

# The World's Eternal Religion

edited by  
**Swami Nirmalananda Giri**  
(Abbot George Burke)

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# Preface by the Editor

A little over sixty years ago I read Paramhansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* where he told of living for a short time in the Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Ashram in Benares (Varanasi) which was under the direction of Sri Swami Dayananda, about whom he also wrote in his autobiography.

Bharat Dharma Mahamandala was a prominent Hindu organization founded by Pandit Din Dayalu Sharma in Hardwar in 1887, who also founded the Hindu College, Delhi, on May 15, 1899. Its objective was to bring together all leaders of the orthodox Hindu community and to work together for the preservation of Sanatana Dharma. In the early years of the 20th century, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya—co-founder of the Benares Hindu University—was very closely associated with the Mahamandala and the Sanatana Dharma movements.

During one of my subsequent pilgrimages to India I found an old copy of *The World's Eternal Religion* published by the Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal in 1920 (the year Yoganandaji came to America) with an introduction written by Swami Dayananda. I bought it as a curiosity and only looked into it perfunctorily. Recently I look into more closely and was deeply impressed by its presentation of the principles of Sanatana Dharma in necessarily great detail.

I hope that those who have found value in our publication, *Sanatana Dharma—The Eternal Religion*, will also find this volume useful and informative. In my opinion *Sanatana Dharma—The Eternal Religion* is the basic textbook of Sanatana Dharma and *The World's Eternal Religion* is the advanced textbook. Both are invaluable for the serious student of dharma.

The use of the glossary is essential in reading this book—more so than any other book I have come across. The words in brackets in the text itself are mine, intended to make certain terms or statements more understandable.

Swami Nirmalananda Giri

# Chapter One

## The Purpose of This Book

Attempts have hitherto been made to present in English the character of India's time-honored religion to the world both by Indian and by foreign writers. It will be noted that between these two classes of writers there is in many cases no very substantial difference except where the aim is to disparage India's religion to the advantage of a favored creed. Many Indian writers have, moreover, been tacitly taking their cue from Western writers, having been habituated to their system of study and their fashion of thinking. The aim of some has been to note convenient similarities of ideas and construct with them eclectic systems of religion under the belief that a new joint revelation will thus be supplied to the world. And all this is work only in the superficialities.

The essential and universal character of India's everlasting religion has neither been yet fully known to, nor understood by, any of such writers, nor yet presented to the modern public in its true aspects. The general tendency is to write under the influence of a historical and antiquarian bias. The writers are usually indifferent to the truths and teachings and to the essentially spiritual and truly human interest that distinguishes it. Some exceptional admirers have spoken and written in praise of it only with reference to what coincides with their own pre-conceived notions formed haphazardly; while only very rare thinkers have been able to appreciate its highest goal and have given some praise to it, and that too from a theoretical standpoint.

But the Indian Dharma, as will be seen from the following pages, is a universal spiritual system, recognizing the goal of humanity's true life, and explaining and guiding its course to that goal. In this connection history and antiquarian research have little value. There is no reason why the teaching should not be accepted if it be in perfect agreement with science and philosophy, and capable of realization by positive experience in this life. 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, and extensive esoteric cults. The test of historical sequence and antiquarian research are no tests to prove the genuineness of such spiritual teachings. Even in their own province of utility, both these tests are condemned by their own critics, the one on account of the prejudices and ignorance of the original writers, the other on account of the vagueness of the authorities and the fancies of the interpreters.

As regards the historical test, it is worthwhile 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 such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata. 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 (Yudhishthira), 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. In its case the historical test is essentially of small worth. Of much less account is the authority of antiquarian research with reference to its value.

One will call to mind the fanciful vagaries of antiquarians of which a telling caricature is made by Charles Dickens in the *Pickwick Papers*, in the story of the broken piece of stone, with a few letters carved on it, the work of an idle villager, but which the enthusiastic finder converts into a valuable archaeological find requiring a 96-page pamphlet to unravel its mystery! And this in the face of the poor villager's assertion that it was the performance of an illiterate rustic! As an actual fact of today, we may point to the antiquarian's vagaries in the location of the war of Lanka—one placing it in Central Asia, another near Java and Sumatra, and others holding that it was at the Babel-Mandeb, while poor orthodox India has been for ages dozing in the belief that the struggle took place at Rameswaram and Ceylon [Sri Lanka]!

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 Purusha 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.

The earnest student and thinker should divest himself of the *idola theatri* of historians and antiquarians when approaching these teachings, and should examine them with an open mind to test their true character by the principal positive tests of reason and self-experience.

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 has 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 *pitriloka* 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: *jnanada*, *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, the seventh *darshana* (*Daivi Mimamsa*) being outside the pale of polemics, it lies sequestered in esoteric knowledge.

It can be seen from this sort of treatment that the Indian religion, the everlasting Vedic dharma, which we mean by the title of Sanatana Dharma, the religion of India, is a scientific religion, and as science bars no enquirer against its tests, so the Indian 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–divine power; divine law; 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, in its onward march towards its goal, travels steadily by degrees, now as a plant, then as an animal, through innumerable wombs 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 material food (anna), which in the set language of the rishis is the annamaya kosha, or food-sheath. Next comes the germ life (swedaja 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 ananda. 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.

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, and 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., nishreyasa, 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, 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 nishreyasa, 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 benignity 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.

# Chapter Three

## Dharmanga

### Classification of Dharma

In the previous chapter we have dealt with the universal character of dharma. In this chapter we propose to deal with dharma as it applies to all human beings. The rishis of old made four divisions of dharma:

- (1) Sadharana dharma—general or universal dharma
- (2) Vishesha dharma—particular dharma
- (3) Asadharana dharma—extraordinary dharma
- (4) Apaddharma—dharma under emergency conditions or situations

Of these, the sadharana dharma applies to all human beings in different aspects. It is complete and perfect in all its branches. This dharma will be more fully treated later on in this section.

#### **Vishesha dharma**

The vishesha or particular dharma applies to special classes of persons, and is not meant for all like the sadharana dharma. For example, there is a special dharma for sannyasis and a special one for house-holders (grihastas). Obviously, what is special dharma for the sannyasi cannot be dharma for the house-holder. To give an instance: Marrying and accepting gold are dharma for the house-holder, but adharmas for the sannyasi. Similarly, there is a special dharma for women, and for a king, and for his subjects, and so on.

#### **Asadharana dharma**

The asadharana or extraordinary dharma is suited to a particular individual, and may even be the opposite of what it is under the other three heads. What is generally adharma for the common run of people may in such a case be dharma for the individual. Only those persons who have extraordinary powers may at times follow this dharma, which should not be imitated by ordinary men.

Vishwamitra's attainment of brahminhood, and Nandi's elevation to the position of a devata are two more examples of this kind of dharma.

#### **Apaddharma dharma**

The last is apaddharma or dharma under emergency. Under this head, all those acts of man which, if performed, would be adharma under ordinary circumstances, become dharma when performed under the pressure of dire necessity and extreme distress. A famous instance of this kind of dharma is supplied by the upanishads. A brahmin, almost dying of starvation, accepted and ate the leavings of the food of a

chandala. But although he ate the chandala's refused food, he would not take water from his hand, for, as he was not dying of thirst, he could wait awhile; besides that, a spring was close by.

Here the first act was justified by the extreme emergency of keeping body and soul together. But taking water would not have been justifiable, because the want of it was not so emergent at the time, and also because water was to be had independently.

Vishwamitra's eating the carcass of a dead dog in the time of famine is another instance in point.

It will be seen from what has been said above that the application of dharma may vary with differences of time, place and circumstances, and may at times appear inconsistent and be even deemed absurd by superficial observers and unthinking minds. No wonder then if for the understanding of the masses, dharma could not be clearly defined, and was pronounced as wholly mysterious. (The Mahabharata says, "The essence of dharma is embedded in obscurity.")

Dharma is mysterious to those that are incapable of understanding its action under highly complicated conditions, but to those that know, it will ever be intelligible and true in whatever phase it presents itself to them.

### **Sadharana dharma**

Now we will again take up sadharana dharma which applies to all humanity. The sadharana dharma is like the general rule, and the vishesha, asadharana and apaddharmas like exceptions to the general rule. All religions, all sects and creeds, and all religious practices in the world must come under one or another of the divisions of sadharana dharma.

The principal classes of sadharana dharma according to the Bhagavad Gita are three:

- 1) Dana or charity
- 2) Tapas or austerities
- 3) Yajna or sacrifice

*Dana or charity.* This may be divided into three kinds. They are:

- a) Abhaya dana: giving hope of salvation and protection from fear
- b) Brahma dana: giving means of learning and imparting education
- c) Artha dana: giving money (in which is included the giving of food, clothes, land, etc.)

According to the Gita all these three sorts of dana can be further arranged, each under three heads, corresponding to the principles of sattwa, rajas and tamas; so that there would be nine kinds of dana dharma.

*Tapas or austerities.* To bear with equanimity heat and cold, happiness and misery, and suchlike pairs of opposites, and to exercise perfect restraint with respect to one's thoughts, speech and deed are austerities. They may be divided as follows:

- a) Sharirik tapas, or bodily austerities
- b) Manasic tapas, or mental austerities
- c) Vachanic tapas, or austerities relating to Speech

These also, like dana, can according to the Gita be classed according to the three gunas, making nine in the same way.

*Yajna, Yaj, or Sacrifice.* The kinds of this dharma are numerous. The principal are:

- a) Karma yajna, or the performance of holy rites, and of other actions.
- b) Upasana yajna or worship.
- c) Jnana yajna or knowledge.

These three can be sub-divided as follows:

Karma yajna falls under six heads:

1) Nitya karma, or performance of regular daily duties, the performance of which does not bring punya (merit), but the non-performance of which brings papa or sin.

2) Naimittic karma, or the special occasional observances, *e.g.*, pilgrimage, the performance of which brings punya, or holy merit, but the non-performance of which does not produce papa or sin.

3) Kamya karma or the observances in connection with some desired object. Under this head come the karmas prescribed in the scriptures for the attainment of particular desired objects, *e.g.*, a person having no son, but wishing to have one, may perform the putreshti yajna, which would fulfill his desire.

4) Adhyatma karma, or the performance of some act of goodness with reference to one's soul, such as service to the country through the publication of helpful literature and other good acts.

5) Adhidaiva karma, or acts and observances with reference to the higher powers, such as a sacrifice performed at the time of pestilence to ward it off by propitiating the devatas.

6) Adhibhuta karma, or acts and observances regarding other beings—those acts that conduce to the welfare and help of third parties, such as feeding brahmins, which help the pitris.

Referring each of these to the three gunas, we get eighteen classes of this branch of dharma.

Upasana yajna, or worship, presents itself in innumerable varieties. The principal are as follows:

1) The worship of Brahman, the Formless One.

2) The worship of Brahman through symbolic representations, such as the worship of the Five Divine Forms (Panchopasana). This subject will be treated of further on in a separate section.

3) The worship of Brahman through Incarnations (Avataras).

4) The worship of the following three classes of deities: the devas, the rishis and the pitris.

5) The worship of the dark powers (asuras) and spirits, etc.

There are four other forms of worship, in connection with practical yajna, namely:

1) Through mystic syllables (mantras) and images (mantra yoga). The meditation under this head requiring symbolical forms is called sthula dhyana or materially objective meditation.

(2) Through control of the body (Hatha Yoga). The meditation here aims at the inner light, and is called jyotir dhyana.

(3) Through the control of the finer forces of nature (laya yoga). The object of meditation here is the bindu or luminous mystic point.

(4) Through the discrimination between the real and the unreal, or Raja Yoga. The meditation of Raja Yoga is called the Brahma Dhyana.

All the above nine, multiplied by the three gunas, give us twenty-seven sorts of worship. A detailed account of worship is given later on in a separate section.

*Jnana Yajna*. The sacrifice in the form of knowledge has principally the following three sub-heads:

1) Shravana, or attentively hearing the words of wisdom from teachers, or learning by oneself sacred lore from the shastras.

(2) Manana, or thinking on the nature of the lore acquired, and discussions on the same.

(3) Nididhyasana, or meditation on the conclusions arrived at by hearing and reasoning.

Each of these may again be subdivided into three, if we consider the three gunas. Thus we get a nine-fold division of jnana yajna.

According to the above divisions we have, four and twenty angas or branches of dharma. Three angas of charity, three of austerities, six of karma, nine of worship, and three of knowledge. Twenty-four branches in all. If we take into consideration the three gunas, we have seventy-two branches of general or universal dharma.

It may be remarked here that yajna is a synonym for dharma. When any one of the above angas is practiced by an individual for his own good, it is called yajna, and when it is practiced for the good of the whole of creation, it is called a mahayajna. A further account of mahayajna will be given in a future section.

### **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 may 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 (action), 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.

Now, in order to bring out the meaning of each anga of dharma, divided into three in accordance with the three gunas, we propose to give some quotations from the Hindu shastras, which will be helpful in understanding the full import of each division. But before we do that, we wish to explain the nature of the three gunas themselves.

### **The Three gunas**

“Sattwa, rajas, and tamas—these gunas born of prakriti bind fast in the body the imperishable embodied one [the Atman].

“Of these, sattwa is stainless, luminous, and health-giving (salubrious); it binds by attachment to happiness and by attachment to knowledge.

“Know rajas’ nature is passion arising from thirst and attachment; it binds fast the embodied one by attachment to action.

“Know indeed that tamas is born of ignorance, deluding all embodied ones. It binds by distraction, laziness and sleep (sleepiness).

“Sattwa causes attachment to happiness, rajas causes attachment to action; and tamas, veiling knowledge, causes attachment to delusion (negligence).

“Sattwa prevails over rajas and tamas; and rajas prevails over sattwa and tamas; and tamas prevails over sattwa and rajas.

“When the light of knowledge shines in all the gates of the body, then it should be known that sattwa is dominant.

“Greed, activity, undertaking of actions, restlessness, and desire—these arise when rajas is dominant.

“Darkness, inertia, heedlessness and delusion—these arise when tamas is dominant.

“When the embodied one dies when sattwa is dominant, then he enters the stainless realms of the knowers of the Highest.

“Dying in rajas, he is born amid those attached to action. Dying in tamas, he is born from the wombs of the deluded.

“They say the fruit of action performed well (well done), is sattwic and without fault (taint); but the fruit of rajas is pain, and the fruit of tamas is ignorance.

“From sattwa arises knowledge; and from rajas [arises] greed; from tamas arises distraction (heedlessness; delusion; confusion) and ignorance.

“Those established in sattwa go upward; the rajasic remain in the middle; the tamasic, abiding in the lowest guna, go downward.

“When the beholder sees no doer other than the gunas, and knows that which is higher than the gunas, he attains to my being.

“When an embodied being rises above (transcends) these three gunas, which are the source of the body, freed from birth, death, old age and pain, he attains immortality” (Bhagavad Gita 14:5-20).

Now, we will deal with some of the important angas, divided into three subdivisions, in accordance with the three gunas.

*Dana or charity.*

The following quotations will clearly bring out the nature of each of the three kinds of dana:

“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).

*Tapas or austerities.*

“This threefold tapasya practiced with the highest faith by those without desire for fruits and steadfast, is considered to be sattwic.

“Tapasya which is practiced with hypocrisy to gain acceptance, honor and worship (reverence; respect), is declared to be rajasic, unstable, and transitory.

“Tapasya which is practiced with deluded notions of the Self, and [self-]torture, or for the purpose of harming (destroying) another, is declared to be tamasic” (Bhagavad Gita 17:17-19).

*Karma yajna, or actions.*

“Sacrifice which is offered, observing the scriptures, by those who do not desire the fruits, concentrating the mind only on the thought: ‘This is to be offered,’ that is sattwic.

“But sacrifice which is offered with a view for the fruit and for the purpose of ostentation, know that to be rajasic.

“Sacrifice devoid of faith, contrary to the scriptures (disregarding the scriptures), with no food offered, without mantras, without gift (fee) is declared to be tamasic” (Bhagavad Gita 17:13). [The sponsors of sacrifice or worship are considered obligated to offer food of some kind (at least sweets) to all those who attend. Gifts are often given to spiritual dignitaries who attend a sacrifice or worship, and a fee is always to be given to those who perform the sacrifice or worship. Not giving a sufficient fee would also be considered “without fee.” *Editor’s Note.*]

“Action which is ordained and free from attachment, done without attraction or aversion (raga-dwesha), with no desire to obtain the fruit—that action is said to be sattwic.

“But that action done with desire for the fulfillment of desires, with egotism (selfishness; self-centeredness), or furthermore is done with much effort, is considered rajasic.

