, as they drive men apart from each other, separating them and setting them in antagonism to each other, and that is clearly the result of the repellent force, which is hate and not love.

The opposite of kindness is harshness, which shows itself but too often in the family as moroseness, sullenness, irritability and peevishness—very common failings, and the destroyers of family affection and peace. These faults bring dark shadows into the family circle, in strong contrast to the light spread by the kind and sunny temper, and are but forms of anger, one of the root manifestations of the hate emotion. Manu classes anger and harshness among the sins which are to be specially avoided: “Let him avoid unbelief, censure of the Vedas, and slighting of the devas, hatred, obstinacy, pride, anger, and harshness” (Manu Smriti 4.163).

And this is natural, for these are sins which are especially productive of misery, and probably most of the daily troubles of life which cause harassment and worry are due to anger in one form or another. It is classed by Sri Krishna with lust and greed as forming part of the triple gate of hell and as one of the asuric characteristics. “Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the Self: desire, anger and greed. Therefore one should abandon (renounce) these three” (Bhagavad Gita 16:21). “Hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance are the endowment of those born to a demonic state” (Bhagavad Gita 16:4).

The mind confused by anger is easily hurried into other sins, and it is one of the chief roots of crime. Impatience is one of its smaller manifestations, and the student who is intent on improving his character should be on his watch against even this comparatively minor form of his great enemy. The steady effort to be patient with and kind to all will gradually eradicate from his character the fault of anger.

Harsh fault-finding, backbiting, slander and abuse are the opposites of magnanimity. They proceed from the same source as irreverence, etc. The way to correct these faults is always to examine whether the defect for which we wish to

condemn another is not present in ourselves. As Vidura says to Dhritarashtra: "You see the holes of another, though small as the mustard-grain, O King! Your own that are large as a bel-fruit you ignore even though seeing them!"

Rudeness, churlishness of bearing, a rough manner, are the faults which are the opposites of courtesy and consideration. They are exceedingly common in modern days, and are spreading in modern India. They are signs of a coarse and vulgar nature which—uncertain of its own power and of the respect of others—tries to assert itself by loudness and to force itself on the attention of others, and it is thus always a mark of weakness. The gentle courteous bearing of a man conscious of his own strength and position contrasts with the rough rude manner of a weak man, unfit for the position he is in and trying to cover his unfitness by self-assertion.

Crookedness, unfairness, deceit, infidelity, quarrelsomeness, fickleness, instability, are other common faults which appear in the relations between equals, and cause many troubles alike in family and social life. They all help to disintegrate families and nations, and men who have these vices are bad citizens, and sooner or later fall into well-deserved contempt and distrust.

Vindictiveness and revengefulness are the opposite of the readiness to forgive, which we have seen is a part of magnanimity, and they perpetuate troubles, keeping them alive when they might die by forgetfulness. The wish to return an injury suffered by inflicting an injury in return is a sign of complete ignorance of the working of the law. A man who suffers an injury should think that he has inflicted an injury on another in the past, and that his own fault comes back to him in the injury now inflicted on himself. Thus he closes the account. But if he revenges himself now, he will in the future again suffer the equivalent of the revenge he takes on his enemy. For that enemy will not be likely to think that he has been justly punished, and will nurse revenge again, and so the chain of claim and counter-claim will continue endlessly. The only way to get rid of an enemy is to forgive him; revengefulness stores up trouble for the future, which will inevitably come to the revengeful person, and the injuries we suffer now are only our own revenge coming home to ourselves. No one can wound us unless our own past places a weapon in his hands. Let a student remember this when some one injures him; let him pay his debt like an honest man, and have done with it.

Intolerance is a vice which has caused immense destruction in the world, especially in modern times. Endless wars have been caused by men of one religion wishing to impose their faith on men of another creed, and torrents of human blood have been shed in the name of God. Persecutions stain the page of history with blood and tears.

Sectarianism, when it is bitter and quarrelsome, is a form of intolerance, and in modern India this subtle enemy of religion is undermining the ancient noble toleration of Hinduism. Sectarian bigotry divides Hindu from Hindu, and blinds them, by magnifying unessential differences, to the essential unity in which they are rooted. As men lose the spirit of religion and cling chiefly to its forms, caring only for the external ceremony and not even understanding its meaning and the objects it is intended to bring about, they become more and more bigoted and intolerant, and split up into more and more numerous parties. Thus religion, which should bind men together, is

changed by intolerant bigotry into a disintegrating force.

The remarks which apply to religious intolerance in India apply with even greater force to social convention in India as well as elsewhere. In India they have a special application because of the inseparable inter-blending of social customs with religious customs, so that the paltriest and most trifling customs, having their origin in some temporary need on some special occasion, rapidly assume a deeply religious and permanent importance.

The true aryan must avoid intolerance and bigotry as he would avoid poison, and should remember that it is utterly alien from the spirit of his ancestral religion. He must look on all Hindu sects as members of his own family, and refuse to quarrel with or to antagonize any. And he must look outside the pale of Hinduism, and see in the other religions that surround him rays of the same spiritual sun in which he himself is basking, and thus spread peace over India and make possible for her a united national existence. Let his religious watchword be "include, not exclude," since the Self is One.

## X

### Virtues and Vices Towards Inferiors

#### **The virtues**

To complete the outline of the virtues and vices evolved in human relations, we must consider those which arise in a man's relation to his inferiors, accordingly as he is ruled by the love emotion or by the hate emotion. The virtues in this case will come under the general name of benevolence—the will to do good to those who are weaker than ourselves. The vices will come under the general name of pride, the sentiment which causes a man to look down on others, and to do them injury, according to the activity of the hate emotion in him.

Love showing itself to an inferior inevitably takes the form of benevolence, and its commonest form is that of compassion and pity. Weakness, ignorance and folly, arouse in the man ruled by the love emotion the desire to help the person who is at such disadvantage, by bestowing on him strength, knowledge and wisdom. Compassion at once springs up in him, as by sympathy he feels the weakness, ignorance, and folly as though they were his own, and thus becomes anxious to remove them, to raise the sufferer above them. From these virtues springs beneficence, the active carrying out of the will to do good, the performance of actions expressive of the good will felt.

In the conduct of parents to their children we see these virtues brightly show forth. The weakness of the child, its dependence and helplessness, awaken the tenderness of the parent, and he becomes filled with compassion and pity for the little creature that is so unable to protect and support itself. These virtues express themselves in softness of language, caressing gestures, encouraging looks and smiles, so that the child may lose the feeling of its own littleness and feebleness, and may in effect share and direct the strength and skill of its elders, and thus supply its own deficiencies. Compassion and pity seek, as does all love, to lessen the distance between itself and its object, to



raise its object towards itself. It allays the apprehension which might arise in the inferior, in presence of strength greater than his own, by the gracious aspect of kindness, expressing in every way that there is no reason for fear. Where it sees timidity and shrinking in the weak, it increases the outward manifestations of gentleness, softness, and sweetness, becoming the more gentle as the object of compassion is the more fearful and hesitating.

The stronger, the older, those who are in any way superior, should always remember to practice these gentle virtues towards the weaker, the younger, the inferior in any way, and should especially bear in mind that their exercise is the more needed when the inferior shows any of the manifestations of fear, of the idea that the superior is a hostile power, likely to inflict injury on him. Power is so constantly used to oppress and to injure, that the first feeling of the inferior in the presence of his superior is apt to be one of fear, and it is necessary to remove this by a manifestation of love.

Compassion and pity readily give rise to protection of the weak, whenever they are threatened by those stronger than themselves, and in protecting them heroism appears, the cheerful risking of oneself for the sake of someone weaker. The hero is the man who risks his life for the good of another who is in need of help, without grudging the cost. The name is most often given to the warrior who gives his life for his king and his country, or to the martyr who dies for his faith; but it is deserved equally by many an unknown man and woman, who in ordinary human circumstances sacrifices life or health for others—the physician or nurse who dies worn out by strenuous exertions in aid of the plague-stricken; the mother who rescues a child from death by ceaseless attendance, careless of her life and health, caring only to supply everything that the babe needs; the bread-winner, who becomes exhausted by excessive toil, sacrificing leisure, strength and health, that the weaker ones dependent on him may not feel the pinch of starvation. The heroic virtues—courage, valor, endurance, etc.—have for the most part their root in compassion and in a sense of duty to the weak, a sympathy with them in their sufferings and a desire to remove these sufferings; they are most readily evoked in presence of the inferior in need of help. In fact, when they appear in the relations to superiors and equals, it is always in connection with the need of these persons, and the man showing the heroic virtues has something to give of which they are in want. It may be a king who, though occupying the position of a superior to his soldiers individually, needs their help for the protection of his crown; or a brother who, normally equal, has a deficiency which his brother can supply at the moment; and so on. It still remains that the hero is always the giver, and leaves in his debt those for whom he pours out his life or his possessions. Compassion, protection and heroism are virtues that especially befit kings and rulers.

Liberality is a virtue, again, which is called out by the presence of inferiors, and the readiness to give, the virtue of charity, is one which has been placed by Hinduism in the very first rank. Dana, gift, has always been an essential part of every sacrifice, and the feeding and supporting of true and learned Brahmanas has been no less essential. By these rules men were trained to sacrifice part of their wealth for the benefit of others, and thus were led onwards to a true understanding and acceptance of the great

law of sacrifice.

Manu says: “Let him diligently offer sacrifices and oblations with faith; these, if performed with faith and with rightly earned wealth, become unperishing. Let him always observe the duty of charity, connected with sacrifices and oblations, with a contented mind, having sought with diligence a worthy recipient. Something verily ought to be given ungrudgingly by him who has been asked, for a worthy recipient will surely arise who will save him from all (sins).” (Manu Smriti 4.226-228)

The way in which charity should be done is very clearly laid down by Sri Krishhna, who divides gifts, according to their nature, into sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. “That gift which is given with the thought: ‘It is to be given,’ to a worthy person, one who has done no prior favor [to the giver], in a proper place at a proper time: that gift is considered sattwic. But that gift which is given with the aim of recompense, or with regard to [the giving’s] fruit, or is given unwillingly (grudgingly; reluctantly), is considered rajasic. The gift which is given at the wrong place or time, to unworthy persons, without respect or with disdain, is declared to be tamasic” (Bhagavad Gita 17:20-22)

That charity should be done with courtesy and gentle kindness is a rule on which much stress is laid. We often read in the Itihasas directions to show careful respect in the making of gifts; charity should ever be gracious, for even a trace of contempt or disrespect makes it, as above said, tamasic.

The idea of showing to weakness the same courtesy that is extended to rank and superiority, a tender deference and consideration, comes out strongly in the following sloka: “Way should be made for a man in a carriage, for one who is above ninety years old, for a sick person, for one who carries a burden, for a woman, a snataka, a king and a bridegroom” (Manu Smriti 2.138).

Similarly we find, when directions are being laid down as to the giving of food to people in the due order of their position, preference over all is given to the weak: “Let him, without making distinctions, feed newly-married women, young maidens, the sick, and pregnant women, even before his guests” (Manu Smriti 3.114).

Another virtue which should be cultivated in relation to inferiors is what may, for lack of a better term, be called appreciativeness, the full recognition of all that is best in them. This recognition, generously expressed, has a most encouraging effect, and stimulates them to put out all their energies. The sense of weakness, of littleness, of inferiority, tends to paralyze, and many a man fails simply by lack of confidence in his own powers. A word of hearty appreciation gives the encouragement needed, and acts like sunshine on a flower, causing the whole nature to expand and glow.

Patience is also most necessary in all dealings with inferiors; lesser ability generally implies less quickness of understanding, less power to grasp or to perform, and the superior needs to practice patience in order not to confuse and bewilder the inferior. With children and servants this virtue has special opportunity for exercise, and its existence in the elders is peculiarly helpful and peace-making in the family. Strength should be used to help and support weakness, not to crush and terrify it, and “patience sweet that naught can ruffle” is a sign of a truly great and strong nature.

Appreciativeness and patience are specially needed in parents and teachers.

### **The vices**

The vices that spring out of the hate emotion to inferiors are of the nature of pride, the sense of superiority in the separated Self, looking down on those below it, and desiring to still further lower them, in order to make its own superiority more marked. The character of a man filled with pride is graphically described by Sri Krishna: “Today this has been acquired by me. This I shall also obtain. This is mine, and this gain also shall be mine. That enemy has been slain by me, and I shall slay others, too, for I am the Lord, I am the enjoyer, I am successful, powerful, and happy. I am wealthy and high-born, who else is equal to me? I shall sacrifice, I shall give, I shall rejoice” (Bhagavad Gita 16:13-15).

Such a man, looking down on his inferiors, seeking only his own gain and his own advantage, will see in them only persons to be used for his own purpose. To them he will show the vices of scorn, contempt, arrogance, disdain, expressing in words and actions his sense of the distance between himself and them. His own bearing will be marked by aggressiveness, self-assertion, overbearingness, implanting dislike and hatred in those with whom he comes into contact, unless they are thoroughly dominated by the love emotion. If his inferiors possess anything which he desires, and he is able to deprive them of it without danger to himself, he may fall into robbery and murder; and he will use his superiority to oppress and enslave. The characters of many such men may be studied in history—tyrants, oppressors, causing widespread destruction and misery, and thus sowing in the breasts of the oppressed the seeds of evil passions which sprang up into a crop of revolt, bloodshed and anarchy. Manu sternly condemns the kings that fail in the duty of protection: “The king that punishes the innocent and punishes not the criminal, he goes into infamy and hell” (Manu Smriti 8.128).

In a smaller fashion these evils are reproduced in the family and in society where the superiors exhibit the fruits of hate instead of love. The tyrannical father or master implants and fosters in his children and servants the vices of the oppressed, and creates the evils which he later endeavors in vain to destroy.

Hauteur, haughtiness, reserve, are subtler forms of this same emotion, and create much mischief when they appear between those between whom cordiality, affection and openness alone should prevail. They should be very carefully guarded against by the student, when he comes to deal with those who are younger than he, or those towards whom nature or circumstances place him in the position of superior to inferior. He should ever remember that the duty of the superior is to bring the inferior up to his own level so far as is possible, and not to keep him inferior and constantly remind him of any distance that there may be between them. If he makes the mistake of following the latter course, the probable, nay the certain, result will be that he will drive the inferior either into a slavish cringing and timidity and nervousness, on the one hand, or rebellion, pride and contempt, on the other. But if he behave otherwise, and treat his inferior as his equal, then the probability, almost the certainty, is that the

inferior will readily see his superiority, and treat him with due respect and reverence. It is they who selflessly help others to rise that are honored, not they who desire aggrandizement for themselves.

Let the student then remember in all his relations with his inferiors to cultivate sympathy and compassion and active beneficence. If in the family he shows these virtues to the younger and to the servants, in his later life in society and in the nation these virtues will still mark his character, and he will become a true philanthropist, a benefactor of his community and of his country.

## XI

### The Reaction Of Virtues And Vices On Each Other

In order that a youth may understand how to improve his own character and meet the difficulties and temptations which surround him, it is important that he should know how the virtues and vices of people react on each other. By understanding this, he will know how to be on his watch against evil reactions, and how to promote the good both in himself and in others.

The general law is that an emotion—and the virtue or the vice that is its permanent mood—when exhibited by one person to another, provokes in that other a similar emotion, virtue or vice. An exhibition of love calls out love in response; an exhibition of hate is answered by hate. Anger produces anger; irritation causes irritation; gentleness brings out gentleness; patience is responded to by patience. If the student will observe himself and his neighbors, he will soon discover for himself the reality of this law, and will see how the moods of people are affected by the moods they meet with in others. One ill-tempered man will set a whole company jangling; one sweet-tempered man will keep everybody at peace.

This is the general law, working among average people who are equals, in whom the love emotion and the hate emotion are both present and are about equally balanced. When the people are not equals, but one is inferior to the other, the emotion, virtue or vice shown by one will also produce in the other one similar in kind, but corresponding to the one first shown, not identical with it. Thus an exhibition of love to an inferior will produce in him love, but the nature of the love will be governed by this inferiority, and will be reverence, trust, serviceableness, and so on. Benevolence will be answered by gratitude, and pity by confidence. An exhibition of hate to an inferior will produce in him hate, but the nature of the hate, again, will be governed by his inferiority, and will be fear, deceit, treacherous revenge, and so on. Oppression will be met with sullenness, and cruelty with silent vindictiveness. The good will produce good, and the evil, evil, according to the general law; but the particular nature of the good or evil shown will be governed by the relative positions of the individuals concerned.

When we come to study exceptional people, another law comes in. If an exceptionally good man is observed, one in whom the love emotion is dominant, then it will be seen that he does not answer anger with anger, but that when anyone shows

the vice of anger to him, he meets it with the opposite virtue, kindness; if a man shows him the vice of pride, he meets it with the opposite virtue, humility; if a man shows him the vice of irritation, he meets it with the opposite virtue, patience; and so on. The result is that the vice is checked, and very often the person who showed it is led, by the exhibition of the opposite virtue, to himself imitate that instead.

In the case of an exceptionally bad man, one who is dominated by the hate emotion, there is but too often an exhibition of vice in answer to an exhibition of virtue. A man showing humility to such a one is met by pride; gentleness provokes insult; patience stimulates oppression.

We have thus two laws:

1. Among ordinary persons, emotions, virtues and vices provoke their own likenesses, or correspondences.
2. In persons who are definitely dominated by love or hate, emotions, virtues and vices provoke the appropriate subdivision of their own dominant emotion.

Let us consider instances.

Two ordinary men, equals, meet, and one in a bad temper speaks angrily; the other flares up in reply, answering angrily; the first retorts, yet more angrily; and so it goes on, each getting more and more angry, until there is a furious quarrel. How often have friends been parted by a quarrel beginning in the ill-temper of one.

Two other men meet, and one, in a bad temper, speaks angrily; the other answers softly with a pleasant smile and friendly gesture. The anger of the first, finding no fuel, dies down, and the soft words and smile awaken an answering smile; the anger is gone, and the two walk off arm-in-arm.

A man in whom the hate emotion predominates, superior to another, treats the latter with insolence and threat, trying to force him to yield to his will. The inferior meets this exhibition of evil emotion with fear, distrust and sullen submission, and in his heart springs up the desire for revenge, which he nourishes until an opportunity occurs to injure the superior. The latter, seeing the fear and sullen submission, shows yet more insolence and scorn, the sight of the fear increasing the original contempt for the inferiority of the other. This again leads to increased fear and distrust and more slavish submission, with growing longing for revenge, and thus the vicious cycle is repeated over and over again.

A superior man, in whom the love emotion predominates, comes into contact with an inferior, in whom the very sight of his superiority arouses fear and distrust. The exhibition of these vices moves him to pity and compassion, and he answers the fear and distrust by increased kindness of manner and softness of language. The inferior thus met is soothed and encouraged, and his fear diminishes to slight timidity of approach; this in its turn disappears, and is replaced by trust and confidence in the good-will of the superior. Thus in his heart the love emotion is aroused, and the seeds of virtue are implanted instead of those of vice, and the relation established is one which conduces to the happiness of each of the persons concerned.

The Itihasas and Puranas have many instances of this interplay of emotions, of the effects of the exhibition of virtues and vices reacting on each other. Bhima's scornful

laughter over the blunders of Duryodhana awakens hatred and the desire for revenge in the bosom of the latter, and the hatred grows into one of the causes of the destructive war between the Pandavas and the Kurus. Kaushalya's angry reproaches as to the treatment of Rama are met by Dasharatha with gentle humility, and she is quickly moved to repentance and shows loving humility in return. Arjuna's fear at the sight of the Virat-rupa in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is allayed by Sri Krishna's gentle words and reassumption of His ordinary form. These stories are told for our instruction, that we may learn how we should meet and conquer evil, not by imitating it, but by exhibiting the opposite emotion. A fire is easily put out at the beginning, but when it has fuel thrown into it, it grows and increases, and at last destroys all with which it comes into contact.

The student will now understand the scientific nature of the command addressed to their followers by all the great divine teachers, never to return evil with evil, but always with good. We can understand now why and how it has ever been said: Do unto others as you would they should do unto you. This is the summary of the Science of Conduct, because the "others" are in very truth "you" yourself.

Says Manu: "Let him not be angry again with the angry man; being harshly addressed, let him speak softly" (Manu Smriti 6.48).

The Sama Veda says: "Cross the passes difficult to cross; (conquer) wrath with peace; untruth with truth."

Says the Buddha: "Hatred ceases not by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love." And again: "To the man that causelessly injures me, I will return the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall flow from me." And again: "He who bears ill-will to those who bear ill-will can never become pure; but he who feels no ill-will pacifies those who hate,.... Overcome anger by not being angered; overcome evil by good; overcome avarice by liberality; overcome falsehood by truth."

Says Lao-tzu: "To those who are good, I am good; and to those who are not good, I am also good; and thus all get to be good. To those who are sincere, I am sincere; and to those who are not sincere, I am also sincere; and thus all get to be sincere."

Says Jesus Christ: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Evil is only perpetuated when it is returned, the wrong emotion growing ever stronger as it is fed with fuel of its own nature; but as water poured on fire is love poured on hate. Happiness can only be gained as the fires of hatred are quenched, and this can only be done by love, generously and freely outpoured.

This is the general law, and in the strictest sense this is the last method of finally changing an evil nature into a good one. But, in dealing with limited times and spaces, it becomes the duty of those occupying special positions or offices in the community, or finding themselves in special situations created by the exceptionally evil, to apply the law of justice and punishment rather than that of charity. The sovereign and the judge, representing the aspect of nature embodied in the law of equilibrium, find it their special duty to punish the evil-doer and suppress the disturbances caused by crime,

restoring the equilibrium of society. Apart from this special modification, the general law holds good.

Further, understanding the nature of virtues and vices, and their relations to and reactions upon each other, the student will now be in a position to cultivate deliberately the love emotion in his own nature, with the virtues which are its permanent moods, and he will learn also to awaken and stimulate these in others by exhibiting them in his own conduct.

In his superiors he will awaken benevolence, compassion, tenderness, by showing to them reverence, service, dutifulness and obedience; and if he meets a superior who shows any harshness or pride, he will check in himself the feeling of fear which springs up, and by showing a frank humility and a confidence in his good will, he will awaken the love emotion, and will thus turn the harshness into kindness and the pride into compassion.

In his equals he will ever seek to arouse affection by showing it himself, to win them to kindness by showing kindness, to courtesy by showing courtesy, to uprightness by showing uprightness. When they show any of the vices of the hate emotion to him, he will restrain the similar emotion that leaps up in himself in answer, and will deliberately show the opposite virtue that belongs to the love emotion, and will oppose kindness to unkindness, courtesy to rudeness, uprightness to deceit. Thus he will not only avoid increasing the mischief caused by others; but in those others themselves, unless they be exceptionally evil, he will arouse right emotion and help them to improve.

In his inferiors he will try to plant the seeds of trust and confidence, encouraging them by his gentleness and patience, and eradicating all suspicion and fear. When he finds an inferior showing these vices, he will not allow himself to give way to scorn and contempt, but will increase his own gentleness and patience, and gradually lead the weaker into the love relation with himself that will make their relations mutually pleasant.

If these principles ruled human relations in the family, the community, the nation, how changed would be the aspect of the world. How quickly would discord change to peace, storm to calm, misery to happiness. To use knowledge to guide action, so that right action may spring from right knowledge, should be the aim of every student of the Science of Ethics. Only thus can character be builded, and India's sons become worthy of their motherland. The student of today is the citizen of tomorrow. May right instruction lead him to noble life.