“That action which is undertaken because of delusion, without regard to the consequences of loss (destruction), injury or [one’s own] ability—that is said to be tamasic” (Bhagavad Gita 18:23-25).

### **Upasana, yajna or worship**

The almighty Mahavishnu, addressing the gods, says: “O gods! it has been said that the very life of worship is devotion and faith and love (bhakti), which is of three kinds according to the three gunas” (Vishnu Gita).

“The bhakti of the afflicted is tamasic; of the enquirers, rajasic; of the persons seeking worldly and spiritual good is sattwic—each one is higher than the preceding.”

“Faith is three-fold according to the nature of the embodied beings—sattwic, rajasic and tamasic.

“O ye Brahmans, listen attentively to their marks. That faith is sattwic, which has pure wisdom at its root.

“That faith which has at its root desires and questionings, is of another kind (rajasic). The last (tamasic) kind is that which has at its root tendencies not based on thought” (Sannyasa Gita).

“Tamasic devotees worship ghosts, spirits and gnomes which are possessed of dark thoughts, being influenced by the powers of these beings.

“Rajasic devotees are those who have desires, and worship the rishis, the pitris, the devatas, and many divine powers (shakti).

“It is only the sattwic devotees who, having known My being, are always engaged in My worship.

“They, with the help of my five saguna (with attributes) forms, are ever absorbed in my meditation, or, realizing the attributeless (nirguna) aspect of Me, the state of Pure Existence, Pure Consciousness, and Pure Bliss, are lost in my meditation and are enjoying untold happiness.

“Always longing for the enjoyments of this world; full of hypocrisy and pride; engaged in My worship, after having abandoned the useful rules of the Vedas—these are marks by which a tamasic worshipper can be known.

“That man of faith, who particularly aspiring after the happiness of the other world, having the virtue of humility, worships Me according to the rules laid down in the Vedas, is a rajasic worshipper according to the scriptures.

“That extremely fortunate man, who has sattwic faith and love, and cares not for the happiness of this or the other world, and with wisdom and devotion for Me only, ever engaged in My worship—he is the best, he is a sattwic worshipper” (Vishnu Gita).

The following quotations will clearly explain the nature of Jnana Yajna.

“That knowledge is sattwic by which one sees in all the divided objects One Unchangeable Undivided Being.

“While that knowledge by which one sees all objects as different—know that knowledge to be rajasic.

“That knowledge is tamasic, which, being petty, is wholly attached to some single

purposeless pursuit, without keeping in view any definite goal.

“That which knows action and renunciation of action, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and absence of fear, bondage and freedom—such reason, O Partha, is Sattwic.

“That reason by which one understands not in the right way dharma and adharma (the right and the wrong), what ought to be done and what ought not to be done—that reason is rajasic.

“And, O Partha, that reason, which, wrapped up in the principle of tamas [darkness] considers adharma to be dharma, and sees all things in a perverted form—that reason is tamasic.

That firmness [dhriti] by which, as unfailing through yoga, one maintains the activities of the mind, the vital forces and the sense-organs—that firmness, O Partha, is sattwic.

“That firmness by which one maintains dharma, desire [kama] and gain [artha], occasionally expecting the fruit—that firmness, O Partha, is rajasic.

“That under which a foolish man does not abandon sleep, fear, sorrow, despair and pride—such firmness is tamasic.

“The end of human existence (purushartha) has as its form the three together—listening to the teachings of the scriptures [shravana], thinking on them [manana], and continued meditation on the same [nididhyasana]—which, being at the root of renunciation, help us to know Brahman; such exertion is called sattwic. When all these three proceed from renunciation as the root, and are devoted to explanation about Brahman, then it is sattwic.

“And, O gods, that purushartha is pronounced as rajasic, when these three coming into relation with the condition of creation, continuance and absorption, subserve duality.

“And that is called tamasic which has unbelief as its root” (Bhagavad Gita 18:20-39).

By all this one will be able to understand the relation of the above-mentioned seventy-two angas or divisions of dharma, which include every possible conception and practice according to the human mind in its humblest state of spiritual development onward up to the most abstruse metaphysical inquiry.

In the Shakti Gita, God as the Almighty Mother says: “I am the root of the tree of dharma, as well as the soil on which the tree stands, and on account of which the tree lives. The trunk is the universal dharma which upholds the universe. The tree has three main branches: dana, tapas and yajna. It has seventy-two branches in all.” The Mother further says: “The innumerable leaves and flowers of the tree are the many subdivisions of dharma. This tree of dharma is the cause [or source] of all dharmas of the world.”

From this one will be able to see that dharma in this universal review cannot be exclusive in any sense; no form of religion, however imperfect or crude, or unscientific it may be, is outside its pale. It is scientifically true and reliable and worthy of the attention and practice of every spiritual aspirant.

# Chapter Four

## 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. 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. It has been established in the Karma Mimamsa philosophy that pure karma is the cause of a man's liberation, while impure karma is the cause of bondage. It has also been proved by logical arguments in the aforesaid system of philosophy that purification of samskara leads to the purification of karma and the purification of karma leads to freedom.

Karma yajna as ritualistic or sacrificial performance is well known as treated in the Purva Mimamsa Darshana of Jaimini; but karma in the comprehensive sense of all or any action is nowhere treated as a separate subject in the known works. But this subject forms a special study in the Purva Mimamsa of Bharadwaja. We 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 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 six divisions of the pure jaiva karma are mentioned in the previous chapter. 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 brahmada (solar system) containing an



infinite variety of manifestations of the four kinds of bhutasanghas (the fourfold stages of births—udbhijja, swedaja, andaja and jarayuja).

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.

The aisha karma (divine karma) belonging to the occult world however is yet unique in that it operates in helpful associations with either of these, the sahaja or spontaneous karma or the jaiva or individual karma. Also the incarnations [avatars] of the divine manifest that karma. They appear in five manifestations as adhyatmika, adhidaivika, adhibhautika, severally or two together or three together, and such incarnations are again partial or full or aveshavatar—incarnations by overshadowing or by possession. All these fall within the province of aisha, the karma belonging to the occult world. When the daivic power is subordinated by the asuric power, and the good suffer at the hands of the wicked, and dharma becomes feeble so that men forget God and become attached to sensual objects, the Lord then manifests himself in incarnation.

Here there is another point to be remembered. The mainspring of these three main 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. In the appearance of the whole macrocosmic creation or the microcosmic, the condition of the individual soul becomes manifest by virtue of chittadagranthi, the knot of chit, life consciousness, with the inanimate or unconscious. This is the source from which the appearance of the latent impulse, samskara, takes place. The latent impulse is the root-cause of creation. Samskara or the latent impulse is of two kinds: the prakrita, “original,” and the aprakrita, “non-original.” The prakrita (pure) is called “natural” and the aprakrita (impure) is called “forced,” The former leads to moksha, the latter (the forced impulse) leads to bondage.

The prakrita, or natural impulse, gives three-fold purification. The original swabhavic (prakrita) impulse leads to mukti. The forced (aswabhavic) impulses keep individual souls in bondage, and infinite are the circumstances bringing about that bondage. The aswabhavic impulses are in this way infinite in variety. When there is scope for the original impulse (prakritic samskara), it gives to men power and purity and freedom in the long run. In this way, the prakritic samskara (original latent impulse) manifesting itself fully becomes the giver of freedom to men.

The Natural Impulse is at the root of spontaneous karma, the Forced Impulse is at the root of the individual karma. Both sorts of impulses are embraced in the aisha karma. It is due to these that individuals come into being and attain to freedom. By

purification the karma attains purity, and this leads to kaivalya (absolute being). The seed from the tree, the tree from the seed—is a perpetual cycle. Similar to this is the course of creation. But just as the fried seed no longer sprouts, so the individual impulses being like the fried seed-grains proceed no further in the cycle of cause and effect and so lead to mukti (freedom).

It is thus: there is the primordial substance, prakriti, made up of three gunas (cosmic principles). A vibration in it gives rise to karma wherefore it is called sahaja (spontaneous). The samskara or the impulse is like the seed and the karma is like the sprout. If the impulse disappears, whence could karma make its appearance? The spontaneous karma springing from prakriti is the cause of the creation of individuals as also of their ultimate freedom; the individual karma on the other hand brings bondage.

So long as the individual karma does not attain to the blessed natural condition by virtue of the dharma mentioned in the previous chapter, it will inevitably be an obstacle to the individual's attainment of freedom. In the holy swabhavik prakritic samskara (natural original impulse) beneficial to all beings, lies the upholding power of dharma and its gradual prosperity-giving course culminating in freedom. The divine being pervades all purificatory actions.

Now as regards the phenomenal manifestation in creation, the three-fold karma operates in the following manner. The prakriti—the power of Brahman manifesting as the primordial substance—undergoes a vibration by virtue of its own nature, giving rise to evolution. The vibratory motion finds itself reflected in the divine being. And by the evolution of the three principles of the prakriti, avidya (ignorance) springs through the tamas vibrations and vidya (knowledge-wisdom) through the sattwa vibrations. Then as the effect of avidya individual souls come into being, which are as God's own manifestations through the combining of the conscious chit with the unconscious (jada) in the interaction of those intermingling vibrations, the individuals appearing like so many reflections of the moon in the waves of water, overlapping, counteracting and mingling with one another into infinite mirrors. Thus an infinity of individual souls follows—beginningless and endless. Then the natural impulse (swabhavik samskara) coming into being, manifests the creation consisting of moveables and immoveables by virtue of the spontaneous or sahaja karma that leads to the expansion of universal creation.

But when the jiva reaches perfection of being in the human stage of life, there begins the jaiva (individual) karma. Then flows the stream of the forced impulse (ashwabhavik) maintaining the round of births and deaths abounding in the three-fold pain and intricate with the variety of universal manifestations. All these worlds of narak, preta, pitri, swarga and the karma bhumi—our world of death—evolve for the sake of the individual soul's karma. So these fourteen worlds (seven above, seven below) present their variety of bhoga (enjoyment and suffering) to the jiva.

Vidya, characterized by perfect sattwa, gives an equal variety to the Lord's aisha karma helping the sahaja (spontaneous) karma as also the jaiva (individual) karma. Avidya cannot stand before the vidya which is purely characterized by sattwa. The

Lord served by vidya strictly maintains the order of creation, preservation and destruction, though He is an unconcerned spectator of the souls of all individuals. Hence is the divine power to be understood as the maintainer of the universe leading to the happiness of all.

But karma springing from prakriti is jadatmika (void of consciousness). All the three sorts of karma require therefore the help of the devatas. The spontaneous (sahaja) karma is wholly in the hands of the prakriti, therefore fully dependent on the devatas. The individual soul's karma (jaiva) is in the hands of their own prakriti. The devas nevertheless can exercise half control on the jaiva karma. They direct the prarabdha karma (karma undergoing fruition) of men. The individuals are responsible of course for their own kriyaman (positive) actions. (Prarabdha, kriyaman and sanchit karma are the three branches of jaiva karma, which are dealt with in a separate chapter.) But the devas acting under the divine prompting incarnate themselves and help on the level of aisha karma, or directly proceed to assist the divine incarnations. Inscrutable is the course of karma. Vast and varied is the field of karma. Karma is the author of infinite microcosms and macrocosms. The devotees and the possessors of knowledge know the course of karma and reach the Divine Presence.

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. Even the devas falling into temptation are liable to fall from the uplifting course. While pursuing this path unerringly they reach the Supreme without any trouble.

With karma are connected two powers: attraction (raga) and repulsion (dwesha). 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, purity of karma 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 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 ekatattwa (oneness) is the sure cause of mukti (freedom). Freedom from desire through love of the Divine finds the aspiration for gaining moksha. The seeds of impulse become then as fried grain and the Raktabija form of karma then ceases. [This is an allusion to an asura named Raktabija from every drop of whose spilt blood there sprang another asura, so that there could be no end to the multiplication of his personality in fighting. The account of Raktabija and his vanquishing by the Goddess Durga is found in the Devi Mahatmyam.] In fact in this state the individual nature then gets absorbed into the divine nature, promising bliss. The divine prakriti then becomes vidya for the jiva and gives him kaivalya.

Action is followed by reaction. Reaction is inevitable, inescapable. Its power to bring in its result is infallible. It follows that even though an individual becomes a mukta, the accumulations of karma done before by him will never be null and void. Those accumulations of karmic impulse, entering into the chidakasha of all creation go to assist the spontaneous (sahaja) and the Lord's aisha karma. Karma in fact is mostly invincible, all beings and all creeds are subject to the stream of karma. Devas and even the Divine Supreme are bound by karma through incarnations, so that the mukta jivas too cannot get rid of the karma that has begun to take effect. Such karma will always enforce its results on the doer. The difference is that the muktas having got rid of desire become helpful to the spontaneous karma. They serve the purpose of the devas by helping the spontaneous karma working through them. The muktas are no more subject to worry of any kind but in conformity with their previous inclinations their energies coincide with the Lord's karma and contribute to the good of the universe. So long as the body endures, karma will not cease—neither in the case of the bhakta nor that of the nastik (atheist). A clear vision results from the devoted performance of karma by those who are wholly devoted to God. They see the absence of karma in karma and karma in absence of karma—thereby attaining oneness with the Divine by carrying on the karma that is prescribed free from attachment of any kind.

When they perform karma with a spirit of desirelessness, their karma is akarma. But if desire be present and they stop bodily action, there will yet be karma even though there is no karma externally. Those that perform karma with the knowledge of this truth will naturally be free from bondage.

# Chapter Five

## Upasana

### Worship In All Its Phases

According to Sanatana Dharma doctrine, the one Supreme Being or Self is to be conceived in three fundamental states or aspects: Brahman, Ishwara and Virat Purusha.

The highest state is that of Brahman, which is ineffable, impersonal, transcending mind and speech, karmaless, beyond the conception of creation, and one/non-dual. It can be indicated by three attributes: Sat (the purest being), Chit (the purest essence of consciousness) and Ananda (the purest essence of bliss eternal). It is nevertheless in its essential character nirguna, or void of attributes.

The Second State or Aspect is that of Ishwara in which the Supreme Self is conceived as touching the plane of the personal consciousness, as becoming saguna or invested with attributes, controlling the Maya, a mysterious power (shakti) of His own which presides over the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe, and beholding karma. In this aspect it is called Ishwara, the Supreme Lord.

In the Third Aspect Ishwara manifests as the Virata Purusha, standing in the immensity and infiniteness of His physical form, embracing the totality of the visible cosmos in all the diversities of its creative design, in all the varieties of its types of life, microcosmic and macrocosmic.

The great rishis, the seers of the past, express this trinity as the trinity of Adhyatma, Adhidaiva and Adhibhuta, the state of Brahman being called Adhyatma, that of Ishwara Adhidaiva, and that of the Virat Purusha Adhibhuta. Corresponding to Adhyatma, Adhidaiva and Adhibhuta, the Vedas are interpreted as containing special portions of their literature under the title of the Jnana Kanda, Upasana Kanda and Karma Kanda, the three paths of spiritual advancement.

Upasana is the effort to realize the proximity or presence of the Supreme Self, and consists of all those observances and practices, physical and mental, by which the aspirant makes a steady advance in the realm of spirituality, so as ultimately to realize in himself the presence of the Supreme. Of all those things which conduce to spiritual progress, upasana is not only beneficial but vitally necessary to all classes and grades of people.

Take for example, the case of dana and tapas. Both are duties prescribed for one's advance in spirituality. Both of these must be of the sattwic character to ensure that advance; both must be founded on the principle of worship. Dana or charity must have faith as its background. Faith is an essential characteristic of worship, so that dana without the principle of worship underlying it becomes fruitless. Tapas (religious austerities) similarly must be inspired by love for the spiritual goal, which

is the same as the spirit of worship. Pursued thus, tapas by continued practice results in an accumulation of power of the sattwic character and leads to a command over spiritual illumination.

In Karma Yoga as distinguished from Jnana Yoga, worship is a predominant factor. When one performs karmas and dedicates them wholly to the Godhead, believing in the tenet that God is all, such karma leads to the spiritual goal. In Jnana Yoga, similarly, faith in the divine guidance comes by worship ensuring the advance to the knowledge or realization of the ultimate eternal bliss. One proceeding to attain to this state of bliss merely with an external endeavor cannot command ease for lack of enlivening faith, and becoming lost in confusion finds it very hard, if not impossible, to reach that goal described as nirvikalpa samadhi—the state in which the trinity of the knower, knowledge and knowable merge into unity. (This is dealt with in the chapter on Raja Yoga.)