"I am giving you complete union of hearts and minds, in which ill-feeling finds no place. Even as the cow is pleased with the new-born calf, so let one be pleased with another. Let the son follow his father and be of one mind with his mother. Let the wife remain in peace with the husband and speak sweet words to him. Let not the brother bear malice towards brother or sister. Let all become harmonious with each other, and let all treat each other well." [The source of this quotation is not given by the author. *Editor's Note.*]

Peace to all Beings.



# THE WORLD'S ETERNAL RELIGION

## Chapter One

### The Purpose of This Book

Indian Dharma is a universal spiritual system, recognizing the goal of humanity's true life, and explaining and guiding its course to that goal. This teaching comes by immemorial tradition from master to pupil and is recorded and preserved in part in the ancient Vedic literature, and in part in the more popular Puranas, Smritis and the like scriptural works.

It is worth while to observe that India did not, nay, in view of the truth, could not, care to record a history in the modern sense; which means narrations limited to particular periods and geographical tracts, to certain select great names and localities arranged in a chronological order, all intended to picture forth a past to vivify the present. India's wisdom transcended the wisdom of every other country's, and it had a vivid knowledge of the past, the present and the future. How could the Seers of old take account of petty details which are forgotten as soon as given, as by school boys on leaving school? Countless ages, countless places, countless personages have come and gone, and will come and go. The Seer adheres to the truth. "History but repeats itself"—this is what they have brought out in the Grand Epics. In the play of human character in its birth and development and ideals and consummation common to all ages in all conditions, the essence is there, the chaff is thrown off. India has always referred itself for light and guidance to such ideals of lofty character as Bhishma, Dharmaraja (Yudhishtira), Rama, Krishna, Vyasa, etc. What higher ideals are necessary to govern human conduct by example and precept? The wisdom deduced from the epic record is preserved, and will never be lost, while modern historical works will have their day and vanish into "oblivion's uncatalogued library." The same truth holds good with respect to religious teaching.

The point is that those who ask for the sources of the teachings of India's religion cannot find them all in one place, or in one work, or some one period of time, or in any sort of written record. They are scattered far and wide, not only in numerous works, extant and inextant, but in varied traditions which are yet inaccessible to the general world. The mendicant minstrels, the Bauls of Bengal, for example, are followers of a religion, of which there is no history, on which there are no manuscripts, and for which there are no institutions to present their teaching about "the Man of my heart," of whom they sing and for whom they yearn. Religious thoughts, practices and traditions yet continue as esoteric, operating within their own consecrated limits, pursuing their purpose and fulfilling their end and aim.

We briefly describe the nature of some of those teachings which will be found to be

easily intelligible from the point of view of the theory of evolution. Evolution in religious thought is not merely physical or biological, nor only social, moral, or of any character referring to mortal life alone; it is a Universal Law comprehending the sublime truths of Philosophy and the final conclusions of Science, and uniting and reconciling all truths into one.

To quote an instance: "The Spirit in man and in the whole universe is One without a second." Man is a microcosm, the universe a macrocosm. Having arrived through four Stages of Ignorance previous to his human life, man had yet to pass three more Stages to be a perfectly evolved human being. He then becomes a fit candidate for further progress and evolves into absolute perfection by a gradation leading from the physical to the spiritual life, eliminating at each successive stage some persistent encumbrances, and finally gaining Freedom, which, in other words, is Self-realization as to being "One without a second." The problem is grand and sublime, almost daunting to follow, but there is a perfectly scientific theory of man's progress in this way, and the student will find light at every step in the study of it, and as in this field of study thinking is itself a direct instrument of help, the mere study will be of material use to the student helping his own progress towards the Goal. Here is some explanation of the problem.

There are *fourteen stages* in the progress of the soul from the first manifestation of life to the last attainment of Freedom. The first four stages are the *udvijja* (vegetable), the *swedaja* (secretal or germ), the *andaja* (ovarian, or egg-born) and the *jarayuja* (uterine, or sac-born), the culmination of which is the human animal. In this stage man has to pass through three grades—the *adhama* (lowest), the *madhyama* (middle) and the *uttama* (highest). In the first he is liable to fall back in evolution by a misuse of his free will, which he develops as a special characteristic in his human being. In the *madhyama* grade he grows a little discriminative and has experience of the *Pitri-Loka* and *Naraka*, becoming liable to repeated births and deaths. The last grade fits him for *Swarga* and return to mortal life for further growth. From this last grade he has to pass up through the next seven stages, the former seven being those of Ignorance and the latter seven those of Knowledge. These Seven Stages of Knowledge are named according to the progress of the soul, as follows: *Jnanda*, *Sunyasda*, *Yogada*, *Lilonmukti*, *Satpada*, *Anandpada* and *Paratpara*, The explanation in its proper place of the nature of these stages will show the reader how perfectly reasonable they are, and how they would tally with one's personal experience in following them.

The student of orthodox Indian Philosophies (or *Darshanas*) will be able to note a striking correspondence between the advance of the successive schools over their predecessors, and the advance of these successive Stages of Knowledge over their preceding stages. The *Darshanas* are seven.

It can be seen from this sort of treatment that the Indian religion, the Everlasting Vedic Dharma, which we mean by the title of Bharata Dharma, the Religion of India, is a scientific religion, and as science bars no enquirer against its tests, so the Bharata Dharma bars no one from its study and practice. The condition is absolutely in accordance with science; the fitness of the candidate in his progress being determined purely by the law of evolution. We exclude no human being, Indian or non-Indian, Arya

or non-Arya, civilized or barbarian, from a place of candidature in his evolution to perfection. His right to this is divine, as he in his origin is divine. Neither, likewise, could any religion other than this One religion of religions be believed to be outside its pale, because the evolution of humanity and its soul is universal—true in the case of the whole human race, as it is true in the case of the single individual soul. What other religious system is there of such perfect brotherhood of the whole human race, present, past and future! The Indian alone knows that “the whole earth with the man of goodness is but one family—home!”

# Chapter Two

## Dharma

### Universal Religion

#### Derivative meaning of Dharma

The word dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhri* and means “that which upholds,” or “that by which the universe is upheld.”

The Mahabharata recognizes this etymological meaning of dharma and takes it as upholding all creation so that whatever has the character of upholding is dharma.

The power and utility of dharma are similarly described in the Narayana Upanishad, dharma being a source of support to all, and a remover of sins.

A far wider meaning is then given to the word dharma. That Shakti (or Divine Power, or Divine Law or Divine Will) is dharma, which pervades the whole universe, and regulates its harmonious action, being the cause of the birth of the universe, its preservation, and its final dissolution or absorption into the Supreme.

#### Dharma as Divine Law

The Divine Will or Law thus manifesting itself is similarly named as dharma.

We see the continuous working of the forces of attraction and repulsion in the universe. Dharma is the power that maintains an equilibrium of these two forces throughout the creation. Thus the sun attracts the earth, the earth travels round the sun, and the moon round the earth, and each is kept in position—all this is owing to the operation of dharma. It is because of dharma that a thing is what it is. If dharma were to cease working even for a single instant, everything would go to wrack and ruin—the earth would at once pull down the moon, and both collide with each other with a tremendous crash, the sun would force in towards itself the other planets and the lesser suns, and the whole fabric of the heavens would be shattered in a moment. Where would our beautiful world be but for this dharma? Astronomy teaches that each world-system has its own sun, planets and satellites, and so forth, each of which is kept in position by the balance of attraction and repulsion. The sun does not draw down and dislodge the earth, and thus destroy the latter. The bigger planets do not do the same towards the smaller ones, and thus smash the latter to atoms. What keeps the balance in the world-systems? It is dharma.

Material science holds that there are the forces of attraction and repulsion connected with molecules and atoms. It has been shown how dharma keeps the equilibrium between the two forces. The whole of Nature (Prakriti) from the very sun down to the minute atom is under dharma, already designated as Divine Power or Divine Law.

## Relation of dharma to creation

This world of ours arose out of dharma. In the beginning of creation, there was the preponderance of the force of attraction. So, molecules attracted molecules, and the result was this perceptible world. And the final dissolution comes on by the preponderance of the force of repulsion—molecules would then continue repelling one another, and dispersing till all things disintegrated, and the result would be *pralaya* or universal destruction. There is a balance between the forces of attraction and repulsion in all embodied forms in the universe, and what maintains the balance is dharma.

## Dharma as Evolution

The ancient Hindus were aware of the principle of evolution long, long before Darwin and others taught it in the West. The Hindus hold that the jiva (individual spirit), in its onward march towards its Goal, travels steadily by degrees, now as a plant, then as an animal, through innumerable yonis or narrow gates of rebirth, till at last it takes its birth as man. It is dharma or Divine Law which has taken the jiva, most undeveloped and almost insentient in the beginning, to the stage of man, the fully conscious and developed being. And dharma will take him in course of time yet higher.

All jivas follow this strict course of evolution from the earliest conceivable material condition to the highest ordinary evolute in the form of the self-conscious and reflecting human being. The stages are these, leading from the gross to the intelligent being. Taking life as beginning to manifest itself is the vegetable kingdom, each evolved living being develops characteristics corresponding to its constituent elements. In vegetable life, there is preponderance of “gross” food (*anna*), which in the set language of the rishis is the *annamaya kosha*, or food-sheath. Next comes the germ life (*swadaja srishti*), where the *annamaya kosha* is partially subordinated to the *pranamaya kosha*, or the sheath of the vital forces. This is followed by the egg-born life (*andaja srishti*), in which the *manomaya kosha*, or the mind-sheath, develops itself in superiority to the other two. Lastly comes the *jarayuja srishti*, or the sac-born beings, where the *vijnanamaya kosha*, or the sheath of intelligence, plays the prominent part. The ultimate form of the sac-born beings is man, the fully developed jiva, in whom is brought into play the *anandamaya kosha*, or the sheath of joy. It is at this stage of evolution that the feeling of joy distinctly manifests itself in the peculiar act of laughing never observed in any previous stage. Students of logic will be reminded of the convenient definition of man: “Man is a laughing animal.”

It is dharma that keeps up this rising chain of evolution, from which there is no escape. Who can resist this all-powerful divine dharma? Knowing the Law, we can but work with it, we can help it to work smoothly, and it is sure to take us to our Destination. Going against the Law, we hinder our evolution. Dharma itself teaches us how to work smoothly and harmoniously, with it, so as to ensure our progressive evolution.

All jivas, other than man, are completely under the power of Prakriti (Nature), and follow her laws automatically. These jivas are lovingly nurtured and brought up by her, as by a fond mother. Like dutiful children they too while in the lower stages of

evolution, obey her commands instinctively in all actions, *e.g.*, in eating and drinking, in sleep, in coition, and so forth.

Now, when the jiva becomes a man, the highest developed being on earth, he develops the power of reasoning and intellect, and particularly a free will, and gaining knowledge, acquires tremendous power for good or evil. He now aspires to gain mastery even over Nature. Mark how man by his knowledge of Nature's Laws utilizes her forces to serve his own ends! As a consequence of his vast powers, which give birth to pride in him, man dares even to violate the laws of Nature. The result is that the gradual and steady evolution of such an individual is retarded, and down he must go to the lower stages. It is dharma alone which can lift him up again.

It might therefore be said that going with Nature, and never against her, following her laws and evolving gradually, till at last we reach the purpose of our evolution, is dharma. And falling back into the lower stages of evolution by acting against Nature and her laws is Adharma.

### **Dharma in Man**

The Indian rishis explain the term dharma in yet another way. They say that all created things have three Gunas or principles—sattwa (or goodness, light, happiness, purity, etc.); rajas, (or activity), and tamas (evil, darkness, ignorance, inactivity). Those actions that suppress the principles of tamas and rajas, and promote the growth of the principle of sattwa, are dharma.

In the universe the principle of rajas manifests itself as the force of attraction, and tamas as that of repulsion. That which keeps the equilibrium of these two principles in the world, is dharma, as already pointed out.

In man, rajas manifests itself as raga (or attachment) and tamas as dwesha (or aversion). Whenever there is a balance of these two in the human heart, sattwa in form of knowledge makes its appearance. All action that brings about this state is dharma.

The jiva, according to the principle of evolution, passes successively through the stages of the plant life, the germ-life, the-egg born life and the sac-born life, developing higher and higher consciousness and power, till it reaches the state of man, where its consciousness is fully developed into self-consciousness. It is therefore that no being other than man is responsible for his good and bad actions, or in other words, for punya and papa.

Those actions of man, whether of mind, body or speech, which increase knowledge that leads to the discrimination of dharma and adharma, have been called dharma in the Vedas.

### **The Dharma of the Hindus**

The Hindu Dharma is Nature's inexorable Universal Law. As this law is all-pervading, so everyone, every nation on the face of the earth, abides by the Hindu Dharma consciously or unconsciously. All religions of the world come under this dharma.

We hear the names of various faiths passing under the name of dharmas, such as

Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Muhammadanism, etc. But India's Eternal Dharma is called THE DHARMA, and includes all these faiths: It is the Universal Dharma.

Although in modern times, various fancy names have been given to this Eternal Dharma, yet in the sacred scriptures, no other name for it is anywhere found, but that of "the Dharma." Indeed, "the Dharma" is the only name proper for it, by reason of the universality, liberality, peaceful tolerance and an all-embracing purview as of Omnipotent God Himself, which characterize it.

### **The three Gunas**

Dharma or Divine Law, also called Shakti, has been considered in our shastras in three aspects as already pointed out—sattwa, rajas and tamas. These three pervade the whole creation. The preponderance of sattwa in man makes him pure, good, contemplative. Rajas makes him active. This principle preponderates in Western nations. Tamas gives rise to bad thoughts and evil passions.

It ought to be the aim of every man to increase the sattwa guna in him. For this guna positively helps the natural evolution of the jiva towards his goal, while others hinder it. The growth of sattwa in man makes him selfless, and self-denying, pure and holy, just and merciful. It gives him peace and bliss. So his path to the Goal gradually becomes straight and easier. Therefore actions that help the growth of this guna is dharma.

Tamas fosters ignorance, selfishness, inactivity, vanity, greed, and all base lusts and low passions in man. Thus his bonds are increased, he is tied down to the vile earth, and his evolution is checked. Therefore everything that increases this guna is bad, is adharma.

Thus, according to the Hindu shastras, all actions of man, whether mental or physical, come under dharma (punya) and adharma (papa). And it is for this reason that it is laid down in the Hindu scriptures that the acts of eating, drinking, sleeping, seeing, hearing, and all other acts of man may be either dharma or adharma. According to our science of religion, all things in the world and all actions of living beings are within the sphere of, and connected with, dharma or adharma.

### **Man's Goal according to the Dharma**

For the religion of the Hindus, as meaning the practical side of dharma, no special name is given, all religious practices being based on Sadachara, the practices of the good and the wise. The whole life of a Hindu is religion. With other peoples, religion is only a part of life, and a sharp distinction is made by them between religion and ordinary daily life, as if religion has little to do with ordinary life. Not so with the Hindus. They make no distinction between ordinary life and religion. Their whole life is regulated by religion, even death with them taking place in religion.

It may also be remarked that the founders of other prevailing religions formulated their respective systems in dogmas and arbitrary rules, laying them down as inviolable laws, so that there was no path to salvation except through their one particular creed. But the Sanatana Dharma of India is not marked by any such spirit of narrowness or

exclusiveness. It is not a particular creed promising salvation to its followers alone, it is the Universal Dharma for all mankind for all times.

Dharma has been defined by the sage Kanada, in his Vaisheshic System of Philosophy, thus: "That is dharma which brings about material and spiritual advancement and Final Liberation."

Dharma has been described at length, and it has been pointed out that it pervades the whole universe as the threefold combination of sattwa, rajas and tamas. The equilibrium of these three principles is Prakriti (Nature, or primordial matter). The soul is independent of Prakriti and consequently of the three principles in it. The Self's goal is to free itself from the experiences of the operation of the three principles, which in ignorance it continues to attribute to itself.

This end is called in our scriptures by various names, e.g., nisreyasa, moksha, mukti, apavarga, sayujya, nirvana—all meaning the same thing.

This then is the blissful Goal of man. Each being on earth is consciously or unconsciously laboring to attain that Goal. He cannot help it—it is his very nature; for he is under the iron grip of the Law of Dharma. and that Law is working for this same end.

It is therefore that the Hindus judge all human action by the aforesaid standard. Does an act help me to attain the Goal? Does an act take a being one step nearer to that sublime end? If so, the action is called good, dharma, or duty; morality, virtue or punya. And if not, it is bad, adharma, immoral, or papa.

Various means are prescribed by the rishis for the attainment of that Goal, which is Supreme Bliss. These means are like so many different roads leading to a common destination. A man may choose any road that suits him best; but must not abuse a brother of his, who, intending to go to the same Goal, happens to choose a different path, according to his inclination, temperament and taste.

Out of a variety of such paths, three can be determined as principal ones. They are:

- (1) The Path of Dana, or charity
- (2) The Path of Tapas, or austerities
- (3) The Path of Yajna, or sacrifice.

Under the third head, come those three well-known paths, the Path of Selfless Work (Karma Yoga), the Path of Love (Bhakti Yoga) and the Path of Knowledge (Jnana Yoga).

### **Western Conceptions of Religion**

It is now proposed to give briefly the conceptions of religion of some of the greatest philosophers and thinkers of the West. (This and the following quotations in this section are from Max Muller, the prominent nineteenth century orientalist and editor of *The Sacred Books of the East*.)

"According to Kant, religion is morality. When we look upon all our moral duties as divine commands that, he thinks, constitutes religion. And we must not forget that Kant does not consider that duties are moral duties, because they rest on a divine command; that would be according to Kant merely revealed religion. On the contrary,



he tells us that because we are directly conscious of them as duties, therefore we look upon them as divine commands.”

According to the Hindu teaching, duty, morality, knowledge, and so on, are not ends in themselves, but are the means to the End.

According to Fichte: “Religion is knowledge—it gives a man a clear insight into himself, answers the highest questions and imparts to us a complete harmony with ourselves, and a thorough sanctification to our minds.”

This view distantly points to the Sankhya doctrine.

Hegel’s view is this. He says: “Religion is, or ought to be, perfect freedom, for it is neither more nor less than the divine spirit becoming conscious of himself through the finite spirit.”

This view very nearly approaches our Vedanta Philosophy.

According to Max Muller: Religion is a subjective faculty for the apprehension of the infinite.

John Stuart Mill’s conception of religion is this. He says: “The essence of religion is the strong and earnest direction of the actions and desires towards an ideal object recognized as of the highest excellence and is rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire.”

This is our Bhakti Yoga or the “Path of Love” for the attainment of the Supreme.

Professor Seely’s view of religion is again like our Bhakti Yoga. He says: “The words religion and worship are commonly and conveniently appropriated to the feelings with which we regard God. But those feelings—love, awe, admiration which together make up worship—are felt in various combinations for human beings and even for inanimate objects. It is not exclusively, but only *par excellence* that religion is directed towards God. When feelings of admiration are very strong, and at the same time serious and permanent, they express themselves in recurring acts; and hence arise ritual, liturgy. Religion is what may be described as habitual and permanent admiration.”

This view agrees with that of Mill given above.

Lastly, let us give the view of another great man, the Positivist, Comte. He says: “Religion in itself expresses the state of perfect unity which is the distinctive mark of man’s existence both as an individual and in society, when all the constituent parts of his nature, moral and physical, are made habitually to converge towards one common purpose.”

If these expositions of religion be acceptable each in its own way, then one must admit that the Hindu Dharma is the greatest and noblest on the face of the earth, comprehending all the above ideas and essays towards a final definition. They are somewhat imperfect conceptions of dharma. It is the Eternal Dharma of the Hindus that is perfect from every point of view. There is nothing antagonistic in the views quoted to the Hindu Dharma, which fully supplies the short-comings of all. The Sanatana Dharma is the oldest religion and the father of every other, living or dead. It stands unrivalled in the depth and splendor of its magnificent philosophy.

## Utility of Dharma

The aim of religion as already mentioned is to secure Abhyudaya, or material and spiritual prosperity) and *nisreyasa* (or perfect, eternal bliss). For the humble human being in his humblest original condition, an advance through body and intellect is necessary, so that with a perfect bodily organism, he can reach the Goal without any obstacle. The Hindu teaching prescribes four objects in the growth of human life: two of them apply to the material body, and the other two are for the spiritual Goal. The first are: gain (*artha*) and desire (*kama*), and the last are: righteousness (*dharma*) and freedom (*moksha*). The reader will note what a sublime view is here taken of the utility of *dharma*. It is a universal benignness intended for the advancement of the whole of humanity through the material, and along the spiritual, path to Freedom and bliss, the Goal of all the previous struggle through innumerable stages of growth. Other religions, as we have seen, but faintly help the aspirant. But in Hinduism as defined and described above, there is no vagueness. It is a vivid, living, and concrete guidance to aspirants of all classes and in all conditions of time, place, and circumstances.

### **Dharma for all Mankind**

On a careful examination of the foregoing, we see how deep was the insight of our rishis into dharmic action, and how wonderfully comprehensive are the divisions given! No religion of the world, living or dead, can possibly go outside the dharmas listed—all are included therein. We also find that differences in human nature, differences in temperaments and capacity, etc., have also been taken into account by the rishis. A person may, according to his taste, inclination and powers, choose any one of these *angas* of *dharma*, and if followed patiently, it will lead him to liberation. A tiny spark of fire many give birth to a big conflagration.

An emotional man will naturally choose the path of Worship, a man having a liking for actions will choose the path of Karma, and a contemplative man will choose the path of Knowledge. But people are apt to forget that *all paths lead to Him*. We have no right to call people who follow a path different to ours, to be in the wrong. Sectarian antagonism and quarrel between religion and religion have absolutely no meaning.

To be all-comprehensive, and to apply to all mankind, a religion must prescribe different paths. It is so in Sanatana Dharma, where all, from the highest developed being who wishes to meditate on the Formless Supreme Being down to the savage who worships the Dark Powers (*Asuras*); the grossest fetishism and the highest absolutism, all have their place in the all-encompassing embrace of Sanatana Dharma. There is no creed in the world that does not depend on some aspect (*anga*) or other of Sanatana Dharma for its existence.

# Chapter Three

## Karma

### The Law of Karma

Karma is the vibration of prakriti or primordial matter which is the result of its three gunas or principles of creation. (See Glossary.) It goes on as cause and effect, like the seed and the sprout. The seed of karma is called samskara. Karma and samskara are of two kinds, pure and impure. Pure karma is the cause of a man's liberation, while impure karma is the cause of bondage. It has also been proved that purification of samskara leads to the purification of karma and the purification of karma leads to freedom.

Karma in the comprehensive sense of all or any action is nowhere treated as a separate subject in the known philosophical works, but we will summarize those teachings here to show how radical, how far-reaching and how incomparably searching the view of karma is as taken by the shastras.

All creation comes from the operation of karma. It abides for aeons through karma and it goes into annihilation through karma. All life macrocosmic and microcosmic, from the minutest vegetation to the highest developed man, universal and individual, is a play of karma. The divine power is karma. In fact, God Divine is Himself subject to karma. What is this almighty karma? How does it come into existence? How are individual souls able to attain salvation conquering the power of that karma?