It should be noted that in the well-known prasthanas-traya of Vedanta, or the triad of starting [basic] points in philosophy, are the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Vedanta Sutra. These are usually understood as leading to a common goal, that of the attainment of jnana, so as virtually to lead to the realization of Brahman. But it can be shown that among the three the Upanishads have worship as their principal aim. This can be easily seen from the following facts: The Gita has been emphatically declared as enjoining and propounding the performance of karma even on the part of the person possessed of jnana. The Vedanta Sutra starting with the enquiry into Brahman (*Athato Brahajijnasa*) aim purely at elucidating the nature of and the attainment of jnana, so that both these two prasthanas mainly having each a distinct aim, the Upanishads have for their aim worship only. So worship is a fact recognized as enjoined in all religious teachings.

The spirit of worship is a guarantee of safety in the path of the spirit. Without this spirit, he is exposed to immense difficulty and even danger. Charity breeds vanity, tapas gives birth to wrath, karma fosters hypocrisy and arrogance, and jnana engenders pride, which defects of character are all to be considered as phases of madness (unmada-inebriation). Humility which characterizes the spirit of worship being absent, there is nothing to arrest the distemper that insidiously gains mastery over the aspirant's mind, and instead of advancing him, only hurls him into the abyss of despondency and despair, the main cause of which is temptation, because while it is true that the systematic observance of dana and other angas of dharma lead to material prosperity and even to liberation, it carries with it the inevitable seeds of a fall if the candidate departs from the rules framed in their wisdom by the rishis to regulate their observance. A spark of fire by the co-operation of time, place and other contributory helps, may blaze into a Universal Pralaya [Mahapralaya] fire. But the least accident may go to put out the small spark itself and leave no future for it. Similarly the human soul, if it is not established on the solid rock of worship, will at any time find its footing as one of slippery sand and the result would be his total discomfiture and despair.

## **Bhakti as a life principle**

Bhakti may be called the prana or life principle of worship and yoga its bodily organism. Bhakti is that attractive force of love by which the presence of the Lord is reached. Yoga includes all those processes, physical as well as superphysical, whereby the modifications of the mind (antahkarana) being restrained, it is fitted to realize the presence of the Supreme.

Bhakti appears in three principal states or stages. In the first and lowest stage, called vaidhi, the neophyte having been instructed in bhakti, perseveres in the practice and makes a steady advance. The next stage is called ragatmika, characterized by ardent devotion. At this stage the devotional practices having matured themselves by repetition and regularity, the love of the Lord enters upon a higher stage and becomes a permanent mode of manifestation of the heart. The neophyte is now a regular bhakta, a devotee; he selects a particular aspect or form of the Supreme, clings to it with passionate ardor and enjoys the indescribable joy of the bhakti emotion. And when the bhakta has by ceaseless devotion reached that lofty stage at which he has no more desires—these being all fulfilled—and realizes the Supreme at all times and everywhere with the eye of knowledge in nirvikalpa samadhi (a transcendental state of abstraction in which the distinction between the knower and the knowledge and the knowable ceases and the trinity becomes unity), he is in that exalted stage of bhakti, called parabhakti. Bhakti in one or other of these three aspects ensouls and vivifies every practice and every observance as the prana life principle does the body. (The highest ideal of bhakti [love] is explained in a separate chapter.)

Sanatana Dharma divides worship into five graded classes, according to the spirit of bhakti of the worshippers. At the bottom of the ladder comes the worship of elementals, departed spirits and dark powers (asuras) generally confined to the lowest and the most undeveloped souls. Next comes the worship of rishis, devas and pitris. The other three classes of worship count among their followers those who are direct worshippers of the Supreme Spirit or Divine Light in progressively higher manifestations. The third class comprises worshippers of the avatars. The fourth class has its worshippers among the ranks of those who rise to a higher conception of the glory of the Supreme and worship Him in his saguna form—the form possessed of attributes. The fifth is the highest class of worship including worshippers who meditate on the nirguna aspect of the Supreme, the one to which no attributes apply and which only conveniently is conceived as Sat-Chit-Ananda. The Lord has two distinctive types of powers (vibhuti). Sattwa and tamas, good and evil, pure and impure, which are the characteristics respectively of the deva and the asura hierarchies, allegorized in the story of the war between the devas and the asuras, highly colored descriptions of which are to be met with in the Vedas and the Puranas, the well-known religious literature of Hinduism. The elementals (bhutas) and the departed spirits (pretas) referred to above possess a natural affinity to the asura powers, and the worship of these beings, who are sinks of iniquity, is naturally the lowest and the most degraded imaginable. The rishis, devas and pitris are the natural

possessors of the Lord's sattwic or beneficent powers. Their worship is of a vastly superior order and is helpful to the follower of the path of jnana.

### **Philosophy of Avatara/Incarnation**

According to Hindu shastras life evolution in this planet exhibits four fundamental types which may also be regarded as corresponding stages through which the life impulse has to pass on its journey to the human kingdom, the crown of nature's constructive efforts. The first is the vegetable type of which the distinctive characteristic is the evolution of life by sprouting from the soil. The second and next successive type is the sweat-born, at which stage life evolves by exudation from other organic lives. The third type is furnished by the oviparous or egg-born life, and the fourth by the viviparous mammal life, the last containing two subordinate types—animal and man. (This subject has been specially dealt with in the chapter on evolution.) The rishis have propounded the doctrine that the Lord of the Universe exists in sixteen expanding kalas or digits of manifestation; that one digit of His life manifests itself in the vegetable kingdom, up to four in the animal and from five to eight in the human, according as we pass from the savage at one end of the scale to the highest evolved sage at the other. The Lord's manifestation in His avatars ranges from nine to sixteen digits, and the shastras speak of ten-digit, twelve-digit, fourteen-digit avatars as well as the Full (Purna) Avatara in whom sixteen digits are present.

### **The Saguna Upasana**

The worship of Vishnu, Surya, Shakti, Ganesh and Shiva is worship of the Saguna Brahman. The rishis of old who were masters of practical psychology and before whose gaze the past, the present and the future lay revealed as an open book, knew that the impure and undeveloped human mind cannot grasp the transcendental infinity of Nirguna Brahman void of attributes and form. Their creative imagination, accordingly, constructed certain images (murtis) embodying various aspects and attributes pointing to Brahman, calculated to provide something at once concrete and inspiring to the spiritual cravings of the soul. The worship based on the contemplation (dhyana) of these images is, in truth, worship of the Saguna Brahman.

Saguna worship is divided into five classes. It has its origin in the fact that the devas (Vishnu, Surya, Shakti, Ganesh and Shiva) who represent the different aspects pointing towards Brahman, are five in number. The origin of the five-fold worship lies in the five primary tattwas (elements) which enter into the constitution of man in varying proportions, so that in some there is a preponderance of akasha (ether), in others of vayu (air), and so on. It is to the fundamental fact of the human constitution that we owe the creation of the five devas together with the five distinctive systems of worship pertaining to them. We can form some idea of the greatness of the Vedas and the Puranas if we try to realize the profound ideas that lie behind this five-fold system of saguna worship.

A beautifully suggestive illustration of it is supplied by the depictions of Mahavishnu with His Consort Lakshmi at His feet, holding a conch, a discus, a mace



and a lotus in His hands, asleep on the serpent Ananta (the limitless space). The Supreme Self is beyond and above all the tattwas of which the subtlest is akasha representing the final limit of matter which can be grasped by the human mind. The all-pervasiveness of akasha may help us to realize the omnipresence of the Supreme Self; wherefore the depictions show Mahavishnu asleep on the serpent Ananta (the Infinite coiling Itself in an uncreate state). The Maya, Shakti, as nescience overpowers the jiva (the organic life unit) but is controlled by Ishwara; hence the picture represents Lakshmi at Mahavishnu's feet which symbolizes Her submission to Her Lord. Mahavishnu, as the bestower of the four chief ends of human existence, holds in His hands a discus, a conch, a mace and a lotus which symbolize dharma (righteousness), artha (riches, worldly prosperity), kama (desire) and moksha (liberation). In this way all saguna images of the Supreme Self and all images of devas and devis are to be understood as concrete and visible representations of ideas. Worship which rests upon and derives its inspiration from the world of ideas and their profound spiritual import is saguna worship. Nirguna worship of which the Upanishads speak is meditation on the Supreme Brahman as pure Sat-Chit-Ananda, transcending all ideas.

To ensure fixity of the mind in order to realize the Nirguna Brahman in the long run, four graduated stages of meditation have been laid down, consisting of (1) Sthula dhyana which is meditation on some externally visible form as representing the Supreme; of (2) Jyotir dhyana which is meditation on the inner Light; of (3) Bindu dhyana which is meditation on the mystic Point; and, lastly, (4) Brahma dhyana which is meditation on Brahman. The first form of dhyana (contemplation) is none other than that of the Saguna Brahman, which has been spoken of before. The second is meditation on the Light in the heart with a view to energize it so that it may be responsive to the Chit (the transcendental source of that which in the phenomenal world manifests as consciousness) aspect of Brahman. The third is meditation in the state of pure sattwa guna on the Chit aspect of prakriti which is revealed to the gaze of the yogi who has reached a high level of development. The fourth is meditation on Nirguna Brahman which is beyond all tattwas and which transcends mind and speech.

It will thus be seen that in Sanatana Dharma different systems of worship have been devised to suit the requirements of men in different stages of mental and spiritual development. Herein lies its greatness and its remarkable comprehensiveness.

*Yoga-yogashchittavritinirodha* according to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali—is the restraining of the modifications of the mind. When this is accomplished, the Supreme Self spontaneously manifests itself in the heart. As the reflection of the sun is blurred and distorted when the surface of the water is agitated by the wind, and is clear and full when the agitation has ceased, so in the heart of man there can be no clear reflection of the Supreme Self so long as it is agitated by the modifications of the mind. When by a proper practice of the eight progressive steps of Yoga (yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi) the

modifications of the yogi's mind have been completely stilled, the Chit aspect of the all-pervading Supreme Self is revealed in his heart. The rishis of old have, in connection with the physical and subtle bodies, discovered numerous yoga practices which may broadly be arranged under four systems: Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga and Raja Yoga. The practical portions of these systems of Yoga are described at length in separate chapters. The portions relating to worship in the four systems of Yoga contain observances and practices which are based on science, and are so numerous and varied that they are sure to be found helpful, in one way or another, by all the religious sects of the world. Those who hold the responsible position of teachers among religious sects should carefully study the classical Yoga literature and acquire some knowledge of the practices described therein whereby they could do much practical good to their respective sects. The inquiring student, if he follows the same advice, will find himself on the true and right path which will be to him a source of genuine and heartfelt gratification.

# Chapter Six

## Mantra Yoga

### Practice of Yoga Through Mantras

Of the four kinds of Yoga we proceed to succinctly describe the first-named: Mantra Yoga.

The world is *namarupatmik*. That is, everything in this world consists of names and forms. The mind cannot conceive anything except through names and forms. This is true of everything pertaining to the material or the super-material world. Those forms of exercises in spiritual culture (*sadhana*), which are performed by controlling the mind through names and forms, come under the heading of Mantra Yoga.

The principle at the root of this system of Yoga is as follows. When a man falls down on the ground he raises himself by supporting himself with his hands on the same ground. In the same way, the human mind being distracted by multiform attractions of *nama-rupa*—name and form—and enslaved by worldly fetters forged thereby, man can break those bonds with comparative ease by utilizing the same *nama-rupa* for the purpose, in accordance with the methods prescribed by the Masters.

Wherever there is any *kairya* (action) there must be *kampan* (vibration). When there is vibration there must be sound (*shabda*), whether caught by the ear or not. In the beginning of creation, when from nature in a state of equilibrium (*samyavastha*) the act of creation first began, the first vibration set up in nature was *Pranava Dhvani*, the *Pranava* (OM) Sound.

Just as *prakriti*, nature, in its state of equilibrium is related to the *Pranava*, in the same way, nature in its disturbed or *Vaishmya* state is related to various *Bija Mantras*—root formulae. In nature in a state of equipoise, the three *gunas*—*sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*—are equally balanced. Let us explain by an illustration what we mean. If we shake a plateful of water, first the whole water in the plate will be moved. Next various eddies and counter-eddies will arise in the water and the water will be agitated in every particle of it. In the same way, when in nature in a state of equilibrium movement first begins, the three evenly-balanced *gunas* inherent in it equally vibrate together. This unbroken vibration is related to *Omkara*. And as nature's creative motion progresses, and nature gets into the *Vaishmyavastha*—into a state of disturbed equilibrium—and the three *gunas* act and react on each other (like the aforesaid second stage of through-and-through agitation of the water in the plate) diverse sounds are produced by the diverse vibratory conditions. These sounds are related to *Bija Mantras*. The *Omkara* or the *Bija Mantras*, pronounced by the mouth, are thus the articulate equivalents or synonyms, so to say, of the inarticulate primal sounds. These primal sounds are heard (perceived) by means of *samadhi*. The

Pranava Mantra is the equivalent for Brahman and the Bija Mantras for the various saguna rupas, forms with attributes, the gods and goddesses.

Again, the mantras may have with them “branches and leaves”—symbolically speaking of mantric variations and mutations—or may be themselves branches and leaves. The branches and leaves of a mantra are bhavatmic-related to the actuating cause of feelings and emotions of the mind. A mantra may be only Omkara, or a bija; or Omkara, bija and branches, etc., combined. Or only bija and branches; or only branches and leaves. In this way there are diverse types of mantra. Of these mantras, that one is to be imparted to a novice for which he is found by examination to be best fitted by his nature, inclination and capacity. The repetition of a mantra in these conditions must be productive of good.

As regards the repetition of a mantra there are three methods: 1) vachanik—pronouncing the words aloud so as to be overheard; 2) upansha—pronouncing the words so softly as to be heard by no one but the repeater himself, and 3) manasic—repeating the words in the mind without moving the tongue. The last is the best method, and the second is better than the first.

In Mantra Yoga the contemplation of sthula (material form) is prescribed. There are four varieties of contemplation—1) sthula dhyana aforesaid; 2) jyotir dhyana, contemplation of Light; 3) bindu dhyana, contemplation of a point realized by sadhana [such as concentration on a chakra—*Editor’s note.*], and 4) Brahma dhyana, contemplation of Brahman. In Raja Yoga the contemplation of Brahman is prescribed, in Laya Yoga the contemplation of the point (bindu), in Hatha Yoga the contemplation of Light, and in Mantra Yoga under consideration the contemplation of the concrete symbol, sthula dhyana. By concrete symbol is meant the figure which is imagined to stand for any of the unchanging, eternal and satya (real/true) attributes of God.

In Sanatana Dharma, it should be explained, there is no such thing as contemplation of a perishable image. In Arya Shastra (scriptures of the Vedic religion—Sanatana Dharma) there is no image worship. The sthula dhyana of Mantra Yoga spoken of above refers to profound and sacred truths of the kingdom of God. The forms conceived to be emblematic of these spiritual truths and forces are the concrete symbols forming the object of contemplation. These forms are based on true, eternal and holy ideas. This kind of dhyana is only mental, without a physical, material image involved.

Man is a slave of feelings and ideas. The human mind cannot be devoid of ideas and feelings for a second. And a sinful act arising from a pure idea or impulse becomes pure, and a virtuous act arising from an impure idea or impulse becomes sinful. For example, the killing of a fellowman is a sinful act, but if the killing is done in a righteous cause, such as in defence of the king or a sadhu (sannyasi), it becomes a good act on account of its actuating motive. It is a good act to protect and befriend a brother-man in distress, but the protecting of a distressed criminal would be the reverse of a good act. Therefore in Sanatana Dharma pre-eminent importance is attached to the purity of the actuating feeling—it being this from which human acts

arise.

To understand Bhava Tattwa, the philosophy of the actuating cause of feeling, it should be understood that from a contemplation of the object of the senses the relation in which it (the object) stands to the senses may be perceived. And from a contemplation of the working of the senses, the mental feeling at the bottom of their activity may be apprehended. Suppose, for example, a woman is the object of the sense of sight, exciting various inclinations in the mind. If the bhava, the actuating cause of feeling, of the man who sees her is impure, then he would regard her in the light of an object of sensuality. But if the feeling of the onlooker be pure, then he would regard the feminine object of his vision as the embodiment of motherhood, as the Divine Mother in actuality.

It is, indeed, bhava, the inner actuating feeling of a man, on which his whole character depends. All the relations of the world depend on bhava for their being taken in a right or a wrong light. The nature of the bhava alters the whole outlook of life. Pure bhava imparts to everything a bright complexion and makes every act a religious duty performed in the sight of the Lord. Impure bhava leads away from the path of duty, which is the path of happiness. Therefore, as we have said, special stress is laid on the subject of bhava in Sanatana Dharma, and many methods are prescribed in our scriptures for making the bhava pure, by the realization of its true swarupa, form and constitution.

The various sacred and spiritual ideas and feelings pertaining to the world of bhava have been followed in the designing of the system of sthula dhyana of Vishnu, Shiva, Devi and other divine symbols. Our meaning will be clear from a brief explanation of the holy and profound significance of the image of Durga, the image being the chief among the presentments of Shakti, or Divine Energy. The demon Mahishasura represents the tamoguna, which has been vanquished by the lion, representing the rajoguna, on which Mother Durga is seated. She is all-holy, all-sattwa-guna, Brahma-rupini (form of God), filling the ten points of the compass by Her ten arms, Her omnipotent hands holding all-powerful weapons. On one side of Her are Ganapati (Ganesha), the Lord of Wisdom, and Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. On the other side of Her are Karttikeya, the Lord of Power, and Saraswati the Goddess of Knowledge. Need it now be pointed out that Durga is the Almighty Mother, Mahamaya, and not an “image?” In this way, the so-called “sthula”-material, concrete-dhyana is not idolatrous, but full of the deepest, highest and finest spiritual significance.

In Mantra Yoga there are directions for contemplating various concrete images emblematic of the five divine attributes (pancha saguna devatmaka) along with the repetition of the prescribed mantras. Saguna Dhyana is of five varieties—that of Vishnu, Surya, Devi, Ganesha and Shiva. The reason of this fivefold division as explained by the maharishis (great sages) is that the creation being constituted of five primary elements, human nature is also divisible into five classes. Therefore, the five forms of dhyana have been devised to meet the requirements of five different natures. Just as for sadhana that mantra is imparted to the novice which would be best

adapted to his nature, capacity and proclivities, so for dhyana also that one of the five varieties of it should be prescribed by the preceptor which would be most in accord with the mental and physical characteristics of the sadhaka.

Mantra Yoga is divided into sixteen stages or parts. These are:

1) *Bhakti*, devotion.

2) *Shuddhi*, purity. Shuddhi, also, is of many kinds such as Dik Shuddhi (purity of the points of the compass of the place in which the sadhaka is situated), Sthan Shuddhi (purity of the spot), Sharir Shuddhi (purity of the body), Antar Shuddhi (purity of the mind) and so forth.

3) *Asana*, the posture to be assumed while sitting for japa or dhyana, and the thing to be sat upon.

4) *Panchang Sevan*: the reading of the Gita or holy book of the sect to which the sadhak belongs; the repeating of the prescribed Thousand Names of the Lord; the reciting of stotras, hymns in praise and adoration of the Lord, etc.; wearing a kavacha (a protective amulet inscribed with mantras of a particular god or goddess); and the recitation of the *hridaya*—a special mantric formula that is felt to embody the very being of the deity specially worshiped by the devotee.

5) *Acharya*, the mode of life to be followed by the sadhaka for his training. The Acharya is of three kinds in accordance with the three gunas—sattwa, rajas and tamas.

6) *Dharana*, literally different methods of self-conception. This is of two kinds, whether it affects the external or the internal world.

7) *Divya Desha Sevana*, the medium through which the system of worship is performed, is called “Divya Desha.” It is of sixteen kinds: 1) Agni (fire); 2) Ambu (water); 3) Linga (emblem); 4) Vedi (sacrificial altar); 5) Bhittirekha (decorative mural markings); 6) Chitra (depiction of the deity); 7) Mandala (sacrificial linear figures of various tints); 8) Bishikh (arrows, weapon [a weapon which is usually shown in the hands of the deity]); 9) Nitya Yantra (Shalagram and Narmadeshwar Linga). [The shaligram and linga are natural stone formations considered actual embodiments of the deity. A shalagram embodies Vishnu or his avatars, and is found only in the riverbed or banks of the Kali Gandaki river in Nepal. A linga embodies Shiva. The lingas are described as “Narmadeshwar” because they are found only at one place in the sacred Narmada river. *Editor’s note.*]; 10) Pithha (the mystic circle of Prana); 11) Bhava Yantra (mystic diagrams representing various dieties); 12) Murti (image); 13) Vibhuti (living beings, etc., through which any divine attribute is manifested); 14) Nabhi (the navel); 15) Hridaya (the heart); and 16) Murdha (the spot between the eyebrows, the ajna chakra). By understanding the subject of Divya Desha it can be clearly realized how certain material media are utilized in Sanatana Dharma for the purpose of worshipping the Formless and Omnipresent God. Those who do not know the object with which the fire, image, picture, etc., are used in our upasana, ignorantly imagine that these are the objects of our worship!

8) *Prana kriya*, vital processes, consisting of pranayama, control of the prana through the regulation of the breath; nyasa, locating the prana or the vital force in certain parts of the body.

- 9) *Mudra*, bodily postures (usually of the hands and fingers) to invoke the deities.
- 10) *Tarpana*, offering of water, etc.
- 11) *Havana*, a sacrifice through offerings into fire.
- 12) *Bali*, sacrifice; offering; oblation.
- 13) *Yajna*, worship. Yajna again is of two kinds according to whether it relates to external worship or internal worship.
- 14) *Japa*, repetition of a mantra.
- 15) *Dhyana*, Meditation; contemplation.
- 16) *Samadhi*, State of superconsciousness; Oneness.

In Mantra Yoga the state of samadhi is called Mahabhava. By going through the aforesaid sixteen stages in due order and in strict obedience to the instructions of the preceptor, the initiate attains to the state of samadhi, seeing his inner Self and securing nearness to the Lord. It is through samadhi that the swarupa (presence or essence) of God is realized.

# Chapter Seven

## Hatha Yoga

### Practice of Yoga through Physical Exercises

The Sadhanas (exercises) by means of which man can bring his chitta-vritti (desires and passions; modifications of the mind) under control and thereby gain nearness to the Lord, have been divided by the holy maharishis into four classes: Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga, and Raja Yoga. These four systems of Yoga have been laid down according to the jati—the type and character—of the modes of exercise prescribed in connection with all the various means for controlling the chitta-vritti.

Hatha Yoga comprises those sadhanas (prescribed methods of exercise and practice) which depend primarily for their performance on the physical body (sthula sharira.) The physical and super-physical (sukshma) body have one and the same connection, the physical or corporeal body being only a limit, a sort of circumscription, of the super-physical or subtle body. The processes, therefore, that have been devised by the maharishis for the purpose of bringing the physical body under control, so that thereby control may be ultimately established over the super-physical body and the passions and impulses of the mind brought under subjection, those processes come under Hatha Yoga.

According to the Sankhya philosophy the manifested creation (including both the sthula and the sukshma sharira) is made of twenty-four tattwas (constituent elements). The prakritic jagat, the material universe, or nature, consists of these twenty-four elements, and the twenty-fifth is the Purusha.

Among these twenty-four Tattwas are: Mahattattwa (Cosmic Intelligence), Ahamtattwa (ego), Manas (mind) as well as Rupa (form), Rasa (taste), Gandha (smell), Sparsha (touch) and Shabda (sound) forming the five Tanmatras; also eye, ear, nose, tongue, and cuticle forming the five Jnanendriyas. Vak (speech), Pani (hand) Pada (feet), Payu (anus) and Upastha (sexual organ) forming the five Karmendriyas, the forces working under these organs. These eighteen are the constituents of the sukshma sharira. And Prithivi (earth), Jala (water), Tej (fire), Vayu (air) and Akasha (ether), the five elements forming the sthula sharira.

The twenty-fifth Tattwa in the form of the Purusha is only a spectator, a witness, in the physical/super-physical body. Purusha dwells in the body but is nirlipta, is not mixed up with it.

In Sanatana Dharma, death does not signify anything more than the leaving of the sthula sharira of five tattwas by the sukshma sharira of nineteen tattwas and the



taking up by the latter of another sthula sharira. That point of separation is called death.

A jiva (spirit that animates the body) leaves its sthula sharira when it has gone through the series of karma for the doing of which it had adopted that sthula sharira, and it then finds an opportunity to discharge its other debts of karma by the adoption of another sthula sharira. It is like the discarding of old clothes and the donning of a new suit. It is the discarding of the sthula sharira which is called death. As a matter of fact the jiva never dies, it only casts off one fleshly garb for another again and again.

Since the “body is but the material expression of the soul,” as Western philosophy says; or as our shastras say, the sthula sharira is so designed as to enable the sukshma sharira in it to work out the karma it (the sukshma sharira) has incurred. In other words, since the sthula sharira is constructed according to the nature of its sukshma sharira and both are bound together as one and are interdependent, it naturally follows that by operating on the sthula sharira the sukshma sharira is acted upon. And in Yoga Shastra the pre-eminently physical processes of Hatha Yoga have been prescribed for individuals of certain temperaments, so to say, in order that first, they may obtain complete mastery over their physical body by means of the sadhanas devised for the purpose and then, by gradually turning the powers thus gained inwards, they may conquer the astral body, and thereby bring their mental functions under control and prepare themselves for seeing the Lord, which is the aim and end of all Yoga.

In the sadhana of Hatha Yoga there are certain special features. In Mantra Yoga special attention has to be paid to outward observances of ceremonial. In Mantra Yoga, again, there is intimate concern and connection with things outside the physical body, and due regard has to be had for varna dharma (duties of castes), ashrama dharma (duties of various stages of life), purusha dharma (duties of males), nari dharma (duties of females), Arya dharma, Un-Aryan dharma, etc. But in Hatha Yoga there are hardly any such restrictions. In Hatha Yoga the question of fitness or otherwise of the novice is considered, but from the point of view of his own physical fitness and not fitness in relation to the world. In Mantra Yoga the mantras (formulas) imparted to initiates are according to each one's bhava and general spiritual character and potential. But in Hatha Yoga there is hardly any such distinction necessary. In the initiation for Hatha Yoga attention need be given only to the physical fitness of the novice and to his adhikara, whether he is worthy of the privilege or not. There is not much direction in Mantra Yoga for making a body which is unfit fit for sadhana; but in Hatha Yoga there are wonderful recipes not only for making the body fit for sadhana but also for freeing the body from phlegm and other harmful secretions.

In Mantra Yoga the contemplation of the concrete symbol representing the essential characteristic of a deity is prescribed. In Hatha Yoga the contemplation of an imagined Center of Light is directed. In Mantra Yoga various gods and goddesses are contemplated. In Hatha Yoga it is prescribed to contemplate the Light-appearance of

God who is the Light of all Light.

In Mantra Yoga the state of samadhi (concentration so perfect as to produce utter unconsciousness of the outer world) is to be attained by contemplation through the means of nama-rupa—name and form. In Hatha Yoga the state of samadhi can be attained by controlling the inspiration of the air and thereby controlling the working of the mind. The samadhi attained through Mantra Yoga is called Mahabhava, and that through Hatha Yoga Mahabodha. Those who practice the Mantra system of Yoga will derive much benefit by taking advantage of some of the processes of Hatha Yoga and *vice versa*.

The maharishis have laid down that in correspondence with adhyatma, adhidaiva and adhibhuta, the three things mana (mind), vayu (breath of life), and virya (vital fluid, semen) are one. Therefore the subjection of manas causes the subjection of virya and vayu. Similarly by bringing under control vayu (life breath), manasa and virya come under control automatically. And if, with the help of the prescribed process of Yoga, the virya could be controlled and made to flow upward, the Yogi would at the same time obtain control over his mind and life-breath without effort. In Raja Yoga the processes are chiefly connected with the mind, and in Mantra, Laya and Hatha Yoga the processes chiefly relate to the mind, life-breath and vital fluid respectively. In Laya Yoga the operations of the mind are the chief factor, while in Mantra and Hatha Yoga the processes principally relate to vayu-dharana and reta-dharana—the controlling of life-breath and vital fluid. For the mantra yogi absolute physical and mental chastity together with the power of control over semen are indispensable. For the Hatha Yogi, in addition to these, pranayama (regulation of the life-breath) and vayu-nirodh (holding of the breath) are laid down as essential.

The practice and exercises connected with Hatha Yoga are divided into seven parts or stages. The first stage is called shat karma (cleansing processes). It is so called on account of comprising six processes. With the help of these processes, the cranium, throat and abdominal cavity are purged of any impurities that may have got into them. This purification makes the body fit for the purposes of yoga. There are many such feats performed under shat karma that would be incredible to modern anatomists and physiologists unless they witnessed them, and even after witnessing them they (the anatomists, etc.) would be at a loss to account for them.

The second stage is called asana. The putting of the human frame into various postures by practicing the methods of exercise prescribed is asana. The number of asanas is thirty-three. With the help of the asanas the body is rendered at once pliant and steady so as to become a fit instrument for yoga.

The third stage is called mudra. There are twenty-four varieties of mudra. The object of the exercises under this head also is to secure steadiness of the physical body and bring the physical organs and functions under complete sway of the yogi.

The fourth stage is called pratyahara. The exercises in this class give power to the initiate to enter the inner world, to dive under the physical plane and witness the working of the inner, super-physical machinery. With the help of pratyahara the yogi secures the dhirata—equipoise or steadiness—of the sukshma sharira.

The fifth stage is pranayama. The air which we expire and inspire through our nostrils is sthula or material air. Dwelling in this air is the sukshma ether, if we may so call it, which vitalizes and actuates the atmospheric air we breathe. This vitalizing ethereal force is pranavayu or life-breath. It is obvious that by gaining control over the sthulavayu the pranavayu is brought under control. The processes under pranayama are of eight descriptions. By practicing pranayama the levitation, or lightening into a condition of imponderability and intangibility, of the physical body is gradually secured, and the adept is thus able to enter into the inner world.

The sixth stage is dhyana or contemplation. For the practice of dhyana the mind should be concentrated on an imagined point of light (jyoti). By the contemplation of light the yogi gains the stages of ekatattwa (all-in-one-and-one-in-all) and thereby attains to the highest point of Hatha Yoga, the state of samadhi called mahabodha. The mahabodha samadhi indicates the attainment of saptamadhikar, the reaching of the seventh highest stage after passing through the six aforesaid stages of Hatha Yoga.

In this state of samadhi the yogi sees God, and gains salvation, mukti, which is the goal of all systems of yoga.

# Chapter Eight

## Laya Yoga

### Practice of Yoga through the Subtler Forces Of nature

In the Yoga Darshana, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which is the foundation and mainstay of yoga, yoga is defined as the system of methods and processes whereby mentality, chitta-vritti (the impulses and functions of the mind), is checked and brought under control. On gaining a check over the powers of the mind by means of yoga, the swarupa (the reality) of the object of all worship, the Paramatman, becomes revealed to the inner consciousness of the initiate. That state of realization of the Supreme Self is samadhi, the aim and end, the ultimate fruit, of the practice of yoga, as well as of upasana.

In the science of yoga, to Laya Yoga is given the third place in the classification under four divisions of the methods of yogic practice and training, thus: 1) Mantra, 2) Hatha, 3) Laya and 4) Raja. Laya therefore indicates a comparatively higher plane of progress.

In the Virat, the absolute and infinite body of God, is contained the boundless universe with its innumerable brahmandas—solar and other cosmic systems. According to Vedic science, it has been proved that in each one of the numberless brahmandas, there is present the Triunity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, as the immediate intelligent cosmic agents of God.

There are separate sets of rishis, devatas and pitris for the preservation of each of the brahmandas. Each brahmada, that is to say, has its own Vyasa, Vasishtha, Angira and other rishis; its own Aditya, Vasu [Vishnu], Rudra [Shiva], Indra and other Devatas; and its own Aryaman and other pitris. They, respectively, carry on the spiritual, super-material and material affairs of the brahmada in their charge. They manifest themselves with the inception of their own brahmada and pass away with its dissolution.

The maharishis have said that as sunbeams entering through a window show the atmosphere of the room to be full of countless motes, so the body of the Virat Purusha as Mahakasha (the absolute infinite space) is literally filled with brahmandas. Just as the world is full of mankind in spite of the deaths always taking place among human beings, so the body of the Virat Purusha is full of the countless systems of brahmada (solar systems), although every one of these comes to its end when its allotted time is over and its course is run. This is the wonderful lila vighraha of the Virat Purusha—His form, or material expression, embodying His cosmic “play”

(literally “play image,” the cosmos and the play of His will in cosmic phenomena all combining to form His image, as it were); the lila vigraha which transcends the limit of word and mind.