The Vedas declare karma to be the same as Brahman. In fact there is no difference between the Divine Power and karma. Everything from the insignificant straw to the voluminous and vast universe, all dualistic existence that we see, is subject to karma. The appearance of the Manifested out of the Unmanifest is due to karma as the cause. Karma gives manifest, activity to sattwa, rajas and tamas, dharma and adharma being characterized by these principles, respectively, so that karma is the secret of dharma and adharma.

Karma works in three ways. There is the sahaja karma—self-springing, spontaneous karma. There is the aisha karma—the karma belonging to the Supreme Lord or occult world. And there is the jaiva karma, of the individual soul; the same being divided as pure and impure. The spontaneous (sahaja) karma is the source of the appearance of the fourteen worlds [lokas], of the creation as a whole, inclusive of moveable and immoveable beings, the Brahmanda (solar system) containing an infinite variety of manifestation.

The jaiva karma (karma of the individual soul) ever gives rise to the world of action, the mortal world and the various high and low conditions of man together with the worlds of fruition—heaven and hell, godly and demonic powers and so on.

The spontaneous or sahaja karma is absolute but subject at His will to the Divine.

The individual or jaiva karma is subject in its operation to the same individual soul. With reference to the sahaja karma, the individual soul has no mastery over it but is entirely under its power; while the individual is master with reference to his own karma, so that the individual souls are therefore responsible regarding their punya or papa, righteous and unrighteous actions.

Here there is another point to be remembered. The mainspring of these three divisions of karma is to be understood under the title of samskara, which may be rendered as a spontaneous latent impulse. This latent impulse is the seed of karma.

The individuals have two courses before them, the tamasic (based on ignorance) and sattwic (based on knowledge) which are called impure and pure karmas. The tamasic proceeding from adharma takes them to degradation, the sattwic uniting with the upholding power of dharma leading them to Conscious Being advances them higher and higher. While pursuing this path unerringly they reach the Supreme without any trouble.

With karma are connected two powers: raga–attraction and dwesha–repulsion. Attraction having attachment as its cause, proceeds from rajas. The other with aversion as its root cause comes from tamas. All creation small and great proceeds from these two powers. The two-fold creation of opposites springs from them. Where there is a balance or equilibrium of these two, there springs the state of joy (ananda) in which sattwa is the potent factor. The divine manifesting always abides in that condition full of sattwa. The individuality of the jivas (souls) is furthered by the condition of bondage in the unequal combination of the two powers. The third condition of sattwa leads to mukti, free from attachment and aversion, because it proceeds from the power prevailing in opposites (dwandwas). Going beyond the province of opposites free from attachment and hatred, freed from desire, those that devote themselves to karma, go unfailingly to the happy goal of bliss. By the elimination of desire in the performance of one's action, the purity proceeding from the purificatory rites is attained. The action thus becomes pure and by the purity of action avidya disappears; then by the help of vidya the knot of the conscious and unconscious springing from ignorance is untied. By its disentanglement the individual reaches the Supreme Lord.

The stream of karma being endless and beginningless pervading the microcosm and macrocosm, if the jiva desires enjoyment, then the karma will never disappear. That bondage cannot be got rid of. The way out is to root out the impulse that forms the seed of karma. This is effected by observing the vow of desirelessness. One that is devoted in love to the Divine One and takes refuge in the Divine, conquers desires. Evidently those that love karma (external action) and not the Divine, must continue in bondage, while those that love the Divine reach kaivalya.

The worldly existence binding the jivas is due to the working of unequal opposites of attraction and repulsion, that is, the dwandwa. The dwandwa is the cause of bondage whilst ekata (oneness) is the sure cause of mukti (freedom).

# Chapter Four

## The Vedanta Philosophy

The Vedanta Philosophy is the most important of all the Hindu Philosophies. In fact, it is the last (final) thing in all Philosophy. The great structure of the Hindu religion stands on the strong foundation of the Vedanta Philosophy.

It is a development of the Philosophy of the Vedas—especially that of the Upanishads. The great rishi, Veda-Vyasa wrote his wonderful Brahma-Sutras based on the Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Then many great and learned men wrote commentaries on them, and thus fully developed the Vedanta Philosophy.

The Vedanta Sutras begin: “Now, therefore, is the enquiry concerning Brahman, the Supreme One.

“ He is that, whence are the creation, continuance, and dissolution.

“He is the Omnipotent Creator of the worlds, and Omniscient Author of revelation.

“This appears from the import and right understanding of the Vedas.”

In the first chapter of the Sutras, the nature of the Supreme One has been discussed. Innumerable passages have been quoted from the various Upanishads. We shall quote a few.

The most important tenet of the Vedanta is that the Supreme One is the material as well as the efficient and instrumental cause of the universe.

Holding that there is absolutely *nothing else in the whole universe but That One*, the Vedanta goes on to describe the nature of That One.

“He wished to be many and prolific, and became manifold” (Chandogya Upanishad).

Therefore He is a Sentient Being, consequently rational and not insensible as the Prakriti of the Sankhyas.

Then again:

“The Omnipotent, Omniscient, Sentient Cause of the Universe is essentially happy. He is the ethereal element from which all things proceed and to which all return. He is the breath in which all beings merge and into which all rise. He is the light which shines in heaven and in all places high and low—everywhere throughout the world and within the human body. He is the lifebreath and intelligent Self—immortal, undying and ever blissful” (Chandogya Upanishad).

Brahman is eternal, omniscient, pervader of all things, ever satisfied in Nature, ever pure, intelligent and free. He is Holy Knowledge and Pure bliss and Joy.”

“Brahman is Supreme—Supreme and all-excellent, and pervading the body of each existent thing. He dwells deep in all existences. He encompasses and regulates the universe.”

“Brahman is the cause as well as the effect. Brahman is one without a second. He is not separate from the embodied Self. He is the Self, and the Self is He.”

“The same earth exhibits diamonds, rocks, oysters, etc.; the same soil produces a diversity of plants; the same food is converted into various excrescences—hair, nails, etc. As milk changes to curd, and water to ice, so is Brahman variously transformed and diversified without any external aid. In like manner, the spider spins his web out of his own substances, spirits assume various shapes, the lotus proceeds from pond to pond without the power of motion. That Brahman is entire and has no parts is no objection. He is not wholly transformed into worldly appearances. Various changes are presented to the same dreaming Self. Diverse illusory shapes and disguises are assumed by the same spirit.”

“Unfairness and want of mercy are not to be imputed to Him because some are happy, others are miserable and others again under both pleasure and pain. Everyone has his lot fixed according to his Karma and merits—his previous virtues and vice in a former state of the universe, which has no beginning in time. The rain-cloud distributes rain freely and impartially, yet the sprout varies according to the seeds.”

The Self is immortal. Individual Selves are in the Vedas compared to sparks issuing from a blazing fire. The Self is eternal and unborn. Its emanation is no birth and no original production. It is perpetually existent and conscious, not merely by association with the mind as the Vaisheshiks hold.

The Self is not of finite dimensions, nor minutely small, abiding within the heart and no bigger than the hundredth part of a hundredth of a hair's point (*i.e.* ethereal). On the contrary, being identical with the Supreme Brahman, it participates in its infinity.

The Self is active, and not merely passive as the Sankhyas maintain. Its activity, however, is not essential. As the carpenter, tools in hand, toils and suffers, so the Self in conjunction with its instruments—body, senses and organs—is active, and quitting them, reposes.

Blind in the darkness of ignorance, the Self is guided in its actions and fruition, in its attainment of knowledge and consequent liberation and bliss, by the Supreme Ruler, who causes it to act conformably with its previous resolves.

The Self is, as it were, a portion of the Supreme Ruler, as a spark of fire. The Supreme, however, does not partake of the pain and pleasure of which the human Self is conscious.

As the Sun's image, reflected in water, is tremulous, quaking with the undulations of the pool, without however affecting other watery images and the solar orbit, so the sufferings of one individual affect not another, nor the Infinite One.

Such being the state of man, how is it then that he feels that his existence is different from the Supreme One, and from the universe? If there is nothing else in the universe but that One, if his Self is one with the Supreme Self, how is it then that he feels the existence of ego in him?

The Vedanta replies that this is due to his ignorance. Whence does this ignorance come? When the Supreme One evolves from Himself the universe, He places it under the influence of Maya, which prevents one from knowing the real character of the universe.

Maya is some indescribable force or power of Brahman, which possesses everything in the universe. Influenced by Her, men forget their real nature, but consider that each has a separate and independent existence. In fact, this universe is the creation of Maya, having absolutely no reality behind it. There is no real existence of anything in the universe, except that of Brahman. Everything else is the result of the mysterious Maya. Like the Sankhya, the Vedanta does not admit the separate existence of Purusha and Prakriti. It holds that Prakriti and Purusha are but two separate manifestations of One, the Supreme Self, Brahman. The cause of these manifestations is Maya.

Not knowing his real nature through Maya is man's ignorance. So long as he will grovel in this ignorance, so long as he will identify himself with his body—so long he will have to pass through many births and deaths, through pleasure and pain. When he will be able to get rid of this ignorance, his illusion will be destroyed, he will then feel and realize that there exists nothing else in the universe but the Supreme.

Everything in the universe is invested by the Supreme with three gunas or principles, namely, sattwa, rajas and tamas, the nature of which has already been described.

These three principles affect men in everything according to their natural tendencies; and according as they possess them in a higher or lower degree, will they contrive to rise, or to fall, to improve in virtue and goodness and approach towards Him, or cultivate vicious propensities and wander away further and further from Brahman.

The Sutras say: "Just as a man, from darkness or distance, mistakes a piece of rope for a snake, so has he under the influence of ignorance, created for himself an outward world, which, like the imaginary snake, does not really exist. Thus he goes on performing various acts in this imaginary world. Man becomes the plaything of his own karma. And his karma brings him punishment for sinful acts, and happiness for good deeds. Thus he continues to suffer pain or enjoy happiness through many births, till, at the fulness of time, his ignorance is destroyed, and then he finds himself united with the Supreme One, he finds that in reality he never had a separate existence from the Supreme Brahman.

The human Self, thus created by the Lord's mysterious Maya, is encased in a body, as in a sheath (kosha), or rather in a succession of sheaths. The first or the innermost sheath is the Anandamaya. In this Kosha the jiva feels the divine happiness indirectly, and his existence as separate from Brahman owing to Maya. This is the jiva's karana sharira.

The Vijnanamaya (Intellectual) is the second sheath. It is composed of the Tanmatras and Buddhi (Intellect) and the Five Senses.

The next sheath is Manomaya (mental) in which the mind is joined with the above.

The fourth is the Pranamaya (vital) sheath. It comprises the organs of action and of Prana or the Vital Principles.

These four sheaths constitute man's Sukshma Sharira (subtle body). This body does not die, but accompanies the Self in its various transmigrations.

Over this is the Sthula Sharira (gross body). It is composed of the coarser elements.

This exterior case is called the Annamaya Sheath.

The Self, thus covered with the three bodies Sthula, Sukshma and Karana, goes on doing karma (action) in this world. At death, the Sthula Sharira is destroyed and dissolves into the various elements of which it was composed. But the Sukshma Sharira is not destroyed at death. It is for this reason that death is nothing to the Hindu, and they do not regard it so seriously as do some people. They consider death as changing one wornout suit of clothes for a new one.

The Self with the Sukshma Sharira is subject to reincarnations and visits various other worlds to receive the rewards of good deeds, or suffer penalties for evil deeds.

The wise, liberated from worldly trammels, ascend to the abode of Brahman, and if their attainment of wisdom is complete, they pass into a Union with the Divine Essence.

This is moksha. Three principal methods of realizing Brahman are Shravana Manana and Nididhyasana (meditation) which have been touched upon elsewhere in previous chapters.

He who has acquired Knowledge—for him cease all births and rebirths, all pain and pleasure. He becomes all bliss: He obtains moksha; He finds that he is HE.

The quintessence of the Vedanta Philosophy has been formulated in a few words thus: “In one half verse, I shall tell you what has been told in crores (ten millions) of volumes: Brahman is real; the world is unreal; and the jiva is Brahman Itself and nothing else.”



# Chapter Five

## Mukti

### Liberation

The final goal of religion is liberation as determined by the Hindu teachers. The literature on the subject of liberation is very vast in India. There are the one thousand one hundred and eighty Upanishads, the seven Darshanas, and many shastras conforming to the teaching of the Vedas, all intended to help the aspirant to gain liberation. A brief description of its nature is given here. It is the ultimate truth of the law of Karma, it is the ultimate aim of Upasana, Yoga and Bhakti, and it is the ultimate object of the Jnana-Kanda of the Vedas, as explained in separate sections, and its outline will make the path easy for the disciple.

The being of the individual soul is explained elsewhere as the knotting up of the conscious with the unconscious which has been shown as the result of avidya or nescience. With the help of vidya or true knowledge, the individual jiva is able to attain mukti by virtue of his own power, as also has already been shown. Karma being of three sorts—the sahaja, the aisha and the jaiva—mukti also as referring to each sort of karma, takes a threefold shape. This has partly been explained in the section on The Occult World. A fuller explanation is given here:

Man as a being endowed with free will can do or counteract good or evil at pleasure. The conquest of sin (papa) and the acquisition of holy merit (punya) are in his power, and if he achieves both these ends, he gradually enlarges his sphere of growth into spirituality, and, rising from world to world in the upper series of the seven worlds, reaches the topmost world and stands installed there as one of the highest Maharishis and Mahatmas, and at his will can gain liberation by penetrating through the Surya Mandala, the solar light, as has been stated in the following description of the Shukla Gati in the Bhagavad Gita.

“Now I shall tell you of the times in which the yogis, departing at the time of death, return or do not return. Fire, light, daytime, the bright lunar fortnight, the six months of the sun’s north path: departing then the Brahman-knowers go to Brahman. Smoke, nighttime, the dark fortnight, the six months of the sun’s south path: thereby attaining the lunar light, the yogi returns [is born] again. Truly these two light and dark paths the world thinks to be eternal. By one he goes to non-return; by the other he returns again. No yogi who knows these two paths is deluded (confused). Therefore at all times be steadfast in yoga. Whatever meritorious fruit is declared to accrue from [study or recitation of] the Vedas, sacrifice, tapasya, and almsgiving—beyond all these goes the yogi who knows all this [the two paths]; and he attains to the supreme, primeval (first; original) Abode (state of being; consciousness)” (8:23-28).

In the attainment of this mukti, strenuous Jaiva Karma and self-knowledge

(atmajnana) obtained by rising to the seventh spiritual world are the main causes, the former the prior cause, the latter the ulterior one.

The next kind of mukti is connected with the Aisha Karma. A man making himself holy and desirous of gaining power, advances to Devatahood by virtue of the help of the Aisha Karma, which helps the jiva by the willing co-operation of the powerful Gods. The jiva thus ascending from power to power, ultimately holds the position of Indra; there, performing his duties without failure, he keeps up that position, and does not fall back or lower. Rising higher still by this perfect dutifulness, the jiva rises to the very highest Godhood—Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva—according to the preponderance in his nature of the principles of rajas, sattwa or tamas. He becomes one with either of these. From this position, a return to the cycle of up and down never takes place; and this is as good as mukti, which in its actuality is with these gods a mere matter of the will. They are themselves mukta as Saguna Brahman.

The third sort of mukti belongs to the sahaja or spontaneous karma. This has been very largely treated of in the Vedas and the shastras. The two Yoga practices, Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga, are both positive helps to the aspirant in this direction. The main principle in the practice of this Yoga is freedom from desire. One realizes oneness with the universe under such a practice, and there is no delusion of self as opposed to non-self. The whole world is realized as one's own self. This naturally results in the condition of the jnani, the man of perfect knowledge. He becomes one with Brahman, seeing no difference between Brahman and himself. He is rid of the three bodies—the Sthula or the Gross, the Sukshma or the Subtle, and the Karana or the Causal—and the natural result is a liberated condition even while the body is doing its own work. This is the jivanmukta condition, the highest and the best, to attain which is aimed at as the goal by all the Darshanas.

The Upanishad says: "The knot of the heart is cut, all doubts are dispelled and his deeds terminated, when He is seen—the higher and the lower" (Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.9).

The termination (destruction) of karma meant here takes place as follows: The karma of the long-past series of births disappears with the acquisition of Self-knowledge. On account of the absence of desire, no new karma is contracted; and the actually-operating karma under which the body is at work comes to an end with the end of the body that continues acting like the potter's wheel. This last condition of the individual is jivanmukti.

# Appendix

## The Wisdom of the Manu Smriti

Who is/was Manu? Manu is a term with various meanings in Indian texts. In early texts, it refers to the archetypal man, or to the first man—the progenitor of humanity. The Sanskrit term for “human,” *manava*, means “of Manu” or “children of Manu.” Therefore “Manava Dharma” means both the dharma expounded by Manu in the Manu Smriti and Human Dharma—the dharma of mankind, the dharma of human beings. It certainly includes and is embodied in Sanatana (the Eternal) Dharma, popularly called Hinduism.

It is generally accepted that the first Manu—Swayambhu Manu—was either a totally perfected being, a Siddha, or a direct manifestation of Brahman, the Absolute. As is right and natural in Sanatana Dharma, there is no single, “orthodox” or perfect definition of such a being who certainly embodies the Divine Source of All.

What really matters is his teaching given to the sages of India in prehistory. “Manu” means: thinking; intelligent; wise. “Smriti” means “that which was heard and is remembered.” So we should examine those parts of the Manu Smriti that deal with the Supreme Dharma (Param Dharma) which embraces both Atmajnana, Knowledge of the Self, and Brahmajnana, Knowledge of Brahman the Absolute Being. What also matters is the fact that for countless thousands and thousands of years this dharma was the norm in Aryavarta, Bharatvarsha: India. The equally countless number of enlightened men and women in India were the embodiments of Manava Dharma.

And what is Dharma? It is the righteous aspiration, perspective and practical way of living as enjoined by the dharma shastras (scriptures) and the spiritually illumined. It is not meant to be a high ideal only for the spiritually gifted, but the norm for all human beings that aspire to the revelation and manifestation of their own innate divinity: the yogis. The Manu Smriti is the most authoritative—and the foundation—of all the dharmashastras of India.

I am confining this commentary to the teachings of Manu that relate to spiritual life and have meaning for all human beings who wish to attain higher consciousness. (Consider that the term “Brahmana” includes all genuine seekers of higher consciousness—especially the yogis.) Most of the shastra consists of the external observances, religious and social, that were relevant to the Aryas in pre-history. I use the term pre-history because the true history of humanity only began when human life evolved enough to both learn and live the principles of Manava Dharma, the true Human Life which began when:

**The great sages approached Manu, who was seated with a collected mind, and, having duly worshipped him, spoke as follows: Deign, divine one, to declare to us precisely and in due order the sacred laws.... For you, O Lord, alone know**

**the purport..., and the knowledge of the Self [Atman], (taught) in this whole ordinance of the Self-existent (Swayambhu), which is unknowable and unfathomable. (1.1-3)**

It is very easy to miss the very important principle implied in this passage. The sages ask Manu *as one who possesses knowledge of the Self* to reveal to them the sacred laws, implying that knowing and following those laws will lead whoever follows them fully and perfectly to Self-knowledge (Atmajnana). Only those who follow Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Religion, will come to know the Eternal One, the divine Self, which to those without this knowledge is certainly “unknowable and unfathomable.”

**He, whose power is measureless, being thus asked by the high-minded great sages, duly honored them, and answered, Listen!**

**This (universe) existed in the shape of Darkness [Tamas], unperceived, destitute of distinctive marks, unattainable by reasoning, unknowable, wholly immersed, as it were, in deep sleep. (1.4-5)**

This is the condition known as Pralaya, when the universe is in a state of unmanifestation, but within it is the potential to become manifest at the will of the Creator, Parambrahman. This is because there is no essential difference between the creation and the Creator because the creation is the Creator. Whether we consider that the creation is the Creator’s extension of Itself, or that the creation is simply an idea in the mind/consciousness of the Creator, makes no difference. The unity/identity is there in some form which no human mind could ever comprehend. The only way to know or understand Divinity is to become divine ourselves. The enlightened jivatman most certainly knows the Paramatman because it exists inseparably within the Paramatman. Only those who are in the state of the Manu can experience this. But we are all manava—of Manu. The supplicating rishis, being yoga siddhas, knew this through their own enlightened consciousness. And so can we. But the first step toward that is learning, following and embodying Manava Dharma, which is essential to our successful pursuit of Sri Krishna’s exhortation in the Bhagavad Gita: “Therefore be a yogi” (6:46).

**Then the divine Self-existent (Swayambhu), himself indiscernible, (but) making (all) this, the great elements [Mahabhutas] and the rest, discernible, appeared with irresistible (creative) power, dispelling the darkness.**

**He who can be perceived by the internal organ [antakharana] (alone), who is subtle, indiscernible, and eternal, who contains all created beings and is inconceivable, shone forth of his own (will). (1.6-7)**

The appearance of the unseeable became the seen by Its own will. This is not contradictory. No one can see the Absolute by external perception, but since the Absolute is within all beings, sentient and insentient, It can be perceived in our inmost consciousness. This takes place in “the internal organ,” the antahkarana or “internal instrument” consisting of the subtle–astral and causal–bodies. But these bodies must be awakened and made functional through yoga sadhana. All the observances we will encounter in our journey through the Manu Smriti enable the individual’s antakharana

to convey this all-embracing vision to us. In a sense they are both the cause and the effect of the individual's Self-realization.

**As at the change of the seasons each season of its own accord assumes its distinctive marks, even so corporeal beings (resume in new births) their (appointed) course of action. (1.30).**

Rebirth became in the very beginning the fundamental means for the evolution of the jivas to Self-realization. Reincarnation and karma are the foundation of this process. Perfection in this process which becomes possible only after creation cycles passed in transmigration from an atom of hydrogen to an awakened human being, requires the final, conscious and self-willed process of yoga sadhana. As Yogananda said: "Yoga is the beginning of the end." So the purpose of the Manu Smriti is fulfilled in the yoga siddha who is established in Self-realization. And it should be studied in this perspective.

**But for the sake of the prosperity of the worlds he caused the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya, and the Shudra to proceed from his mouth, his arms, his thighs, and his feet. (1.31)**

Manu is referring to the Purusha Shukta, the ninetieth hymn of the tenth book of the Rig Veda. In the list of manifestations of the Parampurusha, the Supreme Purusha [Self], the twelfth verse says: "The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya [Kshatriya] made. His thighs became the Vaishya, from his feet the Shudra was produced." Later in the Manu Smriti (1.87) we are told: "In order to protect this universe He, the most resplendent one, assigned separate (duties and) occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet."

Here we should pause and consider the subject of caste.

Caste is a matter of individual development. It is not determined by birth (caste of the parents), but by the evolutionary (psychological) development of the individual which he brings into this life at his birth. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna outlines it this way:

"Of the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas, as also the Shudras, the duties are distributed according to the qualities of their swabhava."

## **Brahmins**

"Tranquility, self-restraint, tapasya, purity (cleanliness), patience, uprightness (honesty; sincerity), knowledge, realization (vijnana), belief in God—these are the duties of Brahmins, born of their swabhava" (18:41-42). Later on Manu says: "To Brahmanas he assigned teaching and studying (the Veda), sacrificing for their own benefit and for others, giving and accepting (of alms)" (1.88).

A brahmin is one striving for brahmajnana, so we must cultivate the qualities listed for them assiduously if we really plan to succeed in our spiritual quest. Here they are:

*Shama* is calmness, tranquility, and control of the internal sense organs.

*Dama* is self-control, control of the senses, and restraint.