The relation of the individual living bodies in their three phases to the cosmic creation, that is to say, the relation of pinda to brahmāṇḍa, is akin to the relation in which the trees stand to the forest. The pinda is the individual entity; the brahmāṇḍa is the collective whole. There are rishis, devatas and pitris in every individual body, helping in the discharge of the material, super-material and spiritual functions of the individual, as there are rishis, devatas and pitris in every brahmāṇḍa presiding over the material, super-material and spiritual departments of that system. In every human being, any occurrence that relates to the intellectual or spiritual part of the individual entity, is under the auspices of the rishis. The acts or things needed for the enjoyment of good or suffering of evil on the part of every human being are provided for by the devatas. And whatever is wanted and is required to be done for the procreation and preservation of the physical body of every human being is the loving charge of the pitris.

The forces of attraction, repulsion etc., which are at work in and between the brahmāṇḍas, planets, stars etc., and which connect them together, are also in operation in regard to every individual living body and duly form connecting links. Furthermore, the chit-satta (absolute consciousness), and the sat-satta (beingness, absolute existence), the prakṛiti shakti or female principle of Godhead, which sustains and permeates the brahmāṇḍa and keep it going, are present in every living body or jīva deha also. From what has been briefly indicated above as to the interrelation and correspondence between the vyāshti, the microcosm, and samāshti, the macrocosm, between the individual part and the collective whole, an idea may be formed of the purpose of Laya Yoga.

The system of Laya Yoga may be defined as the system which aims at bringing under control and check the powers and faculties of the mind, by merging the prakṛiti shakti within the body into the Puruṣa Shakti, (after mastering the laws of connection between pinda and brahmāṇḍa as of vyāshti and samāshti) and thereby gaining the path to liberation.

The maharishi seers of yore, to whom the past, present and future were as an open page, had seen by means of their supernatural powers of yoga, and fixed upon certain definite areas of the body of man, as the pitha [to be explained in a subsequent chapter], or special seats, of the different rishis, devatas and pitris mentioned above. They had also seen that at every moment the living human body was subject to the attraction and repulsion of the planets, stars etc., and thus influenced by the celestial bodies. And it is because they had *seen* how man was affected by the orbs of heaven that they founded the science of astrology on the basis of astronomy.

The method of discovery of this and other sciences by means of yoga is described by Maharishi Patanjali in the third chapter of his Yoga Darshan. The maharishis have indicated in their works on yoga (after they had themselves observed and realized the

facts) that the highest point on the roof of the skull of man, just above the brahmarandhra, at the spot called sahasradala, is the pitha or special seat of Sachchidanandamaya Paramatma, the Supreme Self consisting of Satchidananda-Existent Conscious Bliss. There is He as the seer, but nirlipta, unattached and unconcerned. And just above the anal outlet, in the muladhara chakra, is the seat of the prakriti shakti (nature power; female principle). Prakriti shakti is there in a state of sleep (prashupta)-latent activity, facing outwards (bahirmukhi). This shakti is called kula kundalini (kulakundalini) in the Yoga Shastra. It is on account of this prakriti shakti being in a state of latent activity (sushupta state), that, through her, while she is asleep, all the outer material-world functions of life are being performed by humanity. And it is for this reason that man is so wholly engrossed in the unreal attachments of the world, being utterly deluded by the moha (allurements) of Mahamaya, that he goes mad over the pleasures of worldly pursuits, takes the material body as the real self, and goes round and round the wheel of life passing through cycles of births and deaths. When the initiate gradually awakens from sleep the kula kundalini shakti by the power of yoga, after mastering the secret of the pitha sthanas (seats of devatas) in the body, and opening and penetrating the door of the shat-chakras (literally six circles or chakras), he takes the kula kundalini up to the sahasrara mentioned above, and there merges her in the purusha (chit satta, the male principle), then he (the initiate) attains to the highest stage of nirvikalpa samadhi and gains liberation.

Like the Hatha and Mantra systems of Yoga, Laya Yoga also has special features of its own. Roughly speaking, Hatha Yoga is specially concerned with the physical powers and functions of the body; Mantra Yoga has comparatively greater connection with the forces and powers at work outside the body but intimately affecting it; and Laya Yoga deals with the super-sensual and intangible pithas, as well as the sukshma (so subtle as to be beyond physical perception) forces and functions in the inner world of the body. For Hatha Yoga the contemplation of light is prescribed; for Mantra Yoga the contemplation of the material image as the symbol of the spiritual noumenon in the various phenomenal manifestations is prescribed; but for Laya Yoga there is no such prescribed method of contemplation. In Laya Yoga, however as the prakriti shakti, which is in the shape of kula kundalini in the body of the practicer, becomes gradually roused by means of constant practice, then its reflection becomes manifest in the spot between the eyebrows as jyotishmati, free from material taint. When that jyotishmati is made by degrees fixed and permanent by practice and contemplation, it is called bindu dhyana. The bindu dhyana exercise is one of the principal special features of Laya Yoga. Laya Yoga possesses numerous other special features. By noticing them it can be easily realized that the system of exercises of Laya Yoga is comparatively subtler and higher.

The exercises appertaining to Laya Yoga are divided into nine parts (angas). The first anga is named yama. It is particularly related to the control and subjection of the physical senses. Yama itself is of ten kinds. The second anga is niyama. It is specially connected with the effecting of the purity of the internal world. The third anga is

sthula kriya (physical processes) and is concerned with asana (posture) and mudra (special physical exercises). Very few of the thirty-three asanas and twenty-four mudra practices that are used in Hatha Yoga, are utilized in Laya Yoga. The few that have been adopted, have been designated as “sthula kriya” by the masters of Laya. The fourth anga is sukshma kriya (superphysical processes), comprising pranayama and swarodaya. Of the eight kinds of pranayama laid down for Hatha Yoga, only two have been adopted in Laya Yoga. Swarodaya shastra deals with the wonderful science of the mysteries of the inner kingdom (prakritik sukshma rajya.) Among other things, swarodaya reveals the knowledge of ida, pingala, sushumna and other channels (nadis) in the body; it teaches how to examine the five basic elements (panchatattwa) after entering into the inner world; it then imparts fuller knowledge of the five basic elements, leading to general power of insight into the past, present and future; and in due course it gives complete control over the sukshma prana (the essential principle of life) culminating in the conquest of the world. In short, through swarodaya sadhana absolute ascendancy may be gained over the inner forces of life and nature. The fifth anga is pratyahara. It enables the initiate to enter into the inner world after bringing under check the impulses and inclinations of the mind and withdrawing it from the outer world. The hearing of various nadas (primal sounds) has been included in the practice of processes under the head of pratyahara. The sixth anga is dharana which is the chief anga of Laya Yoga. As pranayama is the chief thing in Hatha Yoga; as japa is the chief element in Mantra Yoga, so dharana is the most important part of Laya Yoga. By means of it the initiate, having gained mastery over the inner world, rouses the kulakundalini, and opens and penetrates the six chakras which are as the doors of the sushumna channel. The seventh anga is dhyana. The process of bindu dhyana mentioned above is indicated in it. The eighth anga is laya kriya, It is full of the most wondrous science relating to the inmost secrets of life and nature. The exercises under laya kriya are so transcendently subtle that it is impossible to convey even a rough idea of them in words. The ninth and final anga is samadhi. The samadhi of Laya Yoga is called mahalaya. The crowning state of mahalaya can be attained through the instrumentality of nada and bindu. On reaching the goal of this samadhi, the successful yogi sees God.

# Chapter Nine

## Raja Yoga

### Yoga Through The Powers of the Mind

Many have an entirely wrong notion of yoga in general and Raja Yoga in particular. People generally associate yoga with incantations, charms and sorcery, with walking on water dry-shod and flying in the air; with making things invisible and eating fire and whatnot. They think that yoga is some sort of dark practices performed secretly in mountain caves and inhospitable forests by half-insane and perverse people for no good purpose.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Yoga is the science which teaches us how to realize, see, feel and be one with God. It has absolutely nothing to do with magic and miracles, and that sort of thing. Certain powers surely come from the practice of yoga. But a yogi is forbidden to use them. Indeed, the use of these powers by the yogi is regarded as an obstacle to his realization of God. Yoga, we repeat, is a practical and scientifically worked-out method of realizing God.

Every science has its own method of investigation. So has the science of yoga. The science of chemistry or physics requires a laboratory, and many apparatus etc., to arrive at certain truths. So the science of yoga, in dealing with its subject—the kingdom of heaven which is within us, a subject far subtler than chemistry or physics—requires the help of the mind, keen introspection, and certain other aids.

No one has the right to challenge the truth discovered by scientists that hydrogen and oxygen combine together in certain proportions to form water. If he cannot bring himself to believe in the assertion, all he has to do is to go and perform a certain experiment in a laboratory and satisfy himself. But unless and until he performs that experiment as described by the scientists, he has no right to deny their statement that the gases hydrogen and oxygen form the liquid substance called water. The same is true of Yoga. The Indian rishis practiced Yoga and discovered certain truths which they preached. They also indicated the way to arrive at those truths. Unless and until one follows the way indicated by them, one has absolutely no right to challenge the correctness of those truths and to speak of them in disparaging terms. Experience is the source of all knowledge, and yoga is based on experience.

The nature of practical yoga has been explained elsewhere. In this section, we propose to deal in brief with the nature of Raja Yoga.

The Vedas are divided into three sections, Karma, Upasana and Jnana. Yoga is also of three kinds corresponding to the above three divisions: Karma Yoga, Upasana Yoga (or Bhakti Yoga); and Jnana Yoga.

Karma Yoga is the art of doing karma (action) properly and efficiently. “Yoga is skill in action” (Bhagavad Gita 2:50). Tying up a knot and untying the same are both



karmas, but their effect is different: karma is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation (moksha). The question then naturally arises: What is the right way of doing karma? This question has been taken up and beautifully discussed by Sri Krishna in chapter three of the Bhagavad Gita. He says that doing karma for karma's sake without caring for its fruits is the right way of doing karma. Karma performed in this way leads to mukti, and is never a cause of bondage, for such karma produces no reaction.

Bhakti yoga is restraining the chitta from having any modifications (Yoga Sutras 1:2) and having thus obtained one-pointed attention, applying the whole mind to God. The philosophy of this kind of yoga has been discussed by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras.

Lastly, Jnana Yoga is discriminating the real from the unreal by sheer reasoning, chiefly with the help of the Upanishads and the six darshanas—systems of philosophy: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. The practical side of Jnana Yoga is Raja Yoga, the best and the most difficult kind of Yoga. The three kinds of Yoga—Mantra, Hatha, and Laya—prepare the way for Raja Yoga.

The dharana (dominant thought, attitude or state of mind) that comes to the followers of the above three kinds of yoga is different in each yoga. From the siddhi (perfection in practice) of the Karma Kanda, the Karma Yogi holds this dharana (thought-awareness): “Even this universe is Brahman,” and consequently he regards service to all beings as service to God. The dharana of the siddha bhakta yogi is: “Brahman itself is the universe.” He sees the presence of the Lord everywhere. Lastly, on the siddhi of the Jnana Kanda, the Jnana Yogi's dharana is: “I am Brahman!” And then he becomes a mukta.

All these three dharanas—also knowns as Mahavakyas—are regarded as the fundamental truths of Raja Yoga. But it might be noted that when one of these dharanas comes to the yogi, the others follow as a matter of course.

Vairagya or renunciation is a most important requisite for all yoga. The holy teachers of yoga have divided vairagya into four kinds, corresponding to the four kinds of practical yoga—Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga, and Raja Yoga. The four kinds of vairagya are:

1. Mridu, or mild;
2. Madhyama, or middling;
3. Adhimatra, or excessive; and
4. Para, or the highest.

Mridu vairagya is the state of the mind where worldly objects very often fail to give pleasure, and a vague longing for something higher and more permanent is felt at times. Madhyama vairagya is that state of the mind in which the world appears all hollow, stale, flat and unprofitable, and the mind ardently desires, and spontaneously moves towards, things divine. When worldly enjoyments cause a distinct pain, and the mind constantly and restlessly yearns for divine knowledge, it is adhimatra vairagya. And when the mind turns away entirely from worldly objects, and cannot be brought back to them under any circumstances, it is the highest vairagya, the para

vairagya.

According to some sages, mridu vairagya indicates fitness for initiation into Mantra Yoga, madhyama vairagya for Hatha Yoga, adhimatra vairagya for Laya Yoga, and para vairagya for Raja Yoga. Other sages, however, hold that the learner in any of the first three stages of vairagya may be taught the three systems of yoga together, according to their fitness from the standpoint of vairagya. In other words, in whichever of the first three states of vairagya the learner may be, he learns the combined teaching of Mantra, Hatha and Laya Yogas, and subsequently, when he advances to the state of para vairagya, he is able to take up the practice of Raja Yoga.

The practical portion of all yoga, especially of Raja Yoga, is concerned with mental practices. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the student of yoga should know what his mind is, and how it works.

The genesis of perception is as follows: The sensations from the external world are carried by the outer instruments (*e.g.*, the eye) to their respective brain-centers (*indriyas*). The *indriyas* take the sensations to the mind (*manas*) and the mind to the determinative faculty (*buddhi*). The *purusha* or the soul, receives the sensations from the *buddhi*, wherein results the perceptual knowledge. The mind is an instrument, as it were, in the hands of the soul, through which the soul perceives external objects.

The aim of yoga is to free man from the meshes of matter. But the highest form of matter is mind—the *chitta* (a term which would include that which is technically known as *manas*, as *ahamkara*, and as *buddhi*). The student of Sankhya need not be told that the first product of *prakriti*, or the root-matter, is *Mahat* or the Great Principle—the *buddhi*, then comes the *ahamkara*, or “I” principle—the matter through which can function the I-ness: and then the *manas*, or the matter which is the vehicle of thought. These three vehicles—the thought-vehicle (*manas*), the I-vehicle (*ahamkara*), the pure-reason-vehicle (*buddhi*)—constitute *chitta*, or the subtlest form of matter. To free man from the fetters of this *chitta* is thus the problem of yoga. The man when freed from all vehicles remains in his own form called *swarupa*.

Thus it will be seen that the *antahkarana* (internal Instrument) is four-fold, *viz.*, *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta* and *ahamkara*. These are the four parts or constituent elements of the internal instrument. *Manas* or the mind is that inward faculty of man which makes and unmakes resolutions. That inner faculty which reasons and gives decision is the *buddhi*. The *chitta* is the repository of impressions. The *ahamkara* assimilates all affections as “mine,” and gives man self-consciousness. (This is according to Vedanta; while the foregoing tri-partite definition is according to Yoga.)

Of these fourfold functions of the inner instrument, *manas* and *buddhi* are *pradhan* or principal, and *chitta* and *ahamkara* are *upapradhan*, or subordinate. The subordinate functions unite with the principal. For example, *chitta* becomes identified with *manas*, so that *manas* receives and interprets impressions, and then forms resolutions, according to the *samskaras* or previous experiences or associations stored up in the *chitta*. Similarly, *ahamkara* becomes one with *buddhi*, and this is why the reasoning faculty comes to a conclusion according to its capacity and plane of knowledge. If there were no such interrelation of *ahamkara* with *buddhi*, there

would be no distinctive stamp on the result of any raciocination [process of thinking]. The sages hold that in the man devoid of knowledge, manas [the sensory mind] is the supreme ruler. But in the man of knowledge, buddhi or reason holds supreme sway. Manas and its subordinate associate, chitta, are, as it were, the lower and grosser part of the antahkarana; while buddhi and ahamkara are the higher, subtler and the better part of the same.

The identification of manas with chitta gives rise to asakti, or bondage; while the identification of buddhi with ahamkara gives birth to bhava. When this bhava is pure, it leads to mukti.

By means of Mantra, Hatha and Laya Yogas, the devotee, by gradually attaining purification, becomes eligible for savikalpa samadhi. It is through Raja Yoga only that the devotee can win nirvikalpa samadhi. Without the help of Raja Yoga, therefore, the adept in any other system of yoga cannot attain the chit swarupa-bhava. Raja Yoga is, in fact, the final refuge for all yogis.

As the light of the full moon is made up of sixteen kalas (phases) so the full course of the Raja Yoga comprises sixteen angas. These are: seven varieties of vichara (reasoning and discrimination); two kinds of dharana (literally, meditation in the nature of prehensive occupation of the inner consciousness); three methods of dhyana (contemplation with concentration); and four forms of samadhi (superconscious experience, or absolute quiescence from obliteration of self-consciousness due to immersion in the universal Self).