*Tapas (tapasya)* is austerity, practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline; spiritual force.

*Shaucha* is purity and cleanliness, including physical and mental purity. Physical shaucha involves purity of diet—abstinence from meat, fish, eggs, alcohol, nicotine, and any mind-altering drugs.

*Kshama* is forgiveness, patience, and forbearance.

*Arjava* is straightforwardness, honesty, and rectitude.

*Jnana* is knowledge, especially knowledge of (or about) Reality or Brahman, the Absolute.

*Vijnana* is the highest knowledge, beyond mere theoretical knowledge. It is transcendental knowledge or knowing, a high state of spiritual realization in which all is seen as manifestations of Brahman. It is final knowledge of the Self.

*Astikyam* is piety and belief in God.

What is to be noted about these traits is the fact that they are the prerequisites for spiritual life—they are not spiritual life itself, which is something even higher, the state of *yogayukta*, of continual uniting of the consciousness with God through yoga. It is sad to see that in most religions the things needed for being a beginner are considered the highest attainments.

Most important is the fact that these traits are not artificial or imposed modes of thought and deed, but are a manifestation of the brahmin's *swabhava*—his inherent state of mind, his state of deep inner being. A brahmin is not one who acts like a brahmin, but who is a brahmin and therefore acts accordingly.

## **Kshatriyas**

“Valor, splendor, steadfastness, skill, not fleeing in battle, generosity and lordliness of spirit are the duties of Kshatriyas, born of their *swabhava*” (18:43). Manu says: “The Kshatriya he commanded to protect the people, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), and to abstain from attaching himself to sensual pleasures” (1.89).

These are traits needed by us, too, for as a person passes from lower to higher caste he retains his positive qualities. So we should consider the qualities of all the castes as necessary for us.

*Sauryam* is heroism, valor, and strength.

*Tejas* is radiance and brilliance of mind and spirit.

*Dhriti* is the quality of being steadfast, constant, firm, patient, and enduring. It also means one possessed of the ability to engage in sustained effort.

*Dakshyam* is skill, virtuosity, and dexterity. One who is *daksha* is expert, intelligent, wise, and able.

*Apalayanam* is not fleeing battle or trying to avoid conflict.

*Danam* is generosity, charity, and a giving disposition, as well as self-sacrifice.

*Ishwarabhava* is a lordly disposition or spirit; nobility and dignity.

All these reveal the *swabhava* of a kshatriya.

## **Vaishyas and Shudras**

“Agriculture, cow-herding and trade are the duties of the Vaishyas, born of their swabhava, and the Shudras’ duty is doing service, born of their swabhava” (18:44). Manu says: “The Vaishya to tend cattle, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), to trade, to lend money, and to cultivate land. One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Shudra, to serve meekly even these (other) three castes” (1.90-91).

This is quite straightforward. It is interesting that only physical actions are listed, whereas both the brahmins and kshatriyas require many psychological factors. Obviously vaishyas and shudras require ethical principles as much as anyone else. In fact, all that has been said in the previous chapters of the Gita applies to all the castes.

### **Duty/Karma**

“Duty” is the usual translation of karma—actions—and cannot be objected to. But in these verses it also means the actions that will be done by the different castes, impelled by their innate nature—swabhava. In other words, these are the things that will be done, and the qualities revealed, spontaneously by the various castes. Caste is not determined by action, but action is produced by the innate caste-nature, the swabhava. However, in the present day the “caste system” and “caste-ism” based on birth rather than personal character is an indefensible corruption and degeneration—based on ignorance, oppression, and egotism—of the original, authentic teaching and practice of Sanatana Dharma. The scriptures of Hinduism bear this out, speaking of people’s caste being determined by their character, and even telling of those who moved from one caste to another in a single life because of their personal development. For example, the philosopher-king Janaka, a kshatriya, in time was recognized as a brahmin.

Psychologically, Shudras are those who are servants to materiality and ignorance, Vaishyas are those who have an intellectual understanding of the possibility of their betterment, Kshatriyas are those who, being close to apprehension of the Self, are able to intuit the truth of the Self while aware of their limitation, and Brahmins are those who see and know the Self. This is the correct understanding of the entire matter. There is no doubt that caste is a matter of ascension in evolution of consciousness and personal life and personality.

The word translated “caste” is *varna*—color. Krishna says: *Chaturvarnyam maya srishtam*—“The four castes [colors] were created [brought forth] by me.” Krishna is saying that the Supreme Spirit has brought forth into manifestation human beings of a fourfold kind. And this Supreme Lord has not “created” human beings as four types, but has manifested them *guna karma vibhagashah*—“according to the sharing of their guna and karma.” That is, all human beings fall into four very broad categories according to the evolutionary level of their development: according to the quality (guna) of the energies of which their subtle and gross bodies are formed, and according to the karmas which they have been born to fulfill. The “color” of each caste is either symbolic or a matter of the dominant color that can be clairvoyantly perceived in their aura. In either case, our caste is determined solely by the innate vibratory qualities present within us. No one assigns us a caste, though others may be able to perceive it, perhaps better than we do.

So what are the “colors” of the four castes? In the dharmashastras dealing with the gurukula, the place where Indians were originally educated, we find colors assigned to the clothing of the four castes. (Notice that all four castes were going to attend the school, not just some “higher” castes.) White was the color of shudras; yellow the color of vaishyas; red the color of kshatriyas, and orange the color of brahmins.

White is actually not a color, but all colors combined. This would be appropriate for shudras, since they were involved in the duties of all the castes. It also expresses their social fluidity, for originally the shudras were the most frequently transferred into other castes.

Yellow is the auric color of intelligence and initiative—an essential trait for agriculturalists, artisans, merchants, and those that comprise the vaishya caste.

Red is the color of dynamic power, discipline and assertiveness, so it naturally fits the kshatriyas, the warrior-ruler caste.

Orange (gerua) is a combination of yellow and red, for brahmins must have the mental acumen and vigorous personal energies of the vaishyas and kshatriyas combined with a dominant spiritual consciousness. Fire is the essence of the original sacred rites of India, so its orange color represents spiritual consciousness and its transmuting powers.

It is interesting that all four colors are to be found in levels of the Indian monastic life. The standard color of full sannyas is appropriately orange, for it is the color of the crematory fire in which the earthly body is consumed, and the sannyasi’s aim is to reduce to ashes all that is earthly within himself by means of the fire of spiritual realization.

It is essential to understand that caste has absolutely nothing to do with a person’s livelihood, though innate caste-qualities will certainly influence what we will gravitate to as our profession. Consequently, the general and natural situation was for shudras to be the servant class—those who assisted the three other castes in their respective functions; vaishyas to be the artisan/merchant class (which included agriculture); kshatriyas to be the warrior/ruling class (which included law enforcement); and brahmins to be the teaching/priestly class (this included the making of laws and magisterial duties).

The Vaishya, Kshatriya and Brahmin castes were called dwijas, “the twice-born” because they were considered to have undergone a spiritual birth when they were initiated into the Gayatri mantra and the spiritual rites of Vedic religion, though they are now considered the practice of Brahmins alone—another corruption and degeneration.

All castes had their function that was essential to society. All were respected for their skills and for the benefits they provided for all in common. It is extremely necessary for us to see that the shudras were not half slaves at the bottom of society in mere servitude. Certainly some were in domestic service, but many—if not most—were found at the side of the other classes to help them in their work.

The castes went through life side-by-side, not in a four-level social stack, one higher than another. All four castes were considered spiritually equal. A shudra following his



swadharma was the spiritual equal of a brahmin following his swadharma.

The idea of outcastes who would be relegated to the work everyone else was considered too superior to do, was absolutely unknown. The only “outcastes” practically speaking were criminals doing voluntary penance outside the context of normal society, and they would be reinstated once their penance had been completed. The outcastes of today are the descendants of incorrigibles who refused to observe the penances (not punishments) imposed on them by the brahmin judges and instead took to a wild and wandering life that often included crime.

Naturally, those in in the thousand-years’ domination under the Moslems (seven hundred years) and Christians (three hundred years) who adopted Islam and Christianity through coercion or bribery were considered outcastes by their own choice.

In modern times certain very traditional institutions such as the Arya Samaj provide the means for these people to be reinstated into normal Hindu society if they desire. In the last century Pandit Anandapriya of the Arya Samaj in Baroda enabled over half a million of these and other estranged groups to return to traditional Hinduism. Vishwanath Brahmachari of Bombay (Galgoan) also returned many “no-castes” to Hinduism by giving them a caste status based on guna and karma. Like the Arya Samaj, he also enabled many non-Indians to also adopt Sanatana Dharma in the fullest traditional manner, assigning them a caste, as well.

### **The gurukula**

In primeval Indian society, the male children were sent at an early age to live in a gurukula, the home of a teacher, until reaching adulthood. The vastly comprehensive education in a gurukula could last from fifteen to twenty years. At the end of his education, the young man returned to his parents, was married, and established his own household. By that time it was necessary that his caste be known so he could fulfill his caste duties. The gurukula was the place where his caste was determined by careful observation on the part of one or more teachers. Only after careful analysis of his personality was his caste determined.

Although there are many progressive educational institutions in India that are based on a spiritual viewpoint, it was only in the schools of Swami (later Paramhansa) Yogananda Giri that the ancient gurukula system was revived in its fullness. Yogananda drew up a Psychological Chart for the use of the teachers in his schools. Through the years each student was observed by those teachers and was finally classified according to his guna and karma, just as it had been done thousands of years before. This was something absolutely extraordinary and revolutionary, and even today is hardly recognized for what it is (was). If he had not come to America, who can say what modern Hinduism might have become through Yogananda’s influence.

### **Personal meaning**

For us living in the West in the twenty-first century, caste has meaning for us since knowing the character of our guna and karma is part of the knowledge that can lead to

Self-knowledge. Although it may be a purely personal matter, it is good for us to know what our caste is, and live our lives accordingly.

In reality, each one of us is a kingdom, a “nation” to ourselves, and all four castes can be found within our psychological makeup. There are times when we must be shudras, others when we must be vaishyas, and so on. When there is “caste mixture”—that is, when in one aspect of our life we live according to a manner inappropriate to it—great harm can result. For example, in religion we must not be vaishyas, turning it into a business, nor must we be kshatriyas, trying to use it to coerce others to accept our spiritual ideas. Instead we must be brahmins—simple and self-contained, oriented only toward our spiritual development, making our religion truly a matter of consciousness, free from materiality. On the other hand, in practical (including economic) matters we must not be materially indifferent brahmins or aggressive kshatriyas, but worthy vaishyas. When considering principles of personal conduct or dealing with negativity, we must be valiant kshatriyas, giving no thought to economic gain or loss, or conciliatory compromises.

The subject of caste merits our attention and application as sadhakas. For caste duty is more than social, it is the way to hasten and facilitate our endeavors in personal evolution.

Back to the Manu Smriti.

**Dividing his own body, the Lord became half male and half female; with that (female) he produced Viraj. But know me, O most holy among the twice-born, to be the creator of this whole (world), whom that male [purusha], Viraj, himself produced, having performed austerities. (1.32-33)**

The basis of relative existence is duality. God and the divine Self in all sentient beings are non-dual. But for sentient beings to experience relativity and evolve within it, duality is necessary, even if only temporary. Therefore God had to “become” dual—at least in the creative Will-Thought that is projected as creation. Nothing exists in relativity but things that are both positive-active and negative-passive in polarity. Everything must have a counterpart to exist. It is posited that every star in the universe has a counterpart star—otherwise it could not exist in time/space. God is both masculine and feminine, male and female. A religion that does not hold this principle produces an imbalance in its adherents, for viable religion affects the whole person which embodies this inherent duality.

There is a hierarchical chain of manifestation in the realm of relativity. The original self-born being in relativity was Viraj. Viraj is defined as: “The macrocosm; the manifested universe; the world man—the masculine potency in nature in contradistinction to the feminine potency.” Related to this are the two terms Virat/Virat Rupa and Viratpurusha. Virat/Virat Rupa is the Macrocosm; the cosmic form of the Self as the cause of the gross world; the all-pervading Spirit in the form of the universe. Viratpurusha is the deity presiding over the universe; the cosmic or universal aspect of the deity.

Next in the Manu Smriti are sixteen verses that list many of the things created/

manifested by Viraj, saying in conclusion:

**These, which are surrounded by multiform Darkness [Tamas], the result of their acts (in former existences), possess internal consciousness and experience pleasure and pain. [And] the (various) conditions in this always terrible and constantly changing circle of births and deaths to which created beings are subject. (1.49-50)**

From highest to lowest, those sentient beings who are subject to constant rebirth in the entire range of manifested being—and as a result are overwhelmed by the experiences which draw their awareness outward from their true Self—possess a witnessing (internal) consciousness which experiences pleasure and pain alternately and incessantly, even though the Self within all sentient beings is by nature peace and joy (ananda). This condition is an age-long nightmare from which they must in time consciously seek to awaken. Until they awaken the misery goes on, causing them to think it is their true nature and therefore they are helpless in stopping it. This is a terrible picture; and we are all in it right now.

But God as Viraj is in it, too! Manu continues:

**When he whose power is incomprehensible had thus produced the universe and men, he disappeared in himself, repeatedly suppressing one period by means of the other. (1.51)**

This is, having gone through many expansions and transmutations in order to project the countless levels of relative existence, he withdraws from them one by one back into his original state—although he is immutable and unchanging! As I have often said to people regarding the adoption of Sanatana Dharma: *If you can't think in two directions at once you won't manage!* Therefore it can be symbolically said:

**When that divine one wakes, then this world stirs; when he slumbers tranquilly, then the universe sinks to sleep. But when he reposes in calm sleep, the corporeal beings whose nature is action, desist from their actions and mind becomes inert. When they are absorbed all at once in that great soul, then he who is the soul of all beings sweetly slumbers, free from all care and occupation. Thus he, the imperishable one, by (alternately) waking and slumbering, incessantly revivifies and destroys this whole movable and immovable (creation). (1.53-54, 57)**

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. So we know from Sir Isaac Newton. And it is true throughout all modes of existence. So since God sends for the creation there must be a withdrawal of creation. But why is there not just one projection and withdrawal? God does not need a rest, however anthropomorphic the above two verses may be. But the individual beings within the creation do, for they “experience pleasure and pain. [And] the (various) conditions in this always terrible and constantly changing circle of births and deaths to which created beings are subject.” They need a rest psychologically and an assimilation of their experiences to

enable them to emerge into the next creation ready for more growth and development. This is essential for relative, conditioned beings, just as all such beings need sleep—the cycle of day and night being miniature creations/dissolutions.

**When, being clothed with subtle particles [energies], it enters into vegetable or animal seed, it then assumes, united (with the subtle body), a (new) corporeal frame. (1.56)**

Thus the individual jiva passes from life-form to life-form again and again in the material universe until it become evolved enough to no longer need physical embodiment and continues to evolved through the astral and causal worlds until it is freed from the need for any vehicle to inhabit. In that state it can remain bodiless or become embodied at will. Such liberated siddhas can return as avatars to any lower world and there help the jivas in their upward evolution.

**Mind, impelled by (Brahman's) desire to create, performs the work of creation by modifying itself, thence ether is produced; they declare that sound is the quality of the latter.**

**But from ether, modifying itself, springs the pure, powerful wind, the vehicle of all perfumes; that is held to possess the quality of touch.**

**Next from wind modifying itself, proceeds the brilliant light, which illuminates and dispels darkness; that is declared to possess the quality of color;**

**And from light, modifying itself, (is produced) water, possessing the quality of taste, from water earth which has the quality of smell; such is the creation in the beginning. (1.75-78)**

It says in the Bible that humans are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:3, 9:26. II Corinthians 4:4). This is implied here in the Manu Smriti. For both the universe and the individual human being come into manifestation in this order which is totally a matter of mind and will.

First the primeval pattern is produced in the element (tattwa) ether (akasha), the basic “substance” of relative manifestation. This is the etheric body of both the universe and the human being, known as the anandamaya kosha (body or level) which is the seat of the will, and whose characteristic faculty-power is sound—shabda.

Next appears—or is modified from ether—the element of air (vayu), whose characteristic faculty-power is the sense of touch, and is the jnanamaya kosha.

Next appears the element of fire (agni), whose characteristic faculty-power is the sense of sight, and is the manomaya kosha.

Next appears the element of water (apah), whose characteristic faculty-power is the sense of taste, and is the pranamaya kosha.

Next, and last, appears the element of earth (prithvi), whose characteristic faculty-power is the sense of smell, and is the annamaya kosha. This is the level of gross, atomic matter. The fire and water bodies are formed of astral energies, and the etheric body is formed of causal energies.

Although the elemental bodies and the basic elements can be thought of as

concentric circles, one above the other, from earth to ether, they actually pervade and penetrate one another. Thus the entire human being consists of atomic, astral and causal energies interacting with one another and reflecting one another. It is complex—as is all relative existence. The only simple, unitary thing is spirit, which is the source of all these while remaining simultaneously beyond them, pervading them and manifesting as them. This is the primal condition or state which manifest as the three gunas: Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. One and many simultaneously.

Now we come to the subject of the Yugas, the ages through which the world passes and which are reflected in the general state of consciousness and evolution of the human race. This is a very complex matter involving mathematical calculations and is virtually not understood in either East or West. Anyway, here is what Manu has to say about the yugas and their character in relation to Dharma.

**In the Krita (Satya) age (Yuga) Dharma is four-footed and entire, and (so is) Truth; nor does any gain accrue to men by unrighteousness. (1.81)**

In Satya Yuga the general level of human consciousness is at its full potential level. Dharma is perfectly understood and followed by nearly all people. The truth of all things, physical, mental and spiritual is known by them. Because of the vibration of the earth itself and the total consciousness of the populace it is impossible to make any gain by wrongdoing in any form. It is immediately detected and people cannot be deceived. So gain by unrighteousness is literally impossible. This condition is truly heaven on earth.

**In the other (three ages), by reason of (unjust) gains (agama), Dharma is deprived successively of one foot, and through (the prevalence of) theft, falsehood, and fraud the merit (gained by men) is diminished by one fourth (in each). (1.82)**

Dharma is at its fullest in the Satya Yuga, three-fourths in the Treta Yuga, one-half in the Dwapara Yuga, and only one fourth in the Kali Yuga.

**(Men are) free from disease, accomplish all their aims, and live four hundred years in the Krita age, but in the Treta and (in each of) the succeeding (ages) their life is lessened by one quarter. (1.83)**

The ideal lifespan in the Satya Yuga is four hundred years; in the Treta Yuga, three hundred years; in the Dwapara Yuga, two hundred years; and in the Kali Yuga one hundred years.

The life of mortals, mentioned in the Veda, the desired results of sacrificial rites and the (supernatural) power of embodied (spirits) are fruits proportioned among men according to (the character of) the age.

One set of duties (is prescribed) for men in the Krita age, different ones in the Treta and in the Dwapara, and (again) another (set) in the Kali, in a proportion as (those) ages decrease in length.

**In the Krita age the chief (virtue) is declared to be (the performance of) austerities, in the Treta (divine) knowledge, in the Dwapara (the performance of) sacrifices, in the Kali liberality [charity] alone. (1.84-86)**

This should be pondered. In the matter of personal dharma we must realize that individuals are in various states of consciousness which can be considered as corresponding to the four levels of human development, the four castes, implying that we all pass through four “ages” or “yugas.” These are four broad classifications or levels of personal evolution: one-fourth, one half, three-fourths and four-fourths or complete.

A Shudra is only developed to one fourth of human potential; a Vaishya to one half; a Kshatriya to three-fourths; and a Brahmin is complete in development: four-fourths. In the Kali Yuga most humans are at the Shudra level; in the Dwapara Yuga at the Vaishya level; in the Treta Yuga at the Kshatriya level; and in the Satya Yuga at the Brahmin level. According to one’s psychological “caste” is his personal dharma determined as indicated in these verses.

**In this [Manu Smriti] the sacred law has been fully stated as well as the good and bad qualities of (human) actions and the immemorial rule of conduct, (to be followed) by all the four castes (varna).**

The rule of conduct is transcendent law, whether it be taught in the revealed texts or in the sacred tradition; hence a twice-born man [dwija: any member of the three upper castes that has received the sacred thread (yajnopavita)] who possesses regard for himself, should be always careful to (follow) it.

The sages who saw that the sacred law is thus grounded on the rule of conduct, have taken good conduct to be the most excellent root of all austerity [tapasya]. (1.107-108, 110)

From this last verse we see that tapasya–spiritual practice, especially yoga sadhana–is impossible without the foundation of right conduct, which even Buddha declared is part of the Noble (Aryan) Path. For the yogi, good conduct is the strict observance of the rules of yama and niyama.

Yama is Restraint; the five Don’ts of Yoga:

- 1) ahimsa–non-violence, non-injury, harmlessness;
- 2) satya–truthfulness, honesty;
- 3) asteya–non-stealing, honesty, non-misappropriativeness;
- 4) brahmacharya–continence;
- 5) aparigraha–non-possessiveness, non-greed, non-selfishness, non-acquisitiveness.

Niyama is Observance; the five Do’s of Yoga:

- 1) Shaucha: purity, cleanliness;
- 2) Santosha: contentment, peacefulness;
- 3) Tapas: austerity, practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline;
- 4) Swadhyaya: self-study, spiritual study;
- 5) Ishwarapranidhana: offering of one’s life to God.

Only those who follow these principles can engage in effective spiritual practice—the yoga life.

**A wise man should strive to restrain his organs (indriyas) which run wild among alluring sensual objects, like a charioteer his horses.**

Those eleven organs which former sages have named, I will properly (and) precisely enumerate in due order:

The ear, the skin, the eyes, the tongue, and the nose as the fifth, the anus, the organ of generation, hands and feet, and the (organ of) speech, named as the tenth.

Five of them, the ear and the rest according to their order, they call organs of sense, and five of them, the anus and the rest, organs of action.

Know that the internal organ (manas) is the eleventh, which by its quality belongs to both (sets); when that has been subdued, both those sets of five have been conquered.

Through the attachment of his organs (to sensual pleasure) a man doubtlessly will incur guilt; but if he keep them under complete control, he will obtain success (in gaining all his aims). (2.88-93)

The main point of these verses is that the mind, the manas, is the key to the purification and mastery of the indriyas. The indriyas are like wild, untamed animals because of the countless number of lives each one of us has lived in animal forms and shaped our minds accordingly, as well as the countless number of human lives we have lived when the habits and states of consciousness inherited from animal incarnations were given free reign without question as normal—even considered human.

Simple, externalized modification of thought and behavior proves helpless against this self-tyranny. The power necessary to work any lasting change and ascension to higher consciousness and life is only one: the power of the ever-free Self, the Atman—the essence, the essential nature of each sentient being. And there is only one means to awaken and function as the Self: yoga sadhana. All the self-help books, teachings and endeavors must fail, for they cannot reveal or establish us in Atmajnana, direct knowledge of the Self, and Atmabhava, awareness of the Self: “I Am The Self.” Yoga, on the other hand, is the direct and unfailing way to attain this knowledge and awareness and be permanently established in it. For only knowledge-experience of the Self bestows liberation (moksha) from ignorance and bondage.