In connection with the seven angas first-mentioned, it is notable, *en passant*, how the holy seers have seen the universality of the law of Seven everywhere in the universe. Thus, for example, there are seven rays of the sun, seven colors (violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red) and seven shades, seven days in the division of time into weeks, seven vyahritis of the Vedic mantras (Bhur, Bhuvah, Swah, Maha, Jana, Tapa, Satya), seven notes in the musical scale, seven dhatus (elements) forming the body, such as bones, marrow, etc., seven upper and seven nether regions, and so forth. Indeed, the more one goes into the subtler constituents of the world, the more will one realize the scientific truth of the principle of seven-fold classification. In accordance with this law of septual division the holy maharishis have indicated seven jnana bhumis (planes of knowledge) and seven ajnana bhumis (planes of ignorance). (This subject has been dealt with in a separate chapter.) And in the same way, the darshanas (also treated in a separate chapter) have been classed under seven systems according to the respective adhikara (capacity, bent and level of mind) in regard to the seven jnana bhumis. In pursuance of the seven jnana bhumis, karma, upasana and jnana have each been divided by the holy teachers into seven divisions.

The names of the seven karma bhumis (planes of karma) are: 1) shubhechha, 2) vicharana, 3) tanumanasa, 4) satwapatti, 5) asanaskti, 6) padarthabhavana and 7) turyaga.

The names of the seven upasana bhumikas (planes of worship; are: 1) nampara, 2) ruppara, 3) vibhutipara, 4) shaktipara, 5) gunapara, 6) bhavapara, and 7) swaruppara.

The names of the seven jnana bhumikas (planes of Knowledge) are: 1) jnanada, 2) sannyasada, 3) yogada, 4) lilonmukti, 5) satpada, 6) anandapada and 7) paratpara.

First, by passing up, step by step, through the seven karma bhumikas, the karmi, the man of action, he who has devoted himself to the active discharge of his duties or to work for a mission, can attain to Karma Yoga leading to the bliss of kaivalya. Next, with the aid of the successive stages of karma and the seven upasana bhumis, the upasaka, the worshiper, can ultimately attain to parabhakti and make himself perfectly blessed. And the jnani, the man of knowledge, similarly, by going through the final seven jnana bhumis, with the help of the study of the Seven Systems of Philosophy, can gain divine knowledge and win freedom even in this body.

The course laid down for a Raja Yogi is to first learn the true meaning of the seven systems of philosophy at the feet of a master-teacher, and then go step by step into the aforesaid seven planes of karma, upasana and jnana, with special reference to the adhikara pertaining to each step. Next he has to practice the higher methods of exercise according to the personal instructions of the teacher. By acquiring success in these seven-planed exercises, the Raja Yogi can gradually practice effectively the two kinds of dharana. The two kinds of dharana are 1) prakriti asraya (dependent on nature) and 2) brahmasraya (dependent on Brahman). By means of dharana the Raja Yogi can acquire strength in his antahkarana. Afterwards, on reaching the domain of dhyana, the three kinds of dhyana have to be practiced, whereby the power of Self-realization (Atmapratyaksha) is produced.

In all spiritual works which follow the Vedas, three forms of knowing the manifestation of God are given. The material aspect of God is called Virat. The adhidaiva (super-material, subtle) aspect is named Ishwara-bhava, and the adhyatma (spiritual) aspect is Brahma-bhava. That bhava which is beyond prakriti, which is beyond action, and which is the state of Satchidananda, is that which is known as Brahman.

The bhava in which God looks at cosmic matter and by His looking at it its nature is quickened into consequential action of creation, preservation and absorption—that Look of God, which is the Qualified (Saguna) Expression causing the enlivening of matter, is known as Ishwara, and His material immanence in the boundless universe of stars and planets is named Virat Purusha. In Raja Yoga different modes of dhyana are laid down for the three aspects of God. And it is through these prescribed methods of dhyana that the raja yogi can reach the stage of samadhi. Having arrived on this ground, the raja yogi, solely with the help of his reasoning faculty (buddhi tattwa), has to practice four kinds of samadhi. Of these the first two are savichara samadhi, where there is still a subtle connection with the conscious working of the power of vichar (discernment and discrimination), and the last two are nirvichara samadhi where there remains only the sense of consciousness (anubhava). In this way on gaining the fourth state, the raja yogi can attain to liberation from the bonds of flesh, even while still in the flesh (jivanmukta).

In the samadhi of Mantra Yoga, the state of mahabhava is attained, marked by speechlessness, quiescence and inert immobility. In the samadhi of Hatha Yoga,

respiration ceases. Therefore to outward appearance the yogi is like a corpse without any sign of animation. In the samadhi of Laya Yoga, the yogi is immersed in the ocean of bliss and has no outer consciousness. These three states are of savikalpa samadhi, samadhi in which there is still fear of a return to the flesh. In these three states there still survive traces of a link with prakritic ananda (the joy of physicality). There is still risk of the yogi returning to the bondage of the flesh. But in the final highest state of the samadhi of Raja Yoga, neither is there any inertness nor any likelihood of the loss of outer consciousness. In the samadhi of Raja Yoga there is not the slightest residuum of the enjoyment pertaining to life on the physical plane (prakritic ananda), and for this reason it is perfect in every respect and there is no risk after its full attainment of a downfall into mundane existence. It is through Raja Yoga that the adept gains nirvikalpa samadhi and wins Brahmabhava. In spite of his corporeal condition, he is free and becomes merged in God.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna has explicitly described in the Bhagavad Gita the manner in which the yogi will work after he has gained the status of the jivanmukta of Raja Yoga samadhi. In the Upanishads is delineated what sort of upasana buddhi (spirit of worship and devotional mind) would characterize the Raja Yogi. And in the Vedanta is defined what would be the ultimate goal and conclusion of the progressive unfolding of the power of knowledge (jnana) of the Raja Yogi. Although the jivanmukta may have become merged in Brahman and reached the state transcending the sense of action (nishkriya bhava), yet his nature (prakriti) related to his physical being will be acted upon by the center of energy of the universe and will automatically be manifest in the aforesaid spheres of karma, upasana and jnana for the good of the world and setting an example to humanity.

Living beings are bound by three kinds of karma-samskara (actuating impulse or impression of karma), sanchita (stored or acquired), prarabdha (karma that has become activated and begun to manifest) and kriyaman (karma in progress). The samskaras which, as the endless seeds of karma, are accumulated by the living being in its wanderings through the cycles of reincarnations are called sanchit. Out of this gathered mass of samskaras, those karmas which become the cause of a new birth—those karma-samskaras which from their special effective force or productiveness bring about the precipitation into a particular birth (yoni)—are called rarabdha. And in undergoing the effect of the mass of karma in pursuance of prarabdha, the new seed of karma, which is acquired in the course of the life according to one's ahankara (egoism, sense of individuality) and propensity, is specified as kriyaman. The region where all the karma-samskaras lie impressed in their seed or incipient state (bijarupa) is called karmashaya. By the attainment of nirvikalpa samadhi through Raja Yoga the link with the karmashaya is severed. The mortal in undergoing the effect of prarabdha, bears so much less the consequences of prarabdha in body, mind and expression every day than the new karma he goes on actively accumulating, that is to say, the credit side is so much larger than the debit side, that it is impossible to work off the whole karma-samskara merely by bearing its effect. It is only with the help of Raja Yoga that nirvikalpa samadhi is gained, whereby the knowledge of the

Eternal Truth Divine (Tattwa Jnana) dawns in the mind annihilating desire, and thus the meshes of samskara are destroyed and connection with the karmashaya successfully cut off. Just as a roasted seed cannot germinate, in the same way the mind from which desire has been eradicated by the force of the Knowledge Divine (Tattwa Jnana) through Raja Yoga samadhi can no longer enmesh the mortal. For, it is desire and its offshoots alone which beget other karmas from karma. And that desire can only be rooted out by the power of Tattwa Jnana, which Tattwa Jnana is dependent on Raja Yoga. When the adept, with the help of Raja Yoga, having obliterated desire becomes perfect in his Knowledge Divine (Parama Tattwa Jnana) and is free from connection with karmashaya, then in that state of absolute success (purna kama) he is designated a jivanmukta. In that state whatever effort or work may yet remain with him, will have had its origin in the common impulse from the root center of the material universe, or will only be the process of finishing off the remaining balance of the mass of prarabdha which had been the cause of the present life. Whatever of these two may be his seeming work, neither sanchit (accumulated) nor kriyaman (in progress) samskaras can touch him, since he is beyond desire and rid of the bond of karmashaya. In other words, these have no power to entangle him.

There is the following beautiful illustration in the shastras showing how at this time the work of the jivanmukta mahapurusha is accomplished. The potter after putting in motion his wheel takes off his hand, but the wheel goes on turning round and round of itself for some time till the imparted energy is exhausted. Likewise, the physical body and the work connected therewith of the jivanmukta go on, although he has won liberation by the force of Tattwa Jnana so long as the effect of those karma-samskaras that had in the shape of prarabdha brought about his present existence is not borne to the full. There is another nice example. The archer may at his will not utilize the stock of arrows he keeps in his quiver or even destroy them. He may not let fly or may even break the arrow he has drawn to the string. But the arrow he has shot at the mark, that shaft he cannot call back, because it is now gone outside his control. Similarly the karma yogi can of course obliterate sanchit and kriyaman karma by gaining Divine Knowledge and annihilating desire, but the effect of the prarabdha karma that caused his physical existence must be undergone till the dissolution of the material body. In this way, the jivanmukta mahapurusha, under the remaining impulse of prarabdha, goes on doing work, freed from the kriyaman connection, till the moment of physical dissolution, and at the same time he may, mingling with the mass of karma which is in accord with the prarabdha of humanity at large and arises from the will of God, initiate and carry on work for the good of the world. As a matter of fact he himself has no work to do; work or no work is the same thing to him. Because there is no longer in him need or desire or sense of doing of work. He only works as the instrument of the Almighty himself. This is how the mahapurushas who have won liberation by the successful attainment of Raja Yoga samadhi become by the force of Tattwa Jnana merged in Brahman while yet in the physical body. The best examples of this state of jivanmukta are holy maharishis like Vashishthha, and Rajarshis like Janaka.

# Chapter Ten

## The Pitha

### The Mystic Circle (Chakra)

Before entering the subject matter of this chapter, we will deal with certain forms of what is called spiritualism, and psychic powers, which will help us in understanding our subject.

We will not deal with spiritualism or psychic powers at large, or in a systematic manner, but will merely take certain examples which will help the reader in clearly understanding our proposed topic.

#### Table-turning

Table-turning is a common form of what has been called “motor automatism.” It is done in this way: Two or more persons of a mediumistic type sit quietly for some time with hands in contact with some easily moveable object, say, a small three-footed table, and desiring its movement, that object will often begin to move. The sitters might then ask questions, and receive answers indicated by taps on the floor from the “spirit” that possesses the table. If, further they desire it to indicate letters of the alphabet by the movement of the table—as by tilting once for *a*, twice for *b*, and so on—it will often do so, and answers unexpected by anyone present will be obtained.

But beyond the simple movements—or table-turning, and the intelligent responses, or table-tilting—both of which are at least *prima facie* physically explicable by the sitters’ unconscious pressure, without postulating any unknown physical force or spirit at all—it is alleged by many persons that further physical phenomena occur, namely, that the table moves in a direction, or with a violence, which no unconscious pressure can explain; and also that percussive sounds or “raps” occur, which no unconscious action, or indeed no agency known to us, could produce. These raps communicate messages like the tilts, and it is to them that the name of “spirit-rapping” is given. But spiritualists generally draw little distinction between these four phenomena—mere table-turning, responsive table-tilting, movement of inexplicable vehemence, and responsive raps—attributing all alike to the agency of spirits of departed men and women, or at any rate to disembodied intelligences of some kind or other.

Faraday’s explanation of table-turning as the result of the summation of many unconscious movements does not explain all cases. Myers (*Human Personality*, Vol. II, p. 92) is of the opinion that beneath the superficially conscious stratum of our being there is not only a stratum of dream and confusion, but a still subjacent stratum of coherent (subliminal) mentation as well.

Another form of motor automatism is the automatic writing through the well-known planchette—a small, usually heart-shaped flat piece of wood equipped with two wheeled casters and a pencil-holding aperture pointing downwards, used to facilitate automatic writing. An instance of an experiment with planchette is given below:

Mr. Smith and his nephew placed their hands on the planchette, and a purely fantastic name was given as that of the communicating agency.

Q. Where did you live?

A. Wem.

(This name was quite unknown to either of the sitters.)

Q. Is it decided who is to be the Archbishop of Canterbury?

A. Yes.

Q. Who?

A. Durham [*i.e.*, the Bishop of Durham].

As none of them remembered his name, they asked:

Q. What is his name?

A. Lightfoot.

How far the main statement is correct, the sitters did not know. The curiosity at the time rested in the fact that the name was given which none of them could recall, but was found to be right. (Myers (*Human Personality*, Vol. II, p. 120-121.)

Innocent readers are here warned that answers received from “spirits” through the table, or the planchette, or other forms of automatic writing etc., are, in most cases, nonsensical, absurd, fantastic and untrue, but sometimes perfectly true.

We give below two instances of a peculiar nature

“Mme. X is also a writing medium. She was writing a letter one day, with no thought of unseen agencies, when suddenly she felt her hand checked. Warned by a special sensation, she still held the pen. Her hand placed itself on a sheet of paper, and began rapidly to write alarming predictions. The writing retained this tone for a few hours, and soon the communications became trivial in character, and, save in some exceptional instances, have since remained so.

“Mme. X is accustomed to arrange her own hair. One morning she said laughingly, ‘I wish that a court hairdresser would do my hair for me; my arms are tired.’ At once she felt her hands acting automatically, and with no fatigue for her arms, which seemed to be held up; and the result was a complicated coiffure, which in no way resembled her usual simple mode of arrangement.” (Myers (*Human Personality*, Vol. II, p. 126-127.)

We will now pass on to hypnotism. Hypnosis is induced in the subject either by mechanical means, or by suggestion, or by passes, or by a combination of any two of these.

A convenient mode of bringing on hypnotic sleep is by the “Magnetic Chain.” Any number of persons from six upwards sit round in a circle, and take each other’s hands by the thumbs. Let them sit quiet and motionless, with all their muscles relaxed, and in the most easy manner, with their eyes closed, or directed to the center of the floor between them, and let them resolve to give way for at least thirty minutes



to the consequences. Sooner or later some one of the chain will show signs of hypnosis by an involuntary falling of the head. Then let some one of the chain give to the subject suggestions of sleep and also make passes over him. The subject will soon be in a state of hypnosis.

Dr. Moll gives a typical experiment. He says: "Mr. X, forty-one years old, seats himself on a chair. I tell him that he must try to sleep. 'Think of nothing but that you are to go to sleep.' After some seconds I continue: 'Now your eyelids are beginning to close, your eyes are growing more and more fatigued, the lids quiver more and more. You feel tired all over, your arms go to sleep, your legs grow tired, a feeling of heaviness and the desire for sleep take possession of your whole body. Your eyes close; your head feels duller; your thoughts grow more and more confused. Now you can no longer resist, now your eyelids are closed. Sleep!' After the eyelids have closed I ask him if he can open them. (He tries to do so, but they are too heavy.) I raise his left arm high in the air. (It remains in the air, and cannot be brought down in spite of all his efforts). I ask him if he is asleep. 'Yes.' 'Fast asleep?' 'Yes.' 'Do you hear the canary singing?' 'Yes.' 'Now you hear the concert?' 'Certainly.' Upon this I take a black cloth and put it into his hand. 'You feel this dog quite plainly?' 'Quite plainly.' 'Now you can open your eyes. You will see the dog clearly. Then you will go to sleep again, and not wake till I tell you.' He opens his eyes, looks at the imaginary dog and strokes it. I take the cloth out of his hand, and lay it on the floor. He stands up and reaches out for it. Although he is in my room, when I tell him that he is in the Zoological Gardens, he believes it and sees trees, and so on."

Jendrassik and Krafft-Ebing obtained marks like burns on their subjects by means of suggestion. If some object such as a match-box, a pair of scissors, a snuff-box etc., were pressed upon the skin of the subject while in hypnosis, and he was at the same time told that the skin was being burned, a blister in the form of the object resulted.