In the Bhagavad Gita we are told: “Triple is the gate destructive of the Self: desire [kama], anger [krodha] and greed [lobha]. Therefore one should abandon (renounce) these three” (16:21). The root of these three is kama, desire, for thwarted desire makes us angry and greedily resolved to fulfil our desire. Since is this so, Manu assures us:

**Desire is never extinguished by the enjoyment of desired objects; it only grows stronger like a fire (fed) with clarified butter (ghee). (2.94)**

An honest person will admit that this is the truth. Throwing more sensuality or materiality into the fire of desire can only make it stronger and therefore more

destructive and hard for us to control and eliminate. For elimination is the only acceptable solution. Not Slow, but Stop.

**If one man should obtain all those (sensual enjoyments) and another should renounce them all, the renunciation of all pleasure is far better than the attainment of them. (2.95)**

Experience proves this, though most people do not want to accept it. They think they choose pleasure, but really they choose pain because that is the inevitable result of sensual pleasure. “Truly, pleasures born of contact [with the senses] are wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end. The wise man is not satisfied (content) with them.

“He whose Self is unattached to external contacts, who finds happiness in the Self, whose Self is united to Brahman by yoga, reaches imperishable happiness.

“He who is able to endure here on earth, before liberation from the body, the agitation that arises from desire and anger is steadfast, a happy man.

“He whose happiness is within, whose delight is within, whose illumination is within: that yogi, identical in being with Brahman, attains Brahmanirvana.

“The seers whose evils have been annihilated, whose doubts have been dispelled, whose inner being is mastered, who rejoice in the welfare of all beings, attain Brahmanirvana.

“Released from desire and anger, with thoughts controlled, those ascetics who know the Self find very near [to them] the bliss of Brahmanirvana.

“Excluding outside contacts, turning up the eyes toward the two brows, equalizing the inhalation and exhalation moving within the nostrils,

“With his senses, mind and intellect controlled, with liberation as his highest aim, free from desire, fear, and anger: such a one is forever free.

“Let this dissolution of union with pain be known (understood) as yoga. This yoga is to be practiced with determination (absence of doubt), with an assured (positive; optimistic) mind.” (Bhagavad Gita 5:21-28; 6:23)

**Those (organs) which are strongly attached to sensual pleasures, cannot so effectually be restrained by abstinence (from enjoyments) as by a constant (pursuit of true) knowledge. (2.96)**

“The abstinent run away from what they desire but carry their desires with them: when a man enters Reality, he leaves his desires behind him” (Bhagavad Gita 2:59). Human beings are rational creatures, though through ignorance a lot of irrational and foolish things are done by them. Simply not doing something does not eliminate the affinity or attraction for it. But insight into its nature can eliminate affinity and attraction. When we were children we wanted and liked things that as we matured we completely lost interest in or considered silly and worthless. True knowledge consists of two things: the way to transformation and the result of that transformation. Since the highest reality is the Paramatman and our true Self, the jivatman, yoga sadhana is the only way to transformation and true knowledge. “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad



**Neither (the study of) the Vedas, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor any (self-imposed) restraint, nor austerities, ever procure the attainment (of rewards) to a man whose heart is contaminated (by sensuality). (2.97)**

This is true, but how can the materialistic, sensual contamination be eliminated? The answer has just been given: “When a man enters Reality, he leaves his desires behind him” (Bhagavad Gita 2:59) in the fulfillment that comes only by establishment in the consciousness that is the Self. Addiction is replaced with indifference which is freedom from materialistic, sensual enslavement.

**That man may be considered to have (really) subdued his organs, who on hearing and touching and seeing, on tasting and smelling (anything) neither rejoices nor repines. (2.98)**

“The enlightened, the Brahman-abiding, calm-hearted, unbewildered, is neither elated by the pleasant nor saddened by the unpleasant” (Bhagavad Gita 5:20). Self-realization is the only way to total peace within and without.

**But when one among all the organs slips away (from control), thereby (man’s) wisdom slips away from him, even as the water (flows) through the one (open) foot of a (water-carrier’s) skin. If he keeps all the (ten) organs as well as the mind in subjection, he may gain all his aims. (2.99-100)**

This is essential knowledge. Yoga is the way when supported by complete and constant observance of yama and niyama.

**Unless one be asked, one must not explain (anything) to anybody, nor (must one answer) a person who asks improperly; let a wise man, though he knows (the answer), behave among men as (if he were) an idiot. (2.110)**

*Unless one be asked, one must not explain (anything) to anybody.* This is the way of the true, original yogis, the Nath Yogis, as is seen in *Light of Soham*. A Nath Yogi teacher or sadhaka will never volunteer or offer his knowledge unless asked. Nor will he reveal his knowledge in the presence of those who have not sought his counsel. He will only speak in private about sadhana to genuine seekers.

*Nor (must one answer) a person who asks improperly.* Someone who asks offhandedly without real interest or aspiration, or asks in a challenging or argumentative manner, or asks in a disrespectful, aggressively skeptical or mocking attitude is asking improperly and should not be told anything.

*Let a wise man, though he knows (the answer), behave among men as (if he were) an idiot.* Even if remaining silent causes others to consider him ignorant, incompetent or a fool, the yogi still should say nothing at all. Nor should he make some response to protect his ego such as, “I am not allowed to tell,” “I may not speak of this,” or “I do not wish to speak of this,” so others will think he has knowledge but chooses to be silent or is forbidden by some hidden tradition or “masters” from speaking freely.

**In such (soil) sacred knowledge must not be sown, just as good seed (must) not (be thrown) on barren land. A teacher of wisdom should rather die with his knowledge than sow it in barren soil.**

**Sacred Learning approached a Brahmana (teacher) and said to him: I am thy treasure, preserve me, deliver me not to a scorner; so (preserved) I shall become supremely strong. But deliver me, as to the keeper of your treasure, to one whom you shall know to be pure, of subdued senses, chaste and attentive. (2.112-115)**

**This is certainly clear!**

**He who desires happiness must strive after a perfectly contented disposition and control himself; for happiness has contentment for its root, the root of unhappiness is the contrary (disposition). (4.12)**

We think that happiness results from having a pleasant experience or getting something we like. But here Manu shows us that it is our fundamental state of mind and outlook—our bhava—that determines happiness. The first step is self-control, self-discipline. Then we can become aware of our inmost being, our Self, which is satchitananda. The root of unhappiness is unawareness of the Self. Sadhana is the means to establish our consciousness in the reality of the Self.

**Let him not, out of desire (for enjoyments), attach himself to any sensual pleasures, and let him carefully obviate an excessive attachment to them, by (reflecting on their worthlessness in) his heart. (4.16)**

Desire for and attachment to the false distractions of the senses immerse us in material experience and prevent the inner experience of the Self. By intelligent analysis of their ultimate pain and misery we enable ourselves to turn from them and become through sadhana able to seek and find the inner happiness that is the very nature of the Self.

**Unrighteousness, practiced in this world, does not at once produce its fruit, like a cow; but, advancing slowly, it cuts off the roots of him who committed it. (4.172)**

This is the absolute truth. Wrong thought, desire and action will inevitably destroy us by cutting us off from the very root of our being: the Self. Even more, they push us towards the mirage of false goals which end in the desolation of misery and emptiness.

**Giving no pain to any creature, let him slowly accumulate spiritual merit, for the sake (of acquiring) a companion to the next world, just as the white ant (gradually raises its) hill.**

**For in the next world neither father, nor mother, nor wife, nor sons, nor relations stay to be his companions; spiritual merit alone remains (with him).**

**Single is each being born; single it dies; single it enjoys (the reward of its) virtue; single (it suffers the retribution of its) sin.**

Leaving the dead body on the ground like a log of wood, or a clod of earth, the relatives depart with averted faces; but spiritual merit follows the (soul).

Let him therefore always slowly accumulate spiritual merit, in order (that it may be his) companion (after death); for with merit as his companion he will traverse a gloom difficult to traverse.

(That companion) speedily conducts the man who is devoted to duty and effaces his sins by austerities, to the next world, radiant and clothed with an ethereal body. (4.238-243)

Daily the Theravada Buddhist monks recite: "I have nothing but my actions; I shall never have anything but my actions." That is true of all human beings: we have only our karmas—both actions and the reactions to those actions. That alone goes with us after death. Therefore spiritual merit (punya) in the form of positive karma should be our primary concern in life along with sadhana, for sadhana creates the highest form of karma—spiritual karma.

We often let our attachment or fear of others and their reactions determine our actions, but this is the worst folly. We must live every moment in the awareness of our own responsibilities and destiny, for they alone will be with us throughout our life and beyond. Others come and go in our lives, but we are with ourselves forever. Awareness of the reality and consequence of our actions and the reactions to them in the form of karmas and samskaras should be always in our minds as we move through the experiences of this life.

Spiritual merit is accumulated steadily by steady self-discipline and sadhana. Those devoted to right conduct and who purify themselves daily by spiritual practice—especially meditation—will rise into higher realms of existence through the presence of right and truth in their subtle bodies.

Let him who desires to raise himself ever form connexions with the most excellent (men), and shun all low ones.

A Brahmana who always connects himself with the most excellent (ones), and shuns all inferior ones, (himself) becomes most distinguished; by an opposite conduct he becomes a Shudra.

He who is persevering, gentle, (and) patient, shuns the company of men of cruel conduct, and does no injury (to living creatures), gains, if he constantly lives in that manner, by controlling his organs and by liberality, heavenly bliss. (4.244-246)

Each human being possesses a divine Self. But we are not just "naked" spirits; we are clothed in subtle bodies which are shaped by all our past desires, thoughts and deeds. And they vary from very low to very high, from completely veiling the consciousness of the Self to revealing the consciousness of our Self. And they are responsive to external influences. Yogananda often said, "Company is greater than will power." Yogis should be very careful about the company they keep, because they are more sensitive to subtle psychic influences emanating from other people. I have seen very ethical and conscientious people turned into coarse and vulgar people because

they fell into evil company and became like those they associated with. Four of them were aspiring yogis whom I met in India. When I next met them here in America, I literally did not recognize them, they were so completely altered physically and mentally by the negative conditions they had fallen into. It was a horrible and frightening thing to see. As Saint Peter wrote, “Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (II Peter 3:17).

Keeping only good association is a matter of spiritual survival.

Continuing this subject, some verses later Manu advises the yogi:

**Alone let him constantly meditate in solitude on that which is salutary for his soul; for he who meditates in solitude attains supreme bliss. (4.258)**

The yogi should not be antisocial, but he should to some degree be non-social—not mixing constantly with those who have no spiritual aspirations and who consider such aspirations worthless and foolish—even abnormal and harmful. This is why the Bhagavad Gita describes a yogi as “remaining in solitude, alone [6:10],...frequenting (living in) secluded places, having distaste for crowds of people (association with many people) 13:10],... dwelling in (frequenting) a solitary place,... constantly devoted to yoga meditation (dhyana yoga), taking refuge in vairagya” (18:52).

**The Lord of creatures (Prajapati) created this whole (world to be) the sustenance of the vital spirit; both the immovable and the movable (creation is) the food of the vital spirit. (5.28)**

This is not speaking only of material food that is eaten by the body, but by experiences which shape the mind and heart. Our subtle bodies can pick up the magnetism and behavior of the objects and perceptions of this world. Thus we must be careful what we “eat” through the senses and our actions in this world. The Self is unchangeable and ever perfect, but our subtle bodies are not. And they can absorb harmful, negative vibrations and energies through our physical senses and our external actions.

We, too, can contribute to the destructive vibrations of the world by both our own wrong conduct and our assent to others’ wrong conduct. Therefore Manu declares:

**He who injures harmless beings from a wish to (give) himself pleasure, never finds happiness, neither living nor dead.**

This covers a lot of territory, from killing animals to eat their flesh or wear their skins (this includes the use of leather) to making part of their bodies into medicine. To enslave an animal for any purpose is also prohibited by Manu. (5.45)

**He who does not seek to cause the sufferings of bonds and death to living creatures, (but) desires the good of all (beings), obtains endless bliss.**

**He who does not injure any (creature) attains without an effort what he thinks of, what he undertakes, and what he fixes his mind on. (5.46-47)**

This indicates that siddhi for the attainment of good, both internal and external, comes to him who is perfect in ahimsa–harmlessness.

Logically, we come to the subject of harmlessness in diet.

**Meat can never be obtained without injury to living creatures, and injury to sentient beings is detrimental to (the attainment of) heavenly bliss; let him therefore shun (the use of) meat.**

**Having well considered the (disgusting) origin of flesh and the (cruelty of) fettering and slaying corporeal beings, let him entirely abstain from eating flesh.**

**He who does not eat meat like a Pishacha, becomes dear to men, and will not be tormented by diseases. (5.48-50)**

A pishacha is a vampiristic spirit or demon, sometimes called “a blood drinker,” though it really depletes its victims of prana, the life force. Those who eat meat are the equivalents of a pishacha, according to Manu.

The result of eating meat given by Manu is interesting. He indicates that violence in word and deed are fostered by the eating of meat. This is sensible, since according to the Chandogya Upanishad the food we eat becomes our mental energy. So the energy of an animal will produce the mind of that animal—not a happy prospect for anyone who values the human status.

The result of a vegetarian diet is absence of disease, whereas meat-eating is poisonous in nature and produces misery in mind and body. Read *Diet For a New America* by John Robbins and *What’s Wrong with Eating Meat?* by Vistara [Barbara] Parham. But most important: try it out for yourself.

**He who permits (the slaughter of an animal), he who cuts it up, he who kills it, he who buys or sells (meat), he who cooks it, he who serves it up, and he who eats it, (must all be considered as) the slayers (of the animal).**

**There is no greater sinner than that (man) who seeks to increase (the bulk of) his own flesh by the flesh of other (beings). (5.51-52)**

No honest person can get around this, much less a serious yogi.

**By subsisting on pure fruit and roots, and by eating food fit for ascetics (in the forest), one does not gain (so great) a reward as by entirely avoiding (the use of) flesh. (5.54)**

This is certainly an incentive to be an absolute vegetarian.

**The wise declare that the real meaning of the word flesh (mam-sah) is “me, then you” in the next life. (5.55)**

Whether this means the animal will devour its eater in the next life of the astral world (astral hell) or in a future incarnation on earth, both consequences are gruesome and certainly to be avoided. A wise person takes to a vegetarian diet joined with intense sadhana and dissolves his carnivore karma here and now.

**The body is cleansed by water, the internal organ is purified by truthfulness, the individual soul by sacred learning and austerities (tapasya), the intellect by (true) knowledge. (5.109)**

There are two forms of true knowledge: the knowledge gained by reading and understanding the scriptures and the teachings of the enlightened, and the knowledge of the Self: “that innermost secret: knowledge of God which is nearer than knowing, open vision direct and instant” (Bhagavad Gita 9:1), that comes only from perfection (siddhi) in yoga sadhana.

**By the restraint of his senses, by the destruction of love (raga) and hatred (dwesha), and by the abstention from injuring the creatures (ahimsa), a person becomes fit for immortality.**

This does not say that the mere absence of raga, dwesha and ahimsa makes one immortal, but that a person cannot successfully pursue liberation (moksha) unless these obstacles to immortality are totally removed. (6.60)

**By deep meditation let him recognize the subtle nature of the supreme Soul, and its presence in all organisms, both the highest and the lowest. (6.65)**

Profound yoga meditation is the sole means for realization of the Paramatman (Supreme Soul) and awareness of Its presence in all things.

**When by the disposition (of his heart) he becomes indifferent to all objects, he obtains eternal happiness both in this world and after death.**

**He who has in this manner gradually given up all attachments and is freed from all the pairs (of opposites), reposes in Brahman alone.**

**All that has been declared (above) depends on meditation; for he who is not proficient in the knowledge of that which refers to the Soul (Atman/Self) reaps not the full reward of the performance of rites. (6.80-82)**

When through sadhana he truly sees the inmost nature of all things as well as his Self, he becomes indifferent to the mere appearance of things and knows the Reality that is behind and within all. The Bhagavad Gita describes such a yogi in this way:

“He must be forgiving, ever-contented, self-controlled, united constantly with me in his meditation. His resolve must be unshakable. He must be dedicated to me in intellect and in mind. Such a devotee is dear to me.

“He neither molests his fellow men, nor allows himself to become disturbed by the world. He is no longer swayed by joy and envy, anxiety and fear. Therefore he is dear to me.

“He is pure, and independent of the body’s desire. He is able to deal with the unexpected: prepared for everything, unperturbed by anything. He is neither vain nor anxious about the results of his actions. Such a devotee is dear to me.

“He does not desire or rejoice in what is pleasant. He does not dread what is unpleasant, or grieve over it. He remains unmoved by good or evil fortune. Such a devotee is dear to me.

“His attitude is the same toward friend and foe. He is indifferent to honor and insult, heat and cold, pleasure and pain. He is free from attachment.

“He values praise and blame equally. He can control his speech. He is content with whatever he gets. His home is everywhere and nowhere. His mind is fixed upon me, and his heart is full of devotion. He is dear to me (Bhagavad Gita 12:14-19).

**Contentment, forgiveness, self-control, abstention from unrighteously appropriating anything, purification, control of the organs (indriyas), wisdom, knowledge (of the supreme Soul), truthfulness, and abstention from anger, (form) the tenfold law.**

This is clear and should be a checklist for those who honestly examine themselves to determine if they are on the right path to the Eternal. (6.92)

**Karmic reaction alone governs all created beings, karmic reaction alone protects them, karmic reaction watches over them while they sleep; the wise declare karmic reaction (to be identical with) the law. (7.18)**

Karma is the basic force behind all our experiences in this world. All sentient beings are subject to it, from the lowest evolved beings to the highest evolved beings. Obviously, the more complex the organism, the more complex the karma will be. Because of our negativity and inner (usually unadmitted and ignored) guilt karma is a bugaboo for many, a reason to fear and be apprehensive about.

But Buddha told the truth, as contrasted with the simplistic silliness that usually prevails in Hinduism and Buddhism today. Buddha taught that karma is not some divine police action on the part of the universe or some abstract metaphysical force external to us that can control our life. Rather: KARMA IS SOLELY IN THE MIND—in our consciousness. Therefore when our mind is purified and clarified, our karma is expunged to some degree and when our consciousness is centered in the Self we no longer have any karma at all because the Self is beyond karma.

This is why when some people came to Yogananda and made complaints about others he walked out saying quietly, “Change yourselves.” It is the same with our karma. If we change ourselves our karma is changed, and if we eliminate our ignorance through meditation our karma evaporates like the mirage it actually is. You do not have to “work out” your karma.

Consider how mistakenly inconsistent it is to speak about delusion and illusion and even the fundamental unreality of the world and the ego, and then to look upon karma as a basic and inescapable reality!

Notice that Manu says that karmic reaction governs, protects and fosters us. So it is positive for the positive, and sadhana is the way of genuine, positive change.

**(On a comparison) between vice (apunya) and death, vice is declared to be more pernicious; a vicious man sinks to the nethermost (hell), he who dies, free from vice, ascends to heaven. (7.53)**

Apunya means non-meritorious acts, unvirtuous (sinful) deeds. Such deeds are

themselves a kind of death because they darken and degrade the mind and produce negative karmas, which result in negative conditions both after death and in future lives.

**The Self (Atman) itself is the witness of the Self, and the Self is the refuge of the Self; despise not your own Self, the supreme witness of men. (8.84)**

This is why the intelligent yogi knows that the Self is the beginning and end of the whole matter. His Self is always with him and is the matrix around which his entire life is lived. It is the karma created by his Self which brings him into this world and out of world. When his Self departs from this world it departs alone and returns alone. The Self has lived in many bodies that have all fallen away and disintegrated. And each time the Self alone remained because it alone is the reality of his being. Consequently the wise yogi knows that the only real course open to him is the path to Self-realization—that the Self is the beginning, middle and end of all life-journeys. We must not ignore or disregard our Self or identify with anything but the Self, knowing that the entire universe has but one purpose: evolution of the Self and its eventual freedom (moksha). All this creation and all life within it exists only for the Self. The Self is ultimately all there is. Therefore:

“What is man’s will and how shall he use it? Let him put forth its power to uncover the Atman, not hide the Atman: man’s will is the only friend of the Atman: his will is also the Atman’s enemy.

“For when a man is self-controlled, his will is the Atman’s friend. But the will of an uncontrolled man is hostile to the Atman, like an enemy.

“That serene one absorbed in the Atman masters his will, he knows no disquiet in heat or in cold, in pain or pleasure, in honor, dishonor” (Bhagavad Gita 6:5-7).

Or to put it more briefly and to the point: “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

The wicked, indeed, say in their hearts, “Nobody sees us;” but the gods distinctly see them and the purusha within their own breasts.

The sky, the earth, the waters, (the Self in) the heart, the moon, the sun, the fire, Yama and the wind, the night, the two twilights (sandhyas), and justice know the conduct of all corporeal beings. ...If you think, O friend of virtue, with respect to yourself, “I am alone,” (know that) that sage who witnesses all virtuous acts and all crimes ever resides in your heart. (8.85-86, 92)

And it is this Self that must be sought, seen and known as our sole Reality. Again: yoga is the way.

**Gambling and betting amount to open theft;.... In a former age this (vice of) gambling has been seen to cause great enmity; a wise man, therefore, should not practice it even for amusement. (9.222, 227)**

There are various forms of gambling and an intelligent yogi should be aware of that and scrupulously avoid them. “For fun” and “for not much” is not a viable excuse. The



very state of mind evoked is to be avoided. Also, by indulging in “innocent” forms of these, deep-seated samskaras of addiction from past lives may awaken and manifest.

The entire Mahabharata epic centers around the vice of gambling and the consequential destruction of countless lives resulting from the domino effect that arose from it. This is referred to by the statement that “In a former age this (vice of) gambling has been seen to cause great enmity.”

**Intoxicating drinks and decoctions and flesh [meat] are the food of the Yakshas, Rakshasas, and Pishakas; a Brahmana... must not partake of such (substances).**

**When the Brahman which dwells in his body is (even) once (only) deluged with spirituous liquor, his Brahmanhood forsakes him. (11.95, 97)**

This is very severe, but totally realistic and true without exceptions.

A yaksha is a kind of ghost, goblin, or demon. A rakshasa is a cannibal demon or goblin, enemy of the gods. Meat-eating human beings are classed as rakshasas. A pishacha is a vampiristic spirit or demon, sometimes called “a blood drinker,” though it really depletes its victims of prana, the life force. All three are killers.

**Action [karma], which springs from the mind, from speech, and from the body, produces either good or evil results; by action are caused the (various) conditions of men, the highest, the middling, and the lowest. Know that the mind is the instigator here below, even to that (action) which is connected with the body. (12.3-4)**

Thought, speech and bodily action produce positive or negative karma. According to the accumulated karmic force a person’s life is spiritually “the highest, the middling, and the lowest.” There are no exceptions, for this is cosmic Law. Ultimately they all proceed from the mind, the commander of the will and therefore of all action.

**(A man) obtains (the result of) a good or evil mental (act) in his mind, (that of) a verbal (act) in his speech, (that of) a bodily (act) in his body. (12.8)**

Action is mental, verbal and physical, and a human being is affected by all three forms on his own mental, verbal and physical levels.

**That man is called a (true) tridandin in whose mind these three, the control over his speech (vagdanda), the control over his thoughts (manodanda), and the control over his body (kayadanda), are firmly fixed.**

**That man who keeps this threefold control (over himself) with respect to all created beings and wholly subdues desire and wrath thereby assuredly gains complete success. (12.10-11)**

A tridandin is someone who has attained mastery over mind, speech and body—or thought, word and deed. It also can mean a sannyasi who carries three long staffs tied together so as to form one in symbolizing and reminding him of the necessity for this threefold mastery.