Any suggestion that takes effect in hypnosis will also take effect post-hypnotically: movements and delusions of the senses, itching, pain, action of the bowels, hunger, thirst, etc., can be induced. Dreams can be influenced. Suggest to the subject while in hypnosis that he will dream that he will be in a boat on a river, a storm will suddenly rise, the boat will capsize, and he will have to swim to the shore. He will dream all this in detail. Suggest to him that three days hence he will pay a visit to a certain person, and he will carry out the order.

These phenomena together with telepathy, possession, trance, double personality, veridical (true-to-life) character of dreams, somnambulism, clairvoyance etc., are never satisfactorily explained by any theories of the Western scientists. The Hindus would call them all merely lower forms of pithas, or the play of consciousness and of prana.

Before we take up the subject of pitha, we will make certain remarks on consciousness and prana, which are necessary for the better understanding of the Hindu pitha theory.

According to the Hindus when creation begins to be manifested, the Avaktya (nature) begins to vibrate, and the first modification of it is the Mahat. This Mahat

might be called universal consciousness, or consciousness in all its aspects—consciousness, sub-consciousness, and super-consciousness. From Mahat is manufactured ahankara or self-consciousness, from which are evolved the five tanmatras (or subtle centers of vision, of hearing, of taste, of touch and of smell), the five subtle sensory and motor nerve-centers (jnanendriya and karmendriya), the manas (mind), and the five gross bhutas—earth, water, fire, air, ether). (See the Sankhya Cosmology as given in Chapter Sixteen.)

Such, in brief, is the nature of creation. And it is also held by the Indian rishis that what constitutes macrocosm constitutes microcosm. If we study a grain of sand, we study the universe.

Beyond prakriti (nature) is the Purusha or Brahman (absolute existence, absolute consciousness, absolute bliss).

It is only the grosser elements, the last order of things evolved out of prakriti, that are perceptible by the ordinary senses. They constitute what is ordinarily understood by the term “matter.” But it should be distinctly remembered that Mahat, or the universal consciousness, manas, or the mind, and the rest are as much matter as the grosser elements—only matter in subtler form.

This Indian view, namely, the manifestation of the gross from the subtle, is perfectly in agreement with physical science. Physicists, by increasing their knowledge of so-called “matter,” have been led to doubt its reality and dematerialized the atom and with it the entire universe which the various atoms compose. The trinity of matter, ether, and electricity, out of which science has hitherto attempted to construct the world, have been reduced to a single element—the ether (which is not scientific matter) in a state of motion. According to Sankhya the objective world is composed of *bhutas* [elements] which derive ultimately from akasha. I do not say that scientific “ether” is akasha, which is a concept belonging to a different train of thought. Moreover the sensible is derived from the super-sensible akasha tanmatra, and is therefore not an ultimate. But it is important to note the agreement in this, that both in the East and West the various forms of gross matter derive from a single substance which is not “matter.” Matter is *dematerialized*, and the way is made for the Indian concept of Maya. There is a point at which the mind cannot any longer usefully work outward. Therefore after the Tanmatras, the mind is turned within to discover their cause in that Egoism [Asmita: I-ness, the sense of “I am”], which, reaching forth to the world of enjoyment, produces sensorium, senses, and objects of sensation. That the mind and senses are also material has the support of some forms of Western philosophy, such as that of Herbert Spencer; for he holds that the universe, whether physical or psychical, is a play of force [energy; shakti], which, in the case of matter, we experience as object. Mind as such is, he says, as much a material organ as the brain and outer sense-organs, though they are differing forms of force.

His affirmation that scientific matter is an appearance produced by the play of cosmic force, and that mind itself is a product of the same play, is what Sankhya and Vedanta hold. Whilst, however, Spencer and the Agnostic school hold that the Reality

behind these phenomena is unknowable, the Vedanta affirms that it is knowable and is consciousness itself. This is the Self, than which nothing can be more intimately known.

Force is blind. We discover consciousness in the universe. It is reasonable to suppose that if the First Cause is of the nature of either consciousness or matter, and not of both, it must be of the nature of the former and not of the latter. Unconsciousness or object may be conceived to modify consciousness, but not to produce consciousness out of its unconscious self. According to Indian ideas, spirit, which is the cause of the universe, is pure consciousness.

We must distinguish between consciousness as such and modes in consciousness. Consciousness is the unity behind all forms of consciousness, whether sensation, emotion, instinct, will or reason. The claim that consciousness as such exists can only be verified by spiritual experience. (See Edward Carpenter's *Consciousness Without Thought*.) All high mystic experiences, whether in East or West, have been experiences of unity in differing forms and degrees. Even, however, in normal life, as well as in abnormal pathological states, we have occasional stretches of experience in which it becomes almost structureless.

The discovery of subliminal consciousness aids the shastric doctrine in so far as it shows that behind the surface consciousness of which we are ordinarily aware, there is yet another mysterious field in which all its operations grow. (Consult *Cosmic Consciousness*, by Dr. Bucke.) It is the buddhi which here manifests. Well-established occult powers and phenomena now generally accepted, such as telepathy, thought-reading, hypnotism, and the like, are only explainable on hypotheses which approach more nearly Eastern doctrine than any other theory which has in modern times prevailed in the West.

We have now the scientific recognition that from its *materia prima* all forms have evolved, that there is life in all things, and that there are no breaks in nature. There is the same matter and consciousness throughout. There is unity of life. There is no such thing as "dead matter." The well-known experiments of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose establish response to stimuli in inorganic matter. What is this response, but the indication of the existence of that sattwa-guna which Vedanta and Sankhya affirm to exist in all things, organic and inorganic. It is the play of Chit (consciousness) in this sattwa, so muffled in tamas as not to be recognizable except by delicate scientific experiment, which appears as the so-called "mechanical" response. Consciousness is here veiled and imprisoned by tamas. Inorganic matter displays it in the form of that seed or rudiment of sentiency which, enlarging into the simple pulses of feeling of the lowest degrees of organized life, at length emerges in the developed self-conscious sensations of human life. (Compare Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*, p. 14, etc.) Consciousness is throughout the same. What varies is its wrappings, the five sheaths. (See Chapters Two and Fifteen.)

There is thus a progressive *release* of Consciousness from gross matter through plants and animals to man. This evolution the Indian Doctrine has taught in its 84 lakhs [8,400,000] of previous births.

According to the Hindu books plants have a dormant consciousness. The Mahabharata says that plants can see, and thus they reach [seek or turn toward] the light. Such a power of vision would have been ridiculed not long ago, but Professor Haberlandt, the well-known botanist, has established that plants possess an organ of vision in the shape of a convex lens on the upper surface of the leaf. The animal consciousness is greater, but seems to display itself almost entirely in the satisfaction of animal wants. In man we reach the world of ideas, but these are a super-structure on consciousness and not its foundation or basis. It is in this modeless basis that the various modes of consciousness with which we are familiar in our waking and dream states, arise.

It would appear therefore that there is nothing unreasonable or unscientific in the Hindu doctrine of the five koshas or sheaths, wrappings of the soul. (Again, see Chapters Two and Fifteen.) The Vedanta holds that every being has the following five koshas:

- (1) anandamaya kosha
- (2) vijñānamaya kosha
- (3) manomaya kosha
- (4) prāṇamaya kosha
- (5) annamaya kosha

The annamaya kosha, the lowest in the order, is the gross body, which “dies.” The other four constitute the being’s sukshma sharira or subtle body, which is not destroyed at “death,” but survives, and goes to other worlds for enjoyment or punishment; after which it is “born” again in another annamaya kosha to work out his karma. These five koshas envelop the universal consciousness of the jiva. As one after another kosha falls off, the jiva’s consciousness is proportionately increased, and when all the koshas are destroyed, the jiva’s consciousness, hitherto bound and limited by the sheaths, is freed, and it mingles with the supreme consciousness. This is freedom (or mukti, release).

Here we find the true explanation of hypnotism, clairvoyance, and such-like phenomena, in which the annamaya kosha is put to sleep, while the subtle prāṇamaya kosha, having thus obtained a greater sphere of action, is left free to operate.

The prāṇamaya kosha is the seat of the prana. In its ordinary and popular meaning, prana is taken to be the breath. When life in a man becomes extinct, we say that “his prana has gone out.” But prana is not the breath. It is not the air that goes into the lungs. Respiration is one of the actions of prana, not prana itself.

Prana is a subtle force pervading all things of the universe. Out of this prana is evolved everything that might be called force. The sum-total of all forces in the universe, whether mental or physical, is called prana.

The prana is the vital force in every being. It has five centers in the human being, from which it controls and guides the brain and every nerve center, and thus regulates all bodily actions.

The prana can be controlled by yogic practices, The yogi who has perfectly

controlled the prana acquires miraculous powers.

Such then is prana. The places and objects in which we see a special manifestation of prana are called pithas. The Universal Prana [Vishwaprana] may be compared to a swift stream, in which eddies are being constantly formed in the rushing waters by the forces of attraction and repulsion. The pithas may be likened to these eddies. As some of these eddies last longer than others, so there are some permanent pithas, while others are transitory. Impermanent pithas, either good or evil, are being constantly formed around us by our thought-force.

These pithas or circles of prana-force are formed by its own forces of attraction and repulsion. They might be formed naturally, or by our concentrated and continued thought-force. Yogis who have controlled the prana can create pithas in their own bodies, or anywhere they please, by simply touching a place with a finger.

The annamaya kosha constitutes the material world, and the other four koshas, the subtle supersensuous world. The pranamaya kosha is the link which connects the two worlds. Communication between the two worlds can be made through the pranamaya kosha only. Just as the material world is the support of the annamaya kosha, so the sukshma sharira is the support of the pranamaya kosha. A circle of prana might be formed in the pranamaya kosha by the forces of attraction and repulsion of prana acting on it. This is a pitha.

A pitha might be called the support or the resting place of the sukshma sharira. A pitha might be formed voluntarily or involuntarily. By the practice of concentration and of the control of the prana force, one can form a pitha voluntarily. At the time of coition, a pitha is formed involuntarily.

When a pitha is formed, rishis, devatas, pitris, spirits and suchlike beings are generally attracted by it to rest on it awhile. These beings with their subtle bodies can appear only on a pitha, the circle of subtle prana force. Just as a bit of straw in the rapid current of a river floats along and stops not in its course except when caught in a whirlpool, so the invisible powers that be alight and rest, as it were, for a time in the whirlpools of the continuous and all-pervading stream of prana.

We are continually absorbing and ejecting prana, or, in other words, the prana in us is imbibing congenial prana from the universal prana, and ejecting the unsuitable prana. This has been stated as attraction and repulsion. The action of these two forces of prana is seen in inspiration and expiration.

Now let us see what happens at a seance. We will take table-turning as an instance. The sitters' prana forces begin to attract and repel each other, the consequence being that a circle of prana or pitha is formed. Spirits are naturally attracted by pithas. Restless and evil spirits called pretas are usually and easily attracted by these low forms of pithas. The consequence is that the "replies" obtained are generally untrue. It is because the pretaloka is not far away from this our world, that the inhabitants thereof generally come and "possess" these pithas. And how can pure spirits come into the presence of the evil ones with their impure aura? If sattwic persons sit at a seance, purer spirits than the pretas might come.

The Hindus recognize five classes of principal pithas, They are:

1. Upasana pithas, such as images, fire, water, etc. When pithas are formed in these, invisible divine powers are invested in them. The pitha of fire may lose its heat, and the water of the Water-pitha may in special cases move and splash and ripple as if it were a thing of life. The pithas under this head are of sixteen kinds as explained in the Mantra Shastras. (These are explained in the section on Image Worship.)

2. Parthiva pithas, such as temples and places of pilgrimage. Such pithas are of two kinds, (a) nitya or permanent, and (b) naimittica or transitory. A permanent pitha is that where the “whirlpool of prana” was formed naturally as in permanent Hindu tirthas; and a transitory pitha is that where the “whirlpool” was formed in course of time by the accumulated thought-force of men. The latter sort remains a pitha so long as the thought-force lasts, the former remains always a pitha.

The Tirtha-pithas are divided into many classes in the shastras, which need not be mentioned here.

3. Jiva-Yantric pithas, where pithas are formed in human bodies, such as in the worship of boys and girls, in “nakha-darpan” [skrying in a mirror with children used as “mediums”] in cases of clairvoyance, etc.

4. Sthula Yantric pithas, which have absolutely nothing to do with worship or the display of divine powers, but formed by men to obtain the so-called responses from the spirits. Under this head come table-turning, planchette, and other forms of “spiritualism.” A Indian example of a form of “motor automatism,” in which a pitha of the kind mentioned in this heading, is formed is the following. It is very common amongst the women of Rajputana (Rajasthan). Two women take each other’s hands, the right by the right and the left by the left, thus forming a kind of cross. At the cross is placed a small earthen pot with flowers in it. After a few minutes the pot begins to move as in table-tilting.

5. Involuntary pithas, such as those formed at the time of coitions. Such a pitha might be formed in human beings as well as in animals. It is the pitha that is thus formed which is the cause of propagation. For this reason, the act of coition has been held so sacred by the Hindus.

The “whirlpool” of prana is created with the help of the mind, mantras, and objects. By mind, we mean the thought-force of the mind, and by mantras, we mean any syllable or phrase, (particularly one possessing occult powers, having been used by many in connection with a certain object), or any action which aids the concentration of the mind to bring forth powerful thought-force. Lastly, an object is any external object, such as an image, or a table in table-tilting. It has been remarked that evil spirits might come into a pitha. To ward off their influence and to prevent them from coming into a pitha, the Hindus, when creating a pitha, purify the ten directions.

Shava-sadhana is an instance of a pitha prevalent amongst the Tantrics. In such a pitha the prana is concentrated on a fresh corpse, sitting on which the sadhak meditates. If the pitha is formed strictly according to the prescribed rules, the corpse will rise and speak.

The ancient Hindus understood well the workings of the subtle prana. There is a deep meaning in some of the apparently unreasonable customs of the Hindus. A brahmin or a sannyasi has been forbidden to bow before an idol set up by a shudra. The reason is that the pitha established by a shudra who is usually low in spirituality, is generally weak as regards the amount of prana in it. A brahmin or a sannyasi, who is highly advanced in spirituality, is likely to draw into himself the prana that is in the pitha, and thus destroy the same. Or, it might be that some of the prana in the brahmin or the sannyasi might be absorbed by the pitha, thus doing a spiritual harm to the brahmin, or the sannyasi. One's thoughts, surroundings, etc., are much influenced by one's prana, which might be pure or vitiated. This principally explains the "touchable-untouchable" and similar customs in India.

The philosophy and the practical exercises connected with the pitha are very essential, for upasana as well as for the realization of the occult world. The subjects of upasana and the occult world have been dealt with in separate chapters. Our maharishis have indicated two means for realizing the power of pitha. (1) By means of development of yogic insight. (2) By means of special natural gift with which some persons are endowed. In the shastras there are many classifications regarding such, (1) Yogic powers which enable the yogi to see and communicate with supernatural beings. Some yogis develop among other things what might be called telegraphic centers in the body for the automatic perception of things and forces occult. Western enquirers have not yet known of these. But the (2) natural gift is manifested in the West among those who can, for example, see spirits with the physical eye, so the understanding of this class of phenomenon is becoming easier nowadays. The more the westerners go into spiritualism the more they will have to go into the science of pitha.

# Chapter Eleven

## Bhakti

### Love and Devotion

According to Hindu shastras bhakti is considered the prana or life principle of all the phases of worship.

We will show here that all-sided as Hinduism is, it does not as a whole take its stand on any single aspect of the infinitely varied character of religion, the result of time, place, and circumstances including the capacity of the various types of mankind to elevate all of whom in the spiritual grade is the aim of religion.

Indian religion is based on the final truth of philosophy, science, and the theory of religion based on them. Not a phase of thought or practice but has been assigned its right place in this religion. It is a religion of religions, and none need consider one's own creed as superior or exclusive, so as to imply that India's religion is something strange, or foreign, or deserving to be discarded. The world has, we hope, come gradually to believe that religion could be no exclusive property of any nation or people. Once more do we repeat that religion has been studied as a science in India, and every shade and grade of thought has been noted, understood, properly classified and registered in our religious philosophy for proper use and the advancement of the whole of humanity to the universally desired goal.

The law of Karma, of action and reaction, which in the two aspects is represented by attraction and repulsion, has been treated of at length elsewhere. Attraction implies attachment (raga), repulsion implies aversion (dwesha). Attraction of an outside physical character is easily understood, once the principle about its action is known. Thus gravity and magnetism are facts familiar to us. As in the physical, so in the moral and spiritual worlds, attraction and repulsion have their own value and operation. In the consideration of the nature of love, we are to understand the nature of this sort of attraction.

The finality of all attraction is unification, or becoming one without a second. But anterior to this, are stages of moral and spiritual attraction, playing a large part in men's relations connected first with family life, and then growing into comprehensiveness and intensity into the feeling of universal, heavenly spiritual love.

The following is an analysis of the feeling. In human relations, love manifests itself in three ways:

- (1) Love towards one's inferiors
- (2) Love towards one's superiors
- (3) Love amongst equals

The fourth kind of love is of an absolute character which we may call love towards God (bhakti). The gradation is natural and progressive, and is instinctively followed



will lead the individual without conscious effort to the very goal of religion.

### **Love towards inferiors**

Love towards inferiors is an ordinary fact. Animal instincts manifest this love. The animal parent, bird, quadruped and even lower, instinctively protect their young, take due precaution against any possibility of harm to them and are ready to sacrifice themselves, reckless even of life if actual danger befalls the young. The cat, the cow, the tigress and even hens and swine are familiar instances. In the case of the ape and monkey, the carrying about of the dead carcass of the young one by the fond mother is a familiar sight. The Hindu Philosophy recognizes the nearness in evolution of the cow, the lion and the ape to man. In man, one of whose wise sayings is “charity begins at home,” attachment to one’s own children is as good and true as in the case of lower animals. The mother is a type of self-sacrifice for the child; the father may act by imitation yet both have an instinctive impulse, as a result of very subtly formed habit, to protect their children and to undergo all sacrifice in their interests. This attachment is termed *sneha* in Sanskrit.

The expression of this bond of *sneha* is very beautifully illustrated in the patriarchal phase of human life. The original unit of the patriarchal system is the joint family, which is very common in India. From the standpoint of the parents of a growing and expanding family, it is not at all difficult to understand the truth about joint family life. The affection of the head of the family naturally runs from the nearest to the remotest descendants of the same blood, and the oldest ancestor would naturally have equal care and interest regarding every member of the expanded house. Nay, the feeling extends wonderfully to slaves, servants and stranger dependents by the force of habit, and nothing could be a better training to the spirit of man in self-sacrifice for others than this first unconsciously received lesson in that direction. The advantages of the joint family system need not be detailed here; modern civilization with all its activity in the direction of liberty is tending to universal co-operation which is only a scientific name for the joint family life. The resources of the family or the country, or nation have undoubtedly a vast bearing on the question, but the feeling of love at the fountainhead is all-pervading in the system and cannot be eliminated.

From the parental stage to the patriarchal, the progress is towards greater and greater self-sacrifice, until it bids fair to be universal. The *tols* of old, the school establishments for the children of the country with the patriarchal preceptors, their wives—the common mothers of the pupils—were and are but a phase of this same human phenomenon. Natural, true and progressive to the spiritual goal, nothing could give better promise and prospect of hope.

Affection towards inferiors and progeny is however not of an everlasting or permanent character. Its permanency depends on the permanency of the object of affection. The progress of attachment towards permanency is necessary to take man to the final goal. Let us remember one main fact here that a great spirit of self-sacrifice is developed by the joint family system of life.

## Love towards superiors

We next consider love or devotion as directed to one's superiors, such as parents, and protectors, including the king (raja). Love here takes the form of shraddha or nishtha, obedient, dependence or loyalty. A higher phase of spirituality is reached here. A training to selfless obedience, dutifulness without consideration of personal interests, a desire to please the superior and see him happy in the contemplation of one's service to him—this is the most laudable feeling developed at this stage.

Any sacrifice for the parent, the father or the mother, and one standing in or representing that relation, the father-in-law, the mother-in-law, uncles and aunts, and elderly neighbors, and townsfolk, and universally aged and dignified person of any place, nationality or race is included in this. This spiritual growth results from the habitual practice of this virtue. Highest eulogies are given to love and sacrifice for parents, and equally high is the emphasis laid on the feeling of loyalty to the king.

As has been pointed out several times, all the actions of the Hindus, bodily, mental or vocal, being in religion, loyalty to the king is a religious duty with the Hindus. To be impressed with the idea that a certain act, either of commission or omission, is a sin before God, is far more useful towards self-government of the spirit than the mere fear of law and force, as exercised by a governing human agency. It must be remembered that all relations in the world are considered in the Indian religion as spiritual in their essence, and any departure from the obligations enjoined by those relations is deemed as causing a spiritual fall and thus retarding and preventing progress to the *summum bonum* of human birth and activity. Loyalty which is so very necessary for the peace and progress of mankind in worldly matters and far more so in spiritual matters, has been enjoined as a sacred duty on the subjects, and beautiful illustrations of this feeling may be noted in life's routine of the people in the Indian States. [These kingdom-states now only exist as secular political states in modern India, and their rajas have no official standing or authority. *Editor's note.*] One will be struck at finding that at the death of the ruling Hindu king, obsequies in the form of the shaving of the face and offering the funeral water and sesamum grains are performed by all the subjects of the state in a body in company with the nearest relatives of the deceased. Oneness of heart and of soul like this as a cementing principle in nationality was first correctly conceived and laid down in the Indian Dharma-shastra. It is undying and effective and if it has disappeared partly owing to deterioration due to time, its value and usefulness will never be lost, and a revival of the consciousness of it will restore the true feeling of love and loyalty in this country as it flourished but in a subconscious way in other lands. With all the talk about democracy in Europe, the world knows the instinctive loyalty of the people of England to the personal authority of their King—a feeling which was far more emphatically and far more touchingly expressed by the Indian subjects of His Most Gracious Majesty, the King-Emperor of India on both occasions of his visit to this country, for the first time alone, and then with Her Majesty, the Queen, the mother of all the subjects of the whole British Empire. Nothing can surpass the beauty of the

feeling attaching to the heart and spirit of India, where humanity reaches the very acme of virtue and love and spirituality, of which oneness without a second is the ever-cherished goal.

### **Love between equals**

We next proceed to the consideration of love between equals. The Sanskrit word representing this attachment is *prema*. Love between friends is this love, and its special phase is the *prema* between husband and wife. *Prema* alone is capable of reaching perfection of selflessness. It is thus that a *prema* appears in three grades. Taking as a clearer illustration the love between man and wife and speaking from the point of view of the wife, attachment expresses itself in these three forms: (1) “He is mine”; (2) “I am his”; and (3) “We—he and I—are one.” This last is the ideal.

In (1) the feeling is: His interests, fate and fortune are my interests and fate and fortune. Owing to her unflinching virtue, she can help the man to rise to a higher stage of virtue himself.

The second phase (2) is “I am his.” He is her strength and support—an idea compared usually with the climbing plant—“the entwining creeper”—and the supporting tree. If the support is taken away, it is impossible for the climbing creeper to keep itself in position—it must fall with the fall of the support.

The third (3): “He and I are one” is the very extreme of the *prema*—attachment. It is comparable to the *summum bonum*, though from the human point of view, not the purely spiritual one in its inception.

Between friends who sacrifice themselves for each other, a similar attachment subsists. The extreme of it is illustrated by the conduct of the heroic comrade in a battle, who to save his friend places himself in the front, shielding him with his own body and dying to protect him. A higher example is seen in an anecdote where a fire had to be crossed to secure a position of advantage in the taking of a castle. The heroic comrade threw himself flat on the fire, calling the chief to step over his back and secure the desired position, counting body and life as nothing before the hope of his friend’s success and glory.

### **Love towards God**

The last phase and the most important of all these is attachment to God, which is called *bhakti*. It should be remembered that God is conceived as a perfection of perfections. All desire, all ambition, all knowledge, all goodness, all attraction, all power is perfect in Him. The Hindu idea of *Bhagavan* is familiar to readers of Sanskrit. He is the Lord; the One endowed with the attributes: infinite dominion, infinite might, infinite glory, infinite splendor, infinite wisdom and infinite renunciation; the Personal God. Everything that can inspire attachment is conceived to exist in God, nothing that is not there. And as, all that is good and happiness-giving, and pleasing and soothing and charming, and winsome, and lovable, and gracious, and captivating—all is there and all in perfection. If one can but realize these conceptions in God, we can easily see that such a one will forget one’s personal and

separate being and will be absorbed in the enjoyment of the conception beyond oneself.

And according to the direction or point of view taken, various are the ways in which attachment to God manifests itself. According to the shastric analysis in the Daivi Mimamsa Philosophy, bhakti is classed as (1) vaidhi, (2) ragatmika, and (3) para.

The vaidhi bhakti is the preparatory stage. Vidhi or injunction for the practice of bhakti is given to the aspirant. The forms of upasana (worship) and puja (adoration), and dhyana (meditation), in fact, the practical life needed for one's confirmation in the path of bhakti are learned by him. This disciplining is helpful to the contraction of bodily habits, and mental strength by virtue of which the feeling on which the next grade, the ragatmika bhakti, becomes well-founded.

The ragatmika bhakti is the most important phase of bhakti. As a lover in love with his beloved lady loves everything referring or belonging to her, as in the case of Juliet's glove, or Sakuntala's bracelet of lotus fibers, so is everything belonging or referring to God, the names given to God to express one's conception of Him and every mental and material concept or object supremely dear to the bhakta. Then there are certain special particulars peculiar to certain individuals in the direction of which their feeling becomes instantly intensified and leads them to the realization of their ideal of bliss. As in the case of certain ragas in Hindu music, the modulation of a particular kind charms the hearer and singer, so fascination steals over one under the influence of particular feelings peculiar to individual susceptibilities. And various are the bhavas or predilections, owing to which the susceptibilities become keen. These bhavas are:

1. Dasya, or attachment through service
2. Sakhya, or that through friendship
3. Kanta, or that for the beloved
4. Vatsalya, or that through affection for offspring
5. Atma-nivedana, or that through self-dedication
6. Guna Kirtan, or that through praise and glorification
7. Tanmaya, or that of oneness with the object of love without a second.

The respective illustrations of these are:

1. Hanuman
2. Arjuna
3. Gopis of Vraja (Vrindavan)
4. Yashoda and Dasaratha
5. Narada
6. Vyasa
7. Hari-Hara [A divine form that is half Vishnu and half Shiva, demonstrating their oneness as God.]

All these seven are two-fold under the two aspects of "I am His" and "He is mine," thus becoming fourteen. The Tanmaya culminates in the Parabhakti. When in all conditions of body, and mind, one is conscious of the Priyatama (the most Beloved

one), and in and out there is no other consciousness, but the one “He and I are one.” This is nothing but the Brahma-sad [God is the Sole Reality] bhava which is the final explanation of mukti in the Vedanta Philosophy. That is love in its beginning and its end.

# Chapter Twelve

## Darshanic Bhumi

### Planes of Knowledge

The Vedas say: “The basis of Atmajnana (knowledge of the Self) is the knowledge of the Jnana Bhumi—planes of knowledge.”

Handicraft and industries characterize the first stage in the progress of a people. The next stage is that of advance in science. Discoveries and inventions are now made which conduce to material prosperity. Up to this time, the search is outward: the material world engrosses all attention and energy. Then a time comes when the search becomes inward. This is the beginning of Philosophy.

India had begun this inward search into the super-sensuous world long before any other nation had even dreamed of its existence. The wonderful truths (in comparison with which the truths of the material world discovered by science are but shadows), relating to the aforesaid subtle world discovered by the rishis of India have been arranged in seven systems, called the seven systems of Hindu Philosophy.

What will it avail a nation if it makes the greatest progress in arts, industries, science and so forth from the materialistic point of view, but none in the field of knowledge transcending all these? For material prosperity is not the be-all and the end-all of human life. What then is the goal, the aim and end of human existence? What is that, by obtaining which, we obtain everything? How to obtain this? The Jnana Kanda of the Vedas—the Hindu Philosophy—answers these questions.

As has already been indicated in the foreword, a human being has seven planes of wisdom (sapta-jnana-bhumi) in his spiritual career in life. He in his evolution towards perfection has to pass through them one-by-one. They are like the seven rungs of a ladder, helping the jiva to ascend to the Absolute One. As the jivatman passes one stage after another, the mind is more and more purified, he acquires more and more spiritual knowledge, until at last, when he has passed the last stage, his existence is merged in the One Eternal Blissful Existence. He attains nirvana, the happy goal!

The successive seven planes or stages of knowledge are in order:

- (1) Jnanada
- (2) Sannyasada
- (3) Yogada
- (4) Lilonmukti
- (5) Satpada
- (6) Ananda-pada,
- (7) Paratpara

In the first (jnanada) stage of life the jiva begins his search after truth from the outside world, and goes a little deep. He gazes at the world in wonder, and asks himself, “Who is the author of this world? There cannot be an effect without a cause. So how came this world into being?” He begins to argue, and infers by logical reasoning that God is the creator of the universe, and that the invisible and eternal atoms are its cause. Here is the sprouting of the germ of Self-knowledge.

In the second stage (sannyasada), a man looks more closely into the material world, and sees the presence of God’s subtle forces in its constituents, and also begins to discern dharma from adharma.

In the third stage of knowledge (yogada), a man practices control over the self, and so acquires higher powers. He gains an insight into the super-physical planes and is able to see some of the manifested forms of the Almighty.

In the fourth stage (lilonmukti), the jiva acquires all knowledge of prakriti (nature), and is no longer fettered by Maya.

In the fifth stage (satpada) the jiva tries to realize in the depths of his inner consciousness the identity of all effects with their cause, of Ishwara and His creation.

In the sixth stage (ananda-pada), a man is able to see in Ishwara the existence of the insentient (achetana) world of karma, and the conscious world of Daiva (the gods); and thus realizing the unity of all things in Ishwara enjoys unutterable bliss.

In the seventh and the last stage (paratpara), the jiva sees no difference between himself and the Supreme One, and is thus merged into that One Supreme Existence.

In other words: At the end of the first stage of knowledge, a jiva feels that he has learned what had to be learned. In the second stage, the jiva renounces what had to be renounced. In the third stage the jiva feels that he has acquired what powers he had to acquire. “I have seen enough of the play of Maya: I shall no longer be bound by it”—thus feels the jiva while he is in the fourth stage. In the fifth stage he realizes that the universe is Brahman. “Brahman is the universe”—such is the consciousness of the jivatma in the sixth stage of knowledge. In the last stage, he feels that he himself is the all-pervading, limitless, unchangeable Brahman—one without a second.

These seven planes of knowledge are connected with the seven schools of Indian philosophy in categorical order. Thus the Jnanada plane of knowledge is connected with the Nyaya system of philosophy; the Sannyasada with the Vaisheshika System; the Yogada with the Yoga System; the Lilonmukti with the Sankhya System; the Satpada with the Karma Mimamsa System; the Anandapada with the Upasana Mimamsa System; and the Paratpara with the Vedanta Systems of Philosophy. We have dealt with each of these systems of philosophy in a separate section.

We give, in connection with the division of the planes of knowledge and planes of ignorance, a chart which will explain our point at a glance.

## The Chart of Mahakash Golak (Containing seven Jnana Bhumis and seven Ajnana Bhumis)

*Planes of Knowledge presided over by Vidya Devi (Saraswati), and their corresponding Philosophy.*

1. Jnanada (Nyaya)
2. Sannyasada (Vaisheshika)
3. Yogada (Yoga)
4. Lilonmukti (Sankhya)
5. Satpada (Karma Mimamsa)
6. Anandapada (Upasana Mimamsa)
7. Paratpara (Vedanta: Brahma Mimamsa).

*Planes of ignorance, presided over by Avidya-devi.*

1. The plane of the collective consciousness of the group souls of the plant beings.
2. The plane of the collective consciousness of the group souls of the germ beings.
3. The plane of the collective consciousness of the group souls of the egg-born beings.
4. The plane of the collective consciousness of the group souls of sac-born beings.
5. The plane of the doctrine of the body as the soul.
6. The plane of the doctrine of the soul as distinct from the gross body.
7. The plane of the doctrine of force as distinct from the soul.

In this chart the jiva's evolution starts from the lowest plane of ignorance, going through all the planes, one by one till he reaches the last which leads to the knowledge (realization) of Brahman. The seven planes of knowledge are presided over by vidya, and the seven planes of ignorance by avidya. Beyond the planes of knowledge is Brahman, the goal of the jiva, which is put at the top. The jada prakriti, the insentient world, is at the bottom.

The above chart includes all grades and phases of philosophical thought of every land beyond India, eastern as well as western.

We now pass on to deal with the ten stages of man.

### **Man's ten stages**

The seven systems of Hindu Philosophy are in accordance with the jiva's seven stages of wisdom. The Hindu