Know Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas to be the three qualities (gunas) of Prakriti which pervades all forms of relative existence.

When one of these qualities wholly predominates in the mind or body, then it embodies that quality. (12.24-25)

Guna means a quality, attribute, or characteristic arising from Prakriti itself—a mode of energy behavior. As a rule, when “guna” is used it is in reference to the three qualities of Prakriti, the three modes of energy behavior that are the basic qualities of nature, and which determine the inherent characteristics of all created things. They are:

- 1) Sattwa: the quality of light, purity, harmony and goodness.
- 2) Rajas: the quality of activity, passion, restlessness and desire for an object or goal.
- 3) Tamas: the quality of dullness, darkness, inertia, folly, and ignorance.

Everything in relative existence has a predominance of one of these gunas, and usually is a blend of all three, though only one is predominant.

Sattwa is declared (to have the form of) knowledge, Tamas (of) ignorance, Rajas (of) raga and dwesha; such is the nature of these (three) which is (all-)pervading and clings to everything created.

When (man) experiences in himself a (feeling) full of bliss, a deep calm, as it were, and a pure light, then let him know (that it is) among those three (the quality called) Sattwa.

What is mixed with pain and does not give satisfaction to the soul one may know (to be the quality of) Rajas, which is difficult to conquer, and which ever draws embodied (souls towards sensual objects).

What is coupled with delusion, what has the character of an undiscernible mass, what cannot be fathomed by reasoning, what cannot be fully known, one must consider (as the quality of) Tamas. (12.26-29)

I will, moreover, fully describe the results which arise from these three qualities, the excellent ones, the middling ones, and the lowest.

The study of the scriptures, austerity, (the pursuit of) knowledge, purity, control over the organs, the performance of meritorious acts and meditation on the Self, (are) the marks of the quality of Sattwa.

The craving after sensual pleasures is declared to be the mark of Tamas, (the pursuit of) possessions and wealth (the mark) of Rajas, (the desire to gain) spiritual merit the mark of Sattwa; each later-named quality is better than the preceding one. (12:30-31, 38)

This requires no comment.

12.39. I will briefly declare in due order what transmigrations in this whole (world a man) obtains through each of these qualities.

12.40. Those endowed with Sattwa reach the state of gods [devas], those

endowed with Rajas the state of men, and those endowed with Tamas ever sink to the condition of beasts; that is the threefold course of transmigrations.

**12.41. But know this threefold course of transmigrations that depends on the (three) gunas (to be again) threefold, low, middling, and high, according to the particular nature of the acts and of the knowledge (of each man). (12.39-41)**

“The condition of beasts” can mean two things: the psychological condition of animality (“two-footed beasts”) or literal birth in an animal body. As Yogananda pointed out, a human being usually creates human karma, so birth in animal form is rare. However, persistence in subhuman conduct may throw a person back to animal form through his animal samskaras from earlier rebirths. Also, those who are cruel to animals may come back as an animal to suffer cruelty from human beings. In this instance they will be human inwardly and animal outwardly and will realize why they are undergoing such suffering. Also there have been instances of a person who was deeply attached to animals, and since he died thinking of them he was reborn as an animal. This, too, is rare but not impossible. Mind is everything, as Sri Ramakrishna said. Once he told a spiritualist medium, “My boy, think of ghosts and you will be come a ghost; think of God and you will become a god. Which do you prefer?”

**In proportion as sensual men indulge in sensual pleasures, in that same proportion their taste for them grows.**

**By repeating their sinful acts those men of small understanding suffer pain here (below) in various births. (12.73-74)**

No comment needed, but it should be heeded!

**(If you ask) whether among all the virtuous actions, (performed) here below, (there be) one which has been declared more efficacious (than the rest) for securing supreme happiness to man, the knowledge of the Self is stated to be the most excellent among all of them; for that is the first of all sciences, because immortality is gained through that. (12.84-85)**

However, knowledge of the Self is not an action, it is a result. Knowledge of the Self comes from yoga sadhana alone.

“When the mind comes to rest, restrained by the practice of yoga, beholding the Self by the Self, he is content in the Self” (Bhagavad Gita 6:20).

Therefore yoga sadhana is not just the most efficacious way, it is the ONLY way.

**He who sacrifices [offers] to the Self (alone), equally recognizing the Self in all created beings and all created beings in the Self, becomes self-sufficient and self-luminous. (12.91)**

The highest sacrifice–yajna or offering–is meditation. But the yogi must always be aware that everything is a form or projection of the Self. Such a one attains the vision/experience of Unity and becomes swayamprakash–self-illuminated–as was Buddha.

**Let [a yogi], concentrating his mind, fully recognize in the Self all things,**

both the real and the unreal, for he who recognizes the universe in the Self, does not give his heart to unrighteousness.

The Self alone is the multitude of the gods, the universe rests on the Self; for the Self produces the connexion of these embodied (spirits) with actions.

He who thus recognizes the Self through the Self in all created beings, becomes equal (-minded) towards all, and enters the highest state: Brahman. (12.118-119, 125)

It seems odd for Manu to say that a yogi should “fully recognize in the Self all things, both the real and the unreal,” but truly nothing exists apart from the Self whether real or illusory. That is, the perception of the world and its illusions exists in the Self as their perceiver. The Self is the all-embracing reality behind both relative reality and relative illusion.

“Those who, renouncing all actions in me, intent on me as the highest [goal] worship me, meditating on me with single-minded Yoga—of those whose consciousness has entered into me, I am soon the deliverer from the ocean of mortal samsara. Keep your mind on me alone, causing your intellect to enter into me. Thenceforward, without doubt, you shall dwell in me.” (Bhagavad Gita 12:6-8).

In other words: “Therefore be a yogi” (Bhagavad Gita 6:46).

# Glossary

**Abhinivesha:** Clinging to earthly life; will to live; strong desire; false identification of the Self with the body or mind; an instinctive clinging to life and a dread of death.

**Abhyasa:** Sustained (constant) spiritual practice.

**Abhyasa Yoga:** Yoga, or union with God, through sustained spiritual practice.

**Abhyasin:** Yoga-practitioner.

**Abhyudaya:** Prosperity; increase; good result. “The purpose of life as related to material prosperity and individual and social welfare it is enjoined by the ritual section of the Vedas (karmakhanda) and is the empirical objective of everyone” (Grimes. *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy*).

**Achara:** Right conduct; good behavior; custom; practice; external observance of established rules and laws; teaching.

**Achyuta:** The indestructible; the unchanging; the imperishable one—a title of Krishna.

**Adharma:** Unrighteousness; demerit, failure to perform one’s proper duty; unrighteous action; lawlessness; absence of virtue; all that is contrary to righteousness (dharma).

**Adhibhautika:** Elemental.

**Adhibhuta:** Primal Being; pertaining to the elements; the primordial form of matter.

**Adhidaiva:** Primal God.

**Adhidaivika:** Pertaining, to the heaven or the celestial beings.

**Adhyatma:** The individual Self; the supreme Self; spirit.

**Adhyatmika:** Adhyatmic; pertaining to the Self (Atman or Jivatman), individual and Supreme (Paramatman).

**Adhyaya:** Chapter; section; study; reading; a lesson; lecture.

**Aditattva:** The first principle; Brahman; Mula Prakriti; the first element (of matter) next but one above akasha in the gradation of subtlety.

**Aditya:** The sun; the Sun God.

**Adityas:** Solar deities, the greatest of which is Vishnu.

**Agami karma:** Karma produced by present action that will be experienced by the individual in the future.

**Agni:** Fire; Vedic god of fire.

**Agnihotra:** “Fire offering;” a Vedic fire sacrifice.

**Ahamkara:** See Ahankara.

**Ahankara:** Ego; egoism or self-conceit; the self-arrogating principle “I,” “I”-ness; self-consciousness.

**Ahimsa:** Non-injury in thought, word, and deed; non-violence; non-killing; harmlessness.

**Aisha Karma:** The karma belonging to the Supreme Lord or occult (astral) world.

**Akasha:** Ether; space; sky; literally: “not visible.” The subtlest of the five elements (panchabhuta), from which the other four arise. It is all-pervading, and is sometimes identified with consciousness–chidakasha. It is the basis of sound (shabda), which is its particular property.

**Akshara:** Imperishable; indestructible, immutable, undying; undecaying; unchanging—all in reference to the individual self and the Supreme Self, Brahman.

**Amsha:** Part; component; limb; fragment.

**Anandamaya:** Full of bliss.

**Anandamaya kosha:** “The sheath of bliss (ananda).” The causal body (karana sharira). The borderline of the Self (atman).

**Anatma(n):** Not-Self; insentient.

**Andaja:** Egg-born body; oviporous.

**Anga:** Limb; individual part; accessory; member; step d. The yoga expounded by Pantanjali in the Yoga Sutras (Yoga Darshan) has eight limbs: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, dharana, dhyana, pratyahara, and samadhi.

**Anna(m):** Food; matter.

**Annamaya kosha:** “The sheath of food (anna).” The physical—or gross—body, made of food.

**Antahkarana:** Internal instrument; the subtle bodies; fourfold mind: mind, intellect, ego and subconscious mind.

**Anu:** Atom; of minute size.

**Apaddharma:** Dharma under emergency; the law of calamity.

**Apah:** Water.

**Apara:** Lower; other; relative; inferior.

**Aparavidya:** Lower, inferior knowledge.

**Apavarga:** Liberation; release; escape from pain; release from the bondage of embodiment.

**Apsara:** A celestial damsel, nymph, and dancer.

**Apunya:** Demerit; vice; non-meritorious acts; unvirtuous deeds; sinful. See Punya.

**Artha:** Wealth; object; thing; meaning; sense; purpose; an object of desire. It is the secular value which is both desired and desirable. It satisfies the acquisitive tendency in individuals. It is the economic value.

**Arvak:** Vegetable; vegetable existence.

**Arya(n):** One who is an Arya—literally, “one who strives upward.” Both Arya and Aryan are exclusively psychological terms having nothing whatsoever to do with birth, race, or nationality. In his teachings Buddha habitually referred to spiritually qualified people as “the Aryas.” Although in English translations we find the expressions: “The Four Noble Truths,” and “The Noble Eightfold Path,” Buddha actually said: “The Four Aryan Truths,” and “The Eightfold Aryan Path.”

**Arya Dharma:** The Dharma of the Aryas. See Sanatana Dharma.

**Aranyaka:** “Forest book;” philosophical, symbolic, and spiritual interpretations of the Vedic hymns and rituals. Mainly meant for forest-dwelling ascetics (vanaprasthas).

**Aryavarta:** The land of the Aryas. Usually applied to northern India.

**Asadharana:** Special; extraordinary; uncommon.

**Asat:** Unreal[ity]; nonbeing; nonexistence; false; falsehood.

**Ashrama:** Stage of life. In Hinduism life is divided ideally into four stages (ashramas): 1) the celibate student life (brahmacharya); 2) the married household life (grihasta); 3) the life of retirement (seclusion) and contemplation (vanaprastha); 4) the life of total renunciation (sannyasa).

**Ashrama-dharma:** Duties pertaining to the four orders or stages of life.

**Ashramite:** Resident of an ashram.

**Ashwamedha Yajna (Sacrifice):** Horse Sacrifice; an elaborate Vedic ceremony undertaken by kings to attain a son or sovereignty. "In Vedic times, a sacrifice or ritual performed by a king to consolidate and extend his power, in which a horse was allowed to roam freely, followed by the king's army. When the horse entered a foreign kingdom, its ruler could either fight against or become an ally of the invaders. If new kingdoms were acquired in this way, the horse was sacrificed as an offering" (*A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy* by John Grimes, p. 66.)

**Asmita:** I-ness; I-anness; the sense of "I am;" "I exist;" sense of individuality.

**Asura:** Demon; evil being (a-sura: without the light).

**Asuric:** Of demonic character.

**Asurim:** The state of an asura, one who dwells in darkness (a-sura-without the light). The condition of those negative souls who are turned away from divinity and moving further into degradation of consciousness and mode of life.

**Asurisampat:** Devilish qualities; demonical wealth.

**Atma:** See Atman.

**Atmabhava:** The nature of the Self; awareness of the self; feeling: "I am the Self."

**Atmajnana:** Direct knowledge of the Self; Brahma-Jnana.

**Atmajnani:** One who has atmajnana.

**Atman:** The individual spirit or Self that is one with Brahman; the essential being, nature or identity of each sentient being.

**Avatar(a):** A fully liberated spirit (jiva) who is born into a world below Satya Loka to help others attain liberation. Though commonly referred to as a divine incarnation, an avatar actually is totally one with God, and therefore an incarnation of God-Consciousness.

**Avidya:** Ignorance; nescience; unknowing; literally: "to know not." A Sakti or illusive power in Brahman which is sometimes regarded as one with Maya and sometimes as different from it. It forms the condition of the individual soul and is otherwise called Ajnana or Asuddha-maya. It forms the Karana Sharira of the Jiva. It is Malina or impure Sattwa. Also called ajnana.

**Avyakta(m):** Unmanifest; invisible; when the three gunas are in a state of equilibrium,.. the undifferentiated.

**Bandha:** "Lock;" bond; bondage; tie or knot; a Hatha Yoga exercise.

**Bel:** A tree whose leaves are sacred to Siva; also the fruit of the same tree.

**Bhagavad Gita:** "The Song of God." The sacred philosophical text often called "the Hindu Bible," part of the epic Mahabharata by Vyasa; the most popular sacred text in

Hinduism.

**Bhakta:** Devotee; votary; a follower of the path of bhakti, divine love; a worshipper of the Personal God.

**Bhakti:** Devotion; dedication; love (of God).

**Bhakti Marga:** The path of devotion leading to union with God.

**Bhakti Yoga:** The yoga of attaining union with God through the prescribed spiritual discipline of the path of devotion.

**Bharat(a):** The proper Sanskrit name for India; one of the brothers of Rama; a title of Arjuna.

**Bharati:** Indian

**Bharat(a)varsha:** The land of India.

**Bhashya:** Commentary.

**Bhava:** Subjective state of being (existence); attitude of mind; mental attitude or feeling; state of realization in the heart or mind.

**Bhishma:** A venerable teacher of dharma in the Mahabharata.

**Bhoga:** Enjoyment, pleasure; experience; perception; also food (usually what has been offered to a deity).

**Brahman:** The Absolute Reality; the Truth proclaimed in the Upanishads; the Supreme Reality that is one and indivisible, infinite, and eternal; all-pervading, changeless Existence; Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute (Satchidananda); Absolute Consciousness; it is not only all-powerful but all-power itself; not only all-knowing and blissful but all-knowledge and all-bliss itself.

**Brahmana (1):** A knower of Brahman; a Brahmajñani.

**Brahmana (2):** A member of the Brahmin caste.

**Brahmanda:** “The egg of Brahma” or “the Brahmic egg.” The cosmic “egg,” the universe; the cosmos; the macrocosm.

**Brahmin (Brahmana):** A knower of Brahman; a member of the highest Hindu caste traditionally consisting of priests, pandits, philosophers, and religious leaders.

**Brahmopasana:** Worship of the Infinite Brahman.

**Bhrigu:** A great sage (rishi) created by Brahma at the beginning of creation, so illustrious that he mediated quarrels among the gods; one of the Sapta Rishis—Great Beings who exist at the top of creation and supervise it.

**Bhur/Bhurloka:** The earth-plane.

**Bhuta:** What has come into being; an entity as opposed to the unmanifested; any of the five elementary constituents of the universe; element.

**Bhutani:** The five elementary constituents of the universe.

**Bhuvah/Bhuvārloka:** The higher etheric or the astral world.

**Bhuvana:** World.

**Brahma:** The Creator (Prajapati) of the three worlds of men, angels, and archangels (Bhur, Bhuvah, and Swah); the first of the created beings; Hiranyagarbha or cosmic intelligence. See **Kalpa** for an explanation of the Days and Night of Brahma and the length of his term as Creator.

**Brahmachari(n):** One who observes continence; a celibate student in the first stage



of life (ashrama); a junior monk.

**Brahmacharya:** Continence; self-restraint on all levels; discipline; dwelling in Brahman.

**Brahmacharya-ashrama:** Order of the students engaged in the study of the Vedas and the service of the Guru or the preceptor.

**Brahmajnana:** Direct, transcendental knowledge of Brahman; Self-realization.

**Brahmajnani:** One who possess Brahmajnana.

**Brahmaloka:** The world (loka) of God (Brahman); the infinite consciousness of God.

**Brahmana (1):** A knower of Brahman; a Brahmajnani.

**Brahmana (2):** A Vedic liturgical text explaining the rituals found in the Vedic samhitas (collection of hymns). A guidebook for performing those rites.

**Brahmanda:** “The egg of Brahma” or “the Brahmic egg.” The cosmic “egg,” the universe; the cosmos; the macrocosm. Brahmandani is the plural form.

**Brahmanirvana:** The state of liberation (nirvana) that results from total union with Brahman.

**Brahmavidya:** Science of Brahman; knowledge of Brahman; learning pertaining to Brahman or the Absolute Reality.

**Brahmin:** See Brahmana.

**Buddhi:** Intellect; intelligence; understanding; reason; the thinking mind; the higher mind, which is the seat of wisdom; the discriminating faculty.

**Buddhitattwa:** Principle of intelligence.

**Caste:** See Varna.

**Chaitanya:** Consciousness; intelligence; awareness; the consciousness that knows itself and knows others; Pure Consciousness.

**Chanda:** Metre.

**Chandala:** An untouchable, or outcaste; literally: “wild” or “bad.”

**Chetana:** Consciousness. Whereas chaitanya is the principle of pure consciousness, chetana is consciousness occupied with an object. It is this “consciousness” that Buddha rejected as an obstacle.

**Chit:** Consciousness (that is spirit or purusha); “to perceive, observe, think, be aware, know;” pure unitary Consciousness. The principle of universal intelligence or consciousness.

**Chitta:** The subtle energy that is the substance of the mind, and therefore the mind itself; mind in all its aspects; the field of the mind; the field of consciousness; consciousness itself; the subconscious mind.

**Chitta-vritti:** Modifications of the mind.

**Crore:** Ten million.

**Daitya:** Demon; slave; a class of mighty beings in whom the diabolical quality predominates; the demons of the Puranas; giant; titan; demons who constantly war with the gods. Sometimes races or nationalities who acted contrary to dharma and fought against the arya were also called demons–daityas or asuras.

**Daivic:** Divine.

**Daksha:** One of the Ten Prajapatis.

**Dana:** “Giving;” gift; charity; almsgiving; self-sacrifice; donation; generosity.

**Danava:** A class of demons. The danavas are a mythological race of asuras, the half-brothers to the devas and daityas that are found in a range of Hindu texts. The danavas are a part of a larger group of the asuras, and are typically portrayed as opposed to the Hindu deities. However, historically, their role in Hinduism is varied and at times, the distinction between the danavas and Hindu deities is complex and they are difficult to distinguish from one another.

**Darshan:** Literally “sight” or “seeing;” vision, literal and metaphysical; a system of philosophy (see Sad-darshanas). Darshan is the seeing of a holy being as well as the blessing received by seeing such a one.

**Darshana:** “Seeing” in the sense of a viewpoint or system of thought. The Sad-darshanas are the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta.

**Dasa:** Slave; servant.

**Deha:** Physical body.

**Deva:** “A shining one,” a god—greater or lesser in the evolutionary hierarchy; a semi-divine or celestial being with great powers, and therefore a “god.” Sometimes called a demi-god. Devas are the demigods presiding over various powers of material and psychic nature. In many instances “devas” refer to the powers of the senses or the sense organs themselves.

**Devaloka:** The world (loka) of the gods.

**Devarajas:** The rulers of the five elements: Indra (Ether), Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), Varuna (water) and Kubera (earth).

**Devayana:** The way or path of the gods, “the shining ones;” the path that leads beyond earthly rebirth and ultimately to liberation.

**Dharma (1):** The righteous way of living, as enjoined by the sacred scriptures and the spiritually illumined; law; lawfulness; virtue; righteousness; norm.

**Dharma (2):** Attributes; natures; essential/visible characteristics; characteristic form; properties; qualifications.

**Dharmaraja:** See Yudhishtira.

**Dharmashala:** A place for pilgrims to stay, either free of charge or at a minimal cost.

**Dharmashastras:** Scriptures which set forth the rules for society and individuals, including spiritual observances. Manu Smriti is the most authoritative—and the foundation—of all the dharmashastras of India.

**Dhyana(m)/Dhyana Yoga:** Meditation; contemplation.

**Dosha:** Defect; imperfection; blemish; fault; shortcoming. In Yoga philosophy there are five doshas: lust (kama), anger (krodha), greed (lobha), delusion (moha), and envy (matsarya).

**Dosha drishti:** Seeing defects; especially the defects in samsara and samsaric life.

**Dukha(m):** Pain; suffering; misery; sorrow; grief; unhappiness; stress; that which is unsatisfactory.

**Dwandwa(s):** The pairs of opposites inherent in nature (prakriti) such as pleasure and pain, hot and cold, light and darkness, gain and loss, victory and defeat, attraction and aversion, happiness and sorrow, birth and death.

**Dwandwata:** State of duality.

**Dwandvatita:** Beyond the pairs of opposites, like heat and cold, hunger and thirst, pleasure and pain, etc.

**Dweshha:** Aversion/avoidance for something, implying a dislike for it. This can be emotional (instinctual) or intellectual. It may range from simple non-preference to intense repulsion, antipathy and even hatred. See Raga.

**Dwija:** “Twice born;” any member of the three upper castes that has received the sacred thread (yajnopavita).

**Gana:** One of a group of spirits that wander together—usually of various types. The term is also used as a kind of “miscellaneous” category for entities that have not otherwise been identified. A gana may be benevolent or malevolent, but is usually disorderly, chaotic, and wild in the sense of untamed or unruly, and potentially dangerous (hazardous). A gana’s appearance is usually deformed, repulsive, or frightening. Shiva is said to be always accompanied by a group of devoted ganas.

**Gandharva:** A demigod—a celestial musician and singer.

**Ganesha:** The elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati; the remover of obstacles; lord (pati) of the ganas (spirits that always accompany Shiva); god of wisdom; god of beginnings; the granter of success in spiritual and material life; in ritual worship he is worshipped first, and is therefore known as Adi-deva, the First God.

**Garuda:** A great being who can assume bird form, and therefore considered the king of birds. Often depicted as an eagle, he is the vehicle of Vishnu.

**Gayatri Mantra:** A Rig Vedic mantra in the gayatri meter invoking the solar powers of evolution and enlightenment, recited at sunrise and sunset.

**Gayatri Meter:** A meter found only in the Rig Veda, consisting of three lines of eight syllables each. It is considered especially appropriate for mantric invocation of deities before worship.

**Ghee:** Clarified butter.

**Goloka:** The celestial abode (loka) of Krishna and His devotees.

**Gotra:** Clan; family; lineage.

**Govinda:** “Cowherd”—a title of Krishna.

**Grihastha:** One who is living in the second stage (ashrama) of Hindu social life; married householder’s life.

**Grihasthya:** The second stage (ashrama) of Hindu social life; married householder’s life.

**Guna:** Quality, attribute, or characteristic arising from nature (Prakriti) itself; a mode of energy behavior. As a rule, when “guna” is used it is in reference to the three qualities of Prakriti, the three modes of energy behavior that are the basic qualities of nature, and which determine the inherent characteristics of all created things. They are: 1) sattwa—purity, light, harmony; 2) rajas—activity, passion; and 3) tamas—dullness, inertia, and ignorance.

**Gunatita:** Beyond the Gunas; one who has transcended the three Gunas.

**Hansa:** Swan.

**Hari:** Vishnu; “thief” in the sense of stealer of hearts.

**Hota:** The priest who recites the verses from the Rig Veda in a sacrifice.

**Hrishiksha:** The bristling (or bushy) haired one. A title of Krishna.

**Ichcha:** Desire; will; wish; divine will; free will. From the verb root icch: “to wish,” “to will.”

**Ichcha shakti:** The power of desire; the power of the will; Shakti in the aspect of omnipotent Divine Will.

**Indra:** King of the lesser “gods” (demigods); the ruler of heaven (Surendra Loka); the rain-god.

**Indriya:** Organ. The five organs of perception (jnanendriyas) are the ear, skin, eye, tongue, and nose. The five organs of action (karmendriyas) are the voice, hand, foot, organ of excretion, and the organ of generation.

**Ishta-devata:** Beloved deity. The deity preferred above all others by an individual. “Chosen ideal” is the usual English translation.

**Ishta mantra:** The mantra of the divine form specially beloved by an individual (ishta devata).

**Ishtamurti:** Favorite form or image of God.

**Ishwara:** “God” or “Lord” in the sense of the Supreme Power, Ruler, Master or Controller of the cosmos. “Ishwara” implies the powers of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience.

**Ishwarapranidhana:** Offering of the life (prana) to God.

**Itihasa:** Epic; a book describing the life and adventures of a hero or heroes. The term is applied to Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The hero of the former is Sri Rama, the son of Dasaratha, and of the latter, the five Pandavas.

**Jada:** Inert; insentient; unconscious; matter.

**Jada Bharata:** A king of ancient India who became so fond of a pet deer that he was thinking of it intently at the time of death and was temporarily reborn as a deer though with full awareness of his previous life.

**Jagat:** World; cosmos; the ever-changing.

**Jaiva/Jaivika:** Pertaining to the jiva.

**Jaiva karma:** The karma, of the individual soul-jiva.

**Janaka:** The royal sage (raja rishi) who was the king of Mithila and a liberated yogi, a highly sought-after teacher of philosophy in ancient India. Sita, the wife of Rama, was his adopted daughter.

**Janaloka:** The world of Rishis and Munis; one of the seven higher planes of consciousness; just above Swarga/Swarloka.

**Janardana:** Agitator of men (properly an epithet of Vishnu)—a title of Krishna.

**Jani Janardana:** God present in all human beings.

**Japa:** Repetition of a mantra.,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

**Jarayu:** Womb.

**Jarayuja:** Womb-born beings; born in a living state.

**Jiva:** Individual spirit.

**Jivatma/Jivatman:** Individual spirit; individual consciousness.

**Jnana:** Knowledge; knowledge of Reality—of Brahman, the Absolute; also denotes the process of reasoning by which the Ultimate Truth is attained. The word is generally used to denote the knowledge by which one is aware of one's identity with Brahman.

**Jnana Marga:** The path of discriminative knowledge leading to union with God.

**Jnana Yoga:** The path of knowledge; meditation through wisdom; constantly and seriously thinking on the true nature of the Self as taught by the upanishads.

**Jnanamaya:** Full of knowledge.

**Jnanamaya kosha:** "The sheath of intellect (buddhi)." The level of intelligent thought and conceptualization. Sometimes called the Vijnanamaya kosha. The astral-causal body.

**Jnanendriyas:** The five organs of perception: ear, skin, eye, tongue, and nose.

**Jnani:** A follower of the path of knowledge (jnana); one who has realized—who knows—the Truth (Brahman).

**Kailash(a):** "Crystalline;" the name of the mountain home of Siva—a mountain peak in the Himalayas (in present-day Tibet) revered as the abode of Shiva, that is a famous place of pilgrimage.

**Kaivalya:** Transcendental state of Absolute Independence; state of absolute freedom from conditioned existence; moksha; isolation; final beatitude; emancipation.

**Kaivalya-mukti (Kaivalya moksha):** Liberation in which the yogi becomes one with Brahman while living (jivanmukti); final emancipation.

**Kalpa:** A Day of Brahma—4,320,000,000 years. It alternates with a Night of Brahma of the same length. He lives hundred such years. Brahma's life is known as Para, being of a longer duration than the life of any other being, and a half of it is called Parardha. He has now completed the first Parardha and is in the first day of the second Parardha. This day or Kalpa is known as Svetavarahakalpa. In the Day of Brahma creation is manifest and in the Night of Brahma is it resolved into its causal state.

**Kama:** Desire; passion; lust.

**Kamadhenu:** Wish-fulfilling cow produced at the churning of the milk ocean.

**Kamadhuk:** See Kamadhenu.

**Kanda:** Section; division; chapter.

**Kapila:** The great sage who formulated the Sankhya philosophy which is endorsed by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. (See the entry under Sankhya.)

**Karana:** Causal (as causal body); "instrument;" cause; instrumental cause; means of accomplishing something; reason. The means of knowledge and action. The inner and outer instruments (sense organs). The unmanifested potential cause that, in due time, takes shape as the visible effect; the material cause of the universe in such a state during the period of dissolution, i.e., cosmic energy in a potential condition.

**Karana Deha:** Causal body.

**Karana sharira:** The causal body (where the individual rests during sound, deep, dreamless sleep, the intellect, mind and senses being reduced to an unmanifested potential condition), also known as the anandamaya kosha, the "sheath of bliss."

**Kardama:** A mind-born son of Brahma—one of the Ten Prajapatis.

**Karma:** Karma, derived from the Sanskrit root *kri*, which means to act, do, or make, means any kind of action, including thought and feeling. It also means the effects of action. Karma is both action and reaction, the metaphysical equivalent of the principle: “For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.” “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7). It is karma operating through the law of cause and effect that binds the jiva or the individual soul to the wheel of birth and death. There are three forms of karma: sanchita, agami, and prarabdha. Sanchita karma is the vast store of accumulated actions done in the past, the fruits of which have not yet been reaped. Agami karma is the action that will be done by the individual in the future. Prarabdha karma is the action that has begun to fructify, the fruit of which is being reaped in this life.

**Karma Kanda:** The part of the Vedas that relates to sacrificial rules and ceremonial acts on the physical level.

**Karma Marga:** The path of selfless action leading to union with God.

**Karma Mimamsa:** See Purva Mimamsa.

**Karma Yoga:** The Yoga of selfless (unattached ) action; performance of one’s own duty; service of humanity.

**Karmanya:** Follower of the Karma Marga; a karma yogi.

**Karmatmana:** One whose nature is action.

**Karmendriyas:** The five organs of action: voice, hand, foot, organ of excretion, and the organ of generation.

**Kashyapa:** A Rishi who was the father of gods and demons, the son of Marichi, one of the sons of Brahma.

**Kinnara:** A celestial musician.

**Kosha:** Sheath; bag; scabbard; a sheath enclosing the soul; body. There are five such concentric sheaths or bodies: the sheaths of bliss, intellect, mind, life-force and the physical body—the anandamaya, jnanamaya, manomaya, pranamaya and annamaya bodies respectively.

**Krida:** Playing, sporting, play, pastime, amusement. See Lila.

**Krishna:** An avatar born in India about three thousand years ago, Whose teachings to His disciple Arjuna on the eve of the Great India (Mahabharata) War comprise the Bhagavad Gita.

**Kriya:** Purificatory action, practice, exercise, or rite; action; activity; movement; function; skill. Kriyas purify the body and nervous system as well as the subtle bodies to enable the yogi to reach and hold on to higher levels of consciousness and being.

**Krodha:** Anger, wrath; fury.

**Kshatriya:** A member of the ruler/warrior caste.

**Kubera:** The god of wealth.

**Kumar(a):** A male virgin.

**Kumaras (Four):** At the beginning of this creation cycle the four most advanced human souls (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata) from the previous cycle refused to engage in the creation of the world and to enter into worldly life

despite the command of Brahma that they do so. Instead they engaged in intense yoga and attained liberation. The chief of these was Sanatkumara who thereby became the Lord of Liberation for all humanity. Ever present in subtle form, Sanatkumara assists those who truly seek liberation—usually invisibly and unknown to them. But at their attainment of perfect realization he reveals himself to them and leads them to the worlds beyond compulsory rebirth.

**Lakshmi:** The consort of Vishnu; the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

**Lila:** Play; sport; divine play; the cosmic play. The concept that creation is a play of the divine, existing for no other reason than for the mere joy of it. The life of an avatar is often spoken of as lila.

**Lobha:** Greed; covetousness.

**Loka:** World or realm; sphere, level, or plane of existence, whether physical, astral, or causal.

**Mahabharata:** The world's longest epic poem (110,00 verses) about the Mahabharata (Great Indian) War that took place about three thousand years ago. The Mahabharata also includes the Bhagavad Gita, the most popular sacred text of Hinduism.

**Mahabhutas:** The Five Elements (Panchabhuta): ether (akasha), air (vayu), fire (agni), water (ap), and earth (prithvi).

**Mahadeva:** "The Great God;" a title of Shiva.

**Mahadbrahma:** Hiranyagarbha; Sutratma; cosmic intelligence.

**Mahaloka:** The world just above Swarloka.

**Mahapralaya:** The final cosmic dissolution; the dissolution of all the worlds of relativity (Bhuloka, Bhuvaloka, Swaloka, Mahaloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka, and Satyaloka), until nothing but the Absolute remains. There are lesser dissolutions, known simply as pralayas, when only the first five worlds (lokas) are dissolved.

**Maharishi:** Great Rishi.

**Maharishis—The Ten:** The ten maharishis, Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prachetas, Vasishtha, Bhrigu and Narada, were superhuman beings, who having obtained liberation in former kalpas, were called forth to aid in the direction of the world process, and who remain, superintending the destinies of the worlds, and will remain until the pralaya. Sometimes only seven are given this rank, Prachetas, Bhrigu and Narada not being included in the list. Sometimes others are added, as Daksha and Kardama.

**Mahat Tattwa:** The Great Principle; the first product from Prakriti in evolution; intellect. The principle of Cosmic Intelligence or Buddhi; universal Christ Consciousness, the "Son of God," the "Only Begotten of the Father," "the firstborn of every creature."

**Mahesh/Maheshwara:** The Great Ishwara (Lord); Shiva.

**Manas(a):** The sensory mind; the perceiving faculty that receives the messages of the senses.

**Manasa puja:** Mental worship; a form of ritualistic worship in which the devotee mentally visualizes the entire procedure of worship.

**Mandala:** Circle; orbit; region; sphere or plane, e.g., Suryamandala or the solar region; a yantra-design made on a metal plate or drawn with auspicious elements upon which ritualistic worship is performed.

**Manava:** Man; a human being; a descendant of Manu.

**Manava dharma:** The essential nature of man; religion of man; the duties of man.

**Manomaya kosha:** “The sheath of the mind (manas–mental substance).” The level (kosha) of the sensory mind. The astral body.

**Mantra:** Sacred syllable or word or set of words through the repetition and reflection of which one attains perfection or realization of the Self. Literally, “a transforming thought” (manat trayate). A mantra, then is a sound formula that transforms the consciousness.

**Manu (1):** The controller of time, the cycle of the yugas.

**Manu (2):** Father of the human race; the first law-giver, whose code is the foundation of Hindu religious and social conduct.

**Manu Smriti:** The Laws of Manu; the most authoritative—and the foundation—of all the dharmashastras of India.

**Manus:** Progenitors of the human race who were also its lawgivers and teachers.

**Manvantara:** An age of Manu (1). Within a cosmic age (kalpa) there are fourteen manvantaras.

**Marga:** Way; path; road; street; approach to God-realization (bhakti marga, jnana marga, karma marga, yoga marga, etc.).

**Marichi:** The chief of the Maruts.

**Maruts:** The presiding deities of winds and storms.

**Maruts:** The presiding deities of winds and storms.

**Matarishwan:** A divine being closely associated with Agni, a messenger of Vivasvat, bringing the hidden fire to the Bhrigus; also a name of Vayu.

**Maya:** The illusive power of Brahman; the veiling and the projecting power of the universe, the power of Cosmic Illusion. “The Measurer”—a reference to the two delusive “measures,” Time and Space.

**Mimamsa:** An enquiry into the nature of a thing; the science of philosophical logic enquiring into Vedic knowledge. Usually a reference to Purva-Mimamsa, one of the six schools of orthodox Indian philosophy. It focuses on the Vedas and the Vedic rites to establish their supreme spiritual value and authority.

**Mitra:** A name of Surya, the sun God.

**Moha:** Delusion—in relation to something, usually producing delusive attachment or infatuation based on a completely false perception and evaluation of the object.

**Moksha:** Release; liberation; the term is particularly applied to the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death; Absolute Experience.

**Mukta:** One who is liberated—freed—usually in the sense of one who has attained moksha or spiritual liberation.

**Mukti:** Moksha; liberation.

**Muktis (Four):** The four states of Liberation: Salokya (being in the same plane or world as God), Samipya (being in close proximity and association with God), Sarupya



(having the same form as God) and Sayujya (united with God; one with God).

**Mulaprakriti:** Avyaktam; the Root [Basic] Energy from which all things are formed. The Divine Prakriti or Energy of God.

**Muni:** “Silent one” (one observing the vow of silence–mauna); sage; ascetic.

**Nagas:** Astral beings that often interact with human beings, usually taking the form of snakes; a kind of powerful spirit-being worshipped in some areas of India, possessing great psychic powers and the ability to appear and communicate with human beings.

**Naishthika brahmachari:** One who has taken the vow of life-long celibacy; a permanent brahmachari.

**Narada:** A primeval sage to whom some of the verses of the Rig Veda are attributed.

**Naraka:** Hell. In Sanatana Dharma’s cosmology there are many hells according to the karma of those dwelling in them before being reincarnated.

**Narayana:** A proper name of God–specifically of Vishnu. The term by etymology means a Being that supports all things, that is reached by them and that helps them to do so; also one who pervades all things. He Who dwells in man. Literally: “God in humanity.” Sadhus often address one another as Narayana and greet one another: “Namo Narayanaya”–I salute Narayana [in you].

**Nath Yogi:** A member of the Nath Yogi Sampradaya.

**Nath Yogi Sampradaya:** An ancient order of yogis claiming Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath, Patanjali, Jnaneshwar and Jesus (Isha Nath) among their master teachers.

**Nirguna:** Without attributes or qualities (gunas).

**Nirguna Brahman:** The impersonal, attributeless Absolute beyond all description or designation.

**Nirvana:** Liberation; final emancipation; the term is particularly applied to the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death that comes from knowing Brahman; Absolute Experience. See Moksha.

**Nishreyasa/Nishshreyas:** Supreme bliss; unification with God final emancipation; see Moksha.

**Nivritti:** Negation; the path of turning away from worldly activity; withdrawal. Literally, “to turn back.” The path of renunciation.

**Nivritti Marga:** The path of renunciation or sannyasa, of withdrawal from the world.

**Niyama:** Observance; the five Do’s of Yoga: 1) Shaucha: purity, cleanliness; 2) Santosha: contentment, peacefulness; 3) Tapas: austerity, practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline; 4) Swadhyaya: self-study, spiritual study; 5) Ishwarapranidhana: offering of one’s life to God.

**Nyaya:** Logic; one of the six schools of Indian philosophy.

**Om:** The Pranava or the sacred syllable symbolizing and embodying Brahman.

**Omkara:** Om.

**Panchikarana:** Quintuplication; according to the Vedanta school, a particular process by which the five kinds of the elementary constituents of the universe are said

to be compounded with one another to form grosser entities that serve as units in the composition of the physical universe. The theory that every physical object contains all the five elements in various proportions.

**Pandavas:** The five sons of King Pandu: Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Their lives are described in the Mahabharata.

**Pandit(a):** Scholar; pundit; learned individual; a man of wisdom.

**Papa(m):** Sin; demerit; evil; sinful deeds; evil deeds; trouble; harm; anything which takes one away from dharma.

**Paramatma(n) (1):** The Supreme Self, God.

**Paramatma(n) (2):** The Universal Soul and Lord of the Divine Mother or Kundalini Shakti. In this state Shiva feels infinite power, beauty, love, wealth, wisdom, goodness, etc. He now wants to delight in playing with his Shakti using all these infinite attributes to create the phenomenal, cosmic universe. As Paramatama, Shiva is conscious of the Perfect Spiritual Personality which is the Shiva-Shakti combine.

**Parambrahman:** The Supreme Absolute; the transcendental Reality.

**Parampurusha:** The Supreme Spirit; Supreme Person.

**Paravidya:** Higher knowledge; direct knowledge of Brahman.

**Parvati:** “Daughter of the Mountain;” the daughter of King Himalaya; the consort of Shiva; an incarnation of the Divine Mother.

**Patala Loka:** Nether world; hell. In ancient Sanskrit texts the Western Hemisphere is called Patal Desh, the Underworld.

**Pishacha:** A vampiristic spirit or demon, sometimes called “a blood drinker,” though it really depletes its victims of prana, the life force.

**Pitri:** A departed ancestor, a forefather.

**Pitriloka:** The world occupied by the divine hierarchy of ancestors.

**Pitriyana:** The path (way) of the departed ancestors in which the individual journeys after death until it once more enters a womb to be born again.

**Pradhana:** Prakriti; causal matter.

**Prahlada:** A daitya prince who rejected his daitya heritage and became a devotee of Vishnu. His father, the evil Hiranyakashipu, tortured him and attempted his life because of his devotion and his speaking to others of divine matters, yet he remained steadfast.

**Prajapati:** Progenitor; the Creator; a title of Brahma the Creator.

**Prajapatis, Ten:** Ten assistant creators under the supervision of Brahma the Creator, who brought them forth from higher worlds to assist him in the creation of the material world.

**Prajna:** Consciousness; awareness; wisdom; intelligence.

**Prakrita:** Having to do with creation or Prakriti in its manifestations.

**Prakriti:** Causal matter; the fundamental power (shakti) of God from which the entire cosmos is formed; the root base of all elements; undifferentiated matter; the material cause of the world. Also known as Pradhana. Prakriti can also mean the entire range of vibratory existence (energy).

**Pralaya:** Periodic cosmic dissolution; complete merging; dissolution when the

cosmos merges into it immediate cause, the unmanifested cosmic energy, or into the Ultimate Substratum, the Absolute Reality.

**Pramana:** Means of valid knowledge; logical proof; authority (of knowledge); means of cognition (from the verb root *ma*—to measure and *pra*—before or forward).

**Prameya:** Object of proof (Brahman or the Absolute Reality); subject of enquiry; object of right knowledge; measured or known object.

**Prana:** Life; vital energy; life-breath; life-force; inhalation. In the human body the prana is divided into five forms: 1) Prana, the prana that moves upward; 2) Apana: The prana that moves downward, producing the excretory functions in general. 3) Vyana: The prana that holds prana and apana together and produces circulation in the body. 4) Samana: The prana that carries the grosser material of food to the apana and brings the subtler material to each limb; the general force of digestion. 5) Udana: The prana which brings up or carries down what has been drunk or eaten; the general force of assimilation.

**Pranamaya kosha:** “The sheath of vital air (prana).” The sheath consisting of vital forces and the (psychic) nervous system, including the karmendriyas.

**Pranava:** A title of Om, meaning “Life-ness” or “Life-Giver.” Om is the expression or controller of prana—the life force within the individual being and the cosmos.

**Prarabdha:** Karma that has become activated and begun to manifest and bear fruit in this life; karmic “seeds” that have begun to “sprout.”

**Prathama:** Foremost; first; earliest; primary; original; prior; preceding; initial; chief; principal.

**Pravritta:** One who follows the Pravritii Marga of active involvement in the world—attached action.

**Pravritti:** Action; endeavor. Literally: “to turn forth.” Active involvement in the world; attached action.

**Pravritti Marga:** The path of active involvement in the world. The path of action or life in worldly society or according to the nature of the world.

**Prayaschitta:** Atonement (through various prescribed acts); expiation; mortification.

**Prayascitta karma:** Expiatory action; bodily mortification; penance.

**Prithvi:** The element of earth with density and fragrance as its characteristic features.

**Prithivitattva:** Principle of earth-element.

**Puja:** Worship; ceremonial (ritual) worship; adoration; honor. Usually involving the image of a deity.

**Punarjanma:** “Birth again;” rebirth/reincarnation.

**Punya:** Merit; virtue; meritorious acts; virtuous deeds. See Apunya.

**Purana:** Literally “The Ancient.” The Puranas are a number of scriptures attributed to the sage Vyasa that teach spiritual principles and practices through stories about sacred historical personages which often include their teachings given in conversations.

**Purusha:** “Person” in the sense of a conscious spirit. Both God and the individual spirits are purushas, but God is the Adi (Original, Archetypal) Purusha, Parama

(Highest) Purusha, and the Purushottama (Highest or Best of the Purushas).

**Purushartha:** The four goals (artha) of human life: wealth (artha), desire (kama), righteousness (dharma), and liberation (moksha). The first is the economic value, the second is the psychological value, the third is the moral value, and the fourth is the spiritual value. Human effort; individual exertion; right exertion.

**Purushottama:** The Supreme Person; Supreme Purusha; the Lord of the universe. (See Purusha.)

**Purva Mimamsa:** One of the six systems (darshanas) of Indian Philosophy that deals with Vedic rituals and action (karma) in general.

**Raga:** Blind love; attraction; attachment that binds the soul to the universe. Attachment/affinity for something, implying a desire for it. This can be emotional (instinctual) or intellectual. It may range from simple liking or preference to intense desire and attraction. Greed; passion. See Dwesha.

**Raga-dwesha:** The continual cycle of attraction and repulsion; like and dislike; love and hatred.

**Rajas:** Activity, passion, desire for an object or goal.

**Rajasic:** Possessed of the qualities of the raja guna (rajas). Passionate; active; restless.

**Rajasuya Yajna (Sacrifice):** A great sacrifice performed by a monarch/emperor as a mark of his sovereignty over other kings.

**Rajoguna:** Activity, passion, desire for an object or goal—the quality or guna of Rajas.

**Rakshasa:** There are two kinds of rakshasas: 1) semidivine, benevolent beings, or 2) cannibal demons or goblins, enemies of the gods. Meat-eating human beings are sometimes classed as rakshasas.

**Rama:** An incarnation of God—the king of ancient Ayodhya in north-central India. His life is recorded in the ancient epic Ramayana.

**Ramayana:** The great Sanskrit epic poem by the sage Valmiki describing the life of Rama, the king of ancient Ayodhya in north-central India, who is regarded as an incarnation of God. The renowned Hindi devotional poem by the saint Tulsidas, also on the life of Rama.

**Rasa:** Taste; essence; savor; juice; nectar of delight.

**Rik (or Ric):** A hymn, usually a hymn of the Rig Veda.

**Rina:** Duty; karmic debt.

**Rishi:** Sage; seer of the Truth.

**Rudra:** Shiva. Derived from *rud*—he who drives away sin or suffering.

**Rupa:** Form; body.

**Sadachara:** Morality; right behavior.

**Sadhana:** Spiritual practice.

**Sadharana:** Belonging or applicable to all; general; common; ordinary; universal.

**Sadhu:** Seeker for truth (sat); a person who is practicing spiritual disciplines; a good or virtuous or honest man, a holy man, saint, sage, seer. Usually this term is applied only to monastics.

**Sadhvi:** A female “sadhu.”

**Sadhyas:** A group of celestial beings with exquisitely refined natures thought to inhabit the ether.

**Saguna:** Possessing attributes or qualities (gunas).

**Saguna Brahman:** Brahman with attributes, such as mercy, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.; the Absolute conceived as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe; also the Personal God according to the Vedanta.

**Sahaja:** Natural; innate; spontaneous; inborn.

**Sahaja Karma:** That to which one is born or naturally inclined; a particular action—spontaneous karma.

**Salokya:** Being in the same plane or world as God.

**Samadhi:** The state of superconsciousness where Absoluteness is experienced attended with all-knowledge and joy; Oneness; here the mind becomes identified with the object of meditation; the meditator and the meditated, thinker and thought become one in perfect absorption of the mind.

**Samhita:** A division of the Vedas; Vedic hymns.

**Samipya:** Being in close proximity and association with one’s object of meditation and worship; being near to God.

**Samkarshana:** The separated soul. From Brahman comes samkarshana, the separated soul, which produces pradyumna, the mind, which produces aniruddha, the “I.” These separated souls are vyakta, manifested, during the period of activity, and when the pralaya approaches they are drawn in, become avyaktam, unmanifested. Brahman is then in the karanavastha, the causal state, in which remain avyakta—both soul and matter. Brahman is the object of worship on whom the soul depends, [yet] the soul being not Brahman, but a part of Brahman, the separation is insisted on but union is sought.

**Samsara:** Life through repeated births and deaths; the wheel of birth and death; the process of earthly life.

**Samsara chakra:** The wheel of birth and death.

**Samsari:** The transmigrating soul.

**Samsaric:** Having to do with samsara; involved with samsara; partaking of the traits or qualities of samsara.

**Samsarin:** One who is subject to samsara—repeated births and deaths—and who is deluded by its appearances, immersed in ignorance.

**Samskara (1):** Impression in the mind, either conscious or subconscious, produced by action or experience in this or previous lives; propensities of the mental residue of impressions; subliminal activators; prenatal tendency. See Vasana.

**Samskara (2):** A ritual that makes an impression or change in the individual for whom it is done. There are sixteen samskaras prescribed by the dharma shastras, beginning with conception (garbhadan) and concluding with the rite for the departed soul (antyshti). The major ones besides these two are the birth rite (jatakarma), naming ceremony (namakaranam), the first eating of solid food (annaprashanam), the first cutting of the hair (chudakaraman), bestowal of the sacred thread and instruction

in the Gayatri mantra (upanayanam), marriage (vivahanam), taking up of the retired life (vanaprastha), and taking up the monastic life (sannyasa). They are all done at points in the person's life when significant changes in the subtle energy bodies are going to take place. Thus the samskara protects and strengthens the individual at those times and also prepares him for those changes, making actual alterations in his subtle bodies. Although they are often made social occasions, they are very real instruments of change to facilitate and further the person's personal evolution. They are the linchpins of dharmic life, and essentially spiritual events.

**Sanatana:** Eternal; everlasting; ancient; primeval.

**Sanatana Dharma:** "The Eternal Religion," also known as "Arya Dharma," "the religion of those who strive upward [Aryas];" Hinduism.

**Sanatana Dharmi:** One who both believes in and follows the principles of Sanatana Dharma.

**Sanatkumara:** One of the Four Kumaras (see Kumaras).

**Sanchita:** Sanchita karma.

**Sanchita karma:** The vast store of accumulated actions done in the past, the fruits of which have not yet been reaped.

**Sandhya:** A ritual done at the "junctions" (sandhyas) of the day—dawn, noon, and sunset—during which the Savitri Gayatri is repeated.

**Sandhyavandana:** A religious ablution and prayer among the twice-born of the Hindus performed in the morning, noon and evening.

**Sankhya:** One of the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy whose originator was the sage Kapila, Sankhya is the original Vedic philosophy, endorsed by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (Gita 2:39; 3:3, 5; 18:13, 19), the second chapter of which is entitled "Sankhya Yoga." *A Ramakrishna-Vedanta Wordbook* says: "Sankhya postulates two ultimate realities, Purusha and Prakriti. Declaring that the cause of suffering is man's identification of Purusha with Prakriti and its products, Sankhya teaches that liberation and true knowledge are attained in the supreme consciousness, where such identification ceases and Purusha is realized as existing independently in its transcendental nature." Not surprisingly, then, Yoga is based on the Sankhya philosophy.

**Sannyas(a):** Renunciation; monastic life. Sannyasa literally means "total throwing away," in the sense of absolute rejection of worldly life, ways and attitudes. True sannyas is based on viveka and vairagya. It is not just a mode of external life, but a profound insight and indifference to the things of the world and the world itself—not the world of God's creation, but the world of human ignorance, illusion, folly and suffering which binds all sentient beings to the wheel of continual birth and death. The sannyasi's one goal is liberation through total purification and enlightenment. His creed is Shankara's renowned Vedanta in Half a Verse: "Brahman is real. The world is illusion. The jiva is none other than Brahman."

**Sannyasi(n):** A renunciate; a monk.

**Santosha:** Contentment; joy; happiness; peacefulness.

**Sapta Rishis:** "Seven Sages." Great Beings who exist at the top of creation and

supervise it.

**Saraswati:** The goddess of speech, wisdom, learning and the arts—particularly music.

**Sarga:** Creation; primary creation; begetting; downpour; letting loose; sending forth.

**Sarpa:** A snake spirit.

**Sarupya:** Having the same form as God.

**Sat:** Existence; reality; truth; being; a title of Brahman, the Absolute or Pure Being.

**Satchidananda:** Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; Brahman.

**Sattwa:** Light; purity; harmony, goodness, reality.

**Sattwa Guna:** Quality of light, purity, harmony, and goodness.

**Sattwic:** Partaking of the quality of Sattwa.

**Satya(m):** Truth; the Real; Brahman, or the Absolute; truthfulness; honesty.

**Satyaloka:** “True World,” “World of the True [Sat]”, or “World of Truth [Satya].” This highest realm of relative existence where liberated beings live who have not entered back into the Transcendent Absolute where there are no “worlds” (lokas). From that world they can descend and return to other worlds for the spiritual welfare of others, as can those that have chosen to return to the Transcendent.

**Sayujya:** Closely united with; united with God; becoming one with God.

**Shabda:** Sound; word.

**Shabda Brahman:** Sound-God; Brahman in the Form of Sound; Soham; the Vedas.

**Shabda tanmatra:** Subtle principle of sound.

**Shakha:** Division; branch.

**Shakra:** Indra.

**Shakti:** Power; energy; force; the Divine Power of becoming; the apparent dynamic aspect of Eternal Being; the Absolute Power or Cosmic Energy; the Divine Feminine.

**Shalagrama:** A flat-round or disk-like stone with rounded edges, found only in the riverbed or banks of the Kali Gandaki in Nepal, and is considered to be a manifestation of Vishnu and his avatars.

**Shama:** Calmness; tranquility; control of the internal sense organs; same; equal.

**Shankaracharya:** Adi (the first) Shankaracharya: The great reformer and re-establisher of Vedic Religion in India around 500 B.C. He is the unparalleled exponent of Advaita (Non-Dual) Vedanta. He also reformed the mode of monastic life and founded (or regenerated) the ancient Swami Order.

**Sharira:** Body; sheath; literally: “that which perishes,” from the root shri which means “to waste away.”

**Shastra:** Scripture; spiritual treatise.

**Shastri:** One who is a scholar and teacher of the scriptures (shastras).

**Shastric:** Scriptural or having to do with the scriptures.

**Shaucha:** Purity; cleanliness.

**Shiva:** A name of God meaning “One Who is all Bliss and the giver of happiness to all.” Although classically applied to the Absolute Brahman, Shiva can also refer to God (Ishwara) in His aspect of Dissolver and Liberator (often mistakenly thought of as

“destroyer”).

**Shiva Linga:** A column-like or egg-shaped symbol of Shiva, usually made of stone. The column-like linga represents the central axis of creation which was seen by Brahma and Vishnu as a column of Light that had no top or bottom, but out of which Shiva emerged and explained that he was the source—indeed the totality—of creation. To yogis it represents the sushumna nadi which embodies the Consciousness that is Shiva. The egg-shaped (garbha) linga represents Shiva as the germ or seed of the universe out of whom all things have come to be as his manifestation. It is often considered to represent the universe itself which is identical with Shiva.

**Shraddha:** Rituals for the welfare of the dead, done in the days after the death and then usually done on the anniversary of the death.

**Srishti:** Creation; projection or gradual unfoldment of what exists potentially in the cause; evolution of the universe from its seed state.

**Shruti:** That which was heard; revealed scripture in the sense of divine communication. Usually applied to the Vedas, Shankara also spoke of the Upanishads as Shruti.

**Shudra:** A member of the laborer, servant caste.

**Shukta:** Vedic hymn.

**Shushrusha:** Obedience; reverence; service.

**Siddha:** A perfected—liberated—being, an adept, a seer, a perfect yogi.

**Siddhi:** Spiritual perfection; psychic power; power; modes of success; attainment; accomplishment; achievement; mastery; supernatural power attained through mantra, meditation, or other yogic practices. From the verb root *sidh*—to attain.

**Sloka:** A Sanskrit verse. Usually it consists of two lines of sixteen syllables each, or four lines of eight syllables each.

**Smriti:** Memory; recollection; “that which is remembered;” code of law. In this latter sense, Smriti is used to designate all scriptures except the Vedas and Upanishads (which are considered of greater authority: Shruti).

**Snataka:** One who has completed his studentship but has not yet entered the Grihasta life.

**Soma:** A milkweed, *Asclepias acida*, whose juice in Vedic times was made into a beverage and offered in sacrifices; the nectar of immortality; a name of Chandra, the presiding deity of the moon.

**Sri:** Holy; sacred; excellent; venerated (venerable); revered; a term of respect similar to “Reverend.” Also: prosperity, glory, and success—and therefore an epithet for Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and abundance, the consort of Vishnu. It is often used as an honorific prefix to the name of deities and holy persons to indicate holiness (Sri Krishna, Sri Swami N., etc.). Also used as the equivalent of the English “Mr.” (Srimati would be the equivalent of “Mrs.”)

**Sthiti:** Steadiness; condition or state; existence; being; subsistence; preservation.

**Sthula Deha:** Physical, material body.

**Sthula sharira:** Gross body; physical body; body of atomic matter.

**Sukshma:** Fine; subtle; intangible; invisible; belonging to a subtler order of



existence than the physical.

**Sukshma sharira:** Subtle body; astral body (also called *linga sharira*).

**Sukshmadeha:** Subtle body.

**Suparna:** A bird spirit.

**Sura:** Divine being; deva; one who is filled with light.

**Surya:** The sun; the presiding deity of the sun, sometimes identified with Vishnu (Surya-Narayana) or the Absolute Brahman.

**Sushupti:** The dreamless sleep state.

**Sutratma:** “The thread-Self;” immanent deity of the totality of the subtle bodies, referring to the Gita verse: “All this creation is strung on me like pearls on a thread” (7:7).

**Swabhava:** One’s own inherent disposition, nature, or potentiality; inherent state of mind; state of inner being.

**Swabhavic:** Related to or produced by the Swabhava.

**Swadharma:** One’s own natural (innate) duty (dharma, based on their karma and samskara. One’s own prescribed duty in life according to the eternal law (ritam).

**Swapna:** The dream state; a dream.

**Swarga:** Heaven-world; the celestial region.

**Swarga loka/Swarloka:** Swarga.

**Swayambhu:** Self-existent or self-generated.

**Swedaja:** Sweat (moisture) born; born spontaneously or generated automatically from inorganic matter through the action of moisture and heat.

**Taijasa:** The dream self; the vital self; the “fiery.”

**Tala:** Place, plane or world.

**Tamas:** Dullness, darkness, inertia, folly, and ignorance.

**Tamasic:** Possessed of the qualities of the tamoguna (tamas). Ignorant; dull; inert; and dark.

**Tamoguna:** The quality or guna of Tamas.

**Tanmatra(s):** The pure elements; the subtle essence of the five elements, elemental essence.

**Tapaloka:** The world of tapasya; the world beyond rebirth where adept yogis perpetually engage in tapasya (yoga) until they attain liberation and pass upward into Satya Loka, the realm of the liberated ones who know Brahman.

**Tapas:** See tapasya.

**Tapasya:** Austerity; practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline; spiritual force. Literally it means the generation of heat or energy, but is always used in a symbolic manner, referring to spiritual practice and its effect, especially the roasting of karmic seeds, the burning up of karma.

**Tapaswi(n):** Ascetic; one who is practicing Tapas.

**Tattwa:** “Thatness.” Principle; element; the essence of things; truth; reality.

**Tejas:** Radiance; brilliancy (especially spiritual); the element of fire; Agni; heat.

**Tiryak:** Animal; animal existence.

**Tridandin (1):** One who has attained mastery over mind, speech and body—or

thought, word and deed.

**Tridandin (2):** A sannyasi who carries three long staffs tied together so as to form one in the right hand.

**Triloki:** The three worlds, bhur, bhuvah and swar lokas.

**Trimurti:** “The three forms”–Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, the Hindu “Trinity.”

**Uma:** See Parvati.

**Upadhi:** Adjunct; association; superimposed thing or attribute that veils and gives a colored view of the substance beneath it; limiting adjunct; instrument; vehicle; body; a technical term used in Vedanta philosophy for any superimposition that gives a limited view of the Absolute and makes It appear as the relative.

**Upanayana(m):** Investiture with the sacred thread (yajnopavita) and initiation into the Gayatri mantra.

**Upanishads:** Books (of varying lengths) of the philosophical teachings of the ancient sages of India on the knowledge of Absolute Reality. The upanishads contain two major themes: (1) the individual self (atman) and the Supreme Self (Paramatman) are one in essence, and (2) the goal of life is the realization/manifestation of this unity, the realization of God (Brahman). There are twelve principal upanishads: Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Kaushitaki and Shvetashvatara, all of which were commented on by Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhavacharya, thus setting the seal of authenticity on them.

**Upasaka:** One who does Upasana; worshipper.

**Upasana:** “Sitting near” or “drawing near;” worship; adoration; contemplation of God or deity; devout meditation; both teaching and learning.

**Upasana Kanda:** Ritual worship.

**Upasanamarti:** That form of God chosen for worship.

**Vaikuntha:** The celestial abode (loka) of Vishnu and His devotees.

**Vairagya:** Non-attachment; detachment; dispassion; absence of desire; disinterest; or indifference. Indifference towards and disgust for all worldly things and enjoyments.

**Vaisheshika:** A treatise by the sage Kanada on the subtle, causal and atomic principles in relation to the five elements; one of the six orthodox systems (darshanas) of Indian philosophy, closely allied to Nyaya. The distinctive feature of the system is its doctrine of “particularity.”

**Vaishwanara:** Universal Being; the Self of the waking state; the sum-total of the created beings; Brahman in the form of the universe; Cosmic Fire; the god of fire; the digestive fire; the gastric fire; the sum-total of the created beings; Brahma in the form of the universe; Virat-purusha.

**Vaishya:** A member of the merchant, farmer, artisan, businessman caste.

**Vanaprastha:** Literally: a forest dweller. The third stage of life (ashrama) in which, leaving home and children, the husband and wife dwell together in seclusion and contemplation as a preparation to taking sannyasa.

**Varna:** Caste. (Literally: color.) In traditional Hindu society there were four divisions or castes according to the individual’s nature and aptitude: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra.

**Varnashrama:** Related to the four castes and the four stages (ashramas) of Hindu life; the laws of caste and ashrama.

**Varnashram dharma:** The observance of caste and ashram.

**Varuna:** A Vedic deity considered the sustainer of the universe and also the presiding deity of the oceans and water. Often identified with the conscience.

**Vasana:** Subtle desire; a tendency created in a person by the doing of an action or by experience; it induces the person to repeat the action or to seek a repetition of the experience; the subtle impression in the mind capable of developing itself into action; it is the cause of birth and experience in general; an aggregate or bundle of samskaras—the impressions of actions that remain unconsciously in the mind.

**Vasana(s):** A bundle or aggregate of such samskaras.

**Vayu:** The Vedic god of the wind; air; vital breath; prana.

**Veda:** Knowledge, wisdom, revealed scripture. See Vedas.

**Vedanta:** Literally, “the end of the Vedas;” the Upanishads; the school of Hindu thought, based primarily on the Upanishads, upholding the doctrine of either pure non-dualism or conditional non-dualism. The original text of this school is Vedanta-darshana, the Brahma Sutras compiled by the sage Vyasa.

**Vedas:** The oldest scriptures of India, considered the oldest scriptures of the world, that were revealed in meditation to the Vedic Rishis (seers). Although in modern times there are said to be four Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva), in the upanishads only three are listed (Rig, Sama, and Yajur). In actuality, there is only one Veda: the Rig Veda. The Sama Veda is only a collection of Rig Veda hymns that are marked (pointed) for singing. The Yajur Veda is a small book giving directions on just one form of Vedic sacrifice. The Atharva Veda is only a collection of theurgical mantras to be recited for the cure of various afflictions or to be recited over the herbs to be taken as medicine for those afflictions.

**Vedic:** Having to do with the Vedas.

**Vidya:** Knowledge; both spiritual knowledge and mundane knowledge.

**Vidyadharas:** Those that possess and impart knowledge (vidya); devas that impart wisdom to their worshippers; spirits that accompany Shiva and have knowledge of magical practice which they impart.

**Vijnanamaya kosha:** One of the sheaths of the soul consisting of the principle, intellect or Buddhi.

**Vikshepa:** The projecting power of the mind, causing external involvement; the movement of pushing outward or away; the projecting power of ignorance; mental restlessness resulting from the awareness moving out from the center that is the Self; Distractions; causes of distractions; projection; false projection; the instability and tossing of the mind which obstructs concentration.

**Viraj:** The macrocosm; the manifested universe; the world man—the masculine potency in nature in contradistinction to the feminine potency.

**Virakti:** Same as Vairagya.

**Virat/Virat Rupa:** Macrocosm; the cosmic form of the Self as the cause of the gross world; the all-pervading Spirit in the form of the universe.

**Viratpurusha:** The deity presiding over the universe; the cosmic or universal aspect of the deity.

**Vishesha:** Special; distinctive qualification; distinguishable; particularity; propriety.

**Vyasa:** One of the greatest sages of India, commentator on the Yoga Sutras, author of the Mahabharata (which includes the Bhagavad Gita), the Brahma Sutras, and the codifier of the Vedas.

**Udgata (Udgatri):** The priest who recites the Sama Veda.

**Varna:** Caste. (Literally: color.) In traditional Hindu society there were four divisions or castes according to the individual's nature and aptitude: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra.

**Varnashrama:** Related to the four castes and the four stages (ashramas) of Hindu life; the laws of caste and ashrama.

**Varnashram dharma:** The observance of caste and ashram.

**Vasus:** Eight Vedic deities characterized by radiance.

**Vibhuti:** Manifestations of divine power or glory; the special forms in which the Lord reveals himself; might; prosperity; welfare; splendor; exalted rank; greatness; miraculous powers; superhuman power resembling that of God (Ishwara). The quality of all-pervasiveness (omnipresence). Also sacred ash from a fire sacrifice.

**Vidya:** Knowledge; both spiritual knowledge and mundane knowledge.

**Vidyadhara:** One of a class of celestials possessing knowledge of magical arts that are considered attendants of Shiva.

**Virad-deha:** Material body or level.

**Virakti:** Same as Vairagya.

**Virat:** Macrocosm; the cosmic form of the Self as the cause of the gross world; the all-pervading Spirit in the form of the universe.

**Viratpurusha:** The deity presiding over the universe; the cosmic or universal aspect of the deity.

**Vishnu:** "The all-pervading;" God as the Preserver.

**Vyasa:** One of the greatest sages of India, commentator on the Yoga Sutras, author of the Mahabharata (which includes the Bhagavad Gita), the Brahma Sutras, and the codifier of the Vedas.

**Yajna/Yajanam:** Sacrifice; offering; sacrificial ceremony; a ritual sacrifice; usually the fire sacrifice known as agnihotra or havan.

**Yajnavalkya:** A great sage whose teachings are recorded in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad; the guru of King Janaka.

**Yajnopavita:** Sacred thread. A triple thread worn by the twice-born (dwijas) that represents the threefold Brahman. It is essential for the performance of all the rites of the twice-born. Usually worn only by Brahmins, originally it was worn by Kshatriyas and Vaishyas as well.

**Yajnopavitin:** Wearer of the sacred thread (yajnopavita).

**Yaksha:** There are two kinds of yakshas: 1) semidivine beings whose king is Kubera, the lord of wealth, or 2) a kind of ghost, goblin, or demon.

**Yama (1):** Restraint; the five Don'ts of Yoga: 1) ahimsa–non-violence, non-injury,

harmlessness; 2) satya–truthfulness, honesty; 3) asteya–non-stealing, honesty, non-misappropriativeness; 4) brahmacharya–continence; 5) aparigraha–non-possessiveness, non-greed, non-selfishness, non-acquisitiveness. These five are called the Great Vow (Observance, Mahavrata) in the Yoga Sutras.

**Yama (2):** Yamaraja; the Lord of Death, controller of who dies and what happens to them after death.

**Yama-Niyama:** The “Ten Commandments of Yoga” outlined in the Yoga Sutras. See Niyama and Yama.

**Yati:** Wanderer; a wandering ascetic.

**Yogamaya:** The power of Maya, of divine illusion. It is Maya in operation, the operation/movement rising from the presence (union–yoga) of God (Ishwara) within it, and therefore possessing delusive power.

**Yogi:** One who practices Yoga; one who strives earnestly for union with God; an aspirant going through any course of spiritual discipline.

**Yojana:** A measure of distance said to be equivalent to 9 or 10 miles.

**Yudhishtira:** The eldest Pandava brother, also called Dharmaraja because he was the literal embodiment of dharma–righteousness.

**Yuga:** Age or cycle; aeon; world era. Hindus believe that there are four yugas: the Golden Age (Satya or Krita Yuga), the Silver age (Treta Yuga), The Bronze Age (Dwapara Yuga), and the Iron Age (Kali Yuga). Satya Yuga is four times as long as the Kali Yuga; Treta Yuga is three times as long; and Dwapara Yuga is twice as long. In the Satya Yuga the majority of humans use the total potential–four-fourths–of their minds; in the Treta Yuga, three-fourths; in the Dwapara Yuga, one half; and in the Kali Yuga, one fourth. (In each Yuga there are those who are using either more or less of their minds than the general populace.) The Yugas move in a perpetual circle: Ascending Kali Yuga, ascending Dwapara Yuga, ascending Treta Yuga, ascending Satya Yuga, descending Satya Yuga, descending Treta Yuga, descending Dwapara Yuga, and descending Kali Yuga–over and over. Furthermore, there are yuga cycles within yuga cycles. For example, there are yuga cycles that affect the entire cosmos, and smaller yuga cycles within those greater cycles that affect a solar system. The cosmic yuga cycle takes 8,640,000,000 years, whereas the solar yuga cycle only takes 24,000 years. At the present time our solar system is in the ascending Dwapara Yuga, but the cosmos is in the descending Kali Yuga. Consequently, the more the general mind of humanity develops, the more good can be accomplished by the positive, and the more evil can be accomplished by the negative. Therefore we have more contrasts and polarization in contemporary life than previously before 1900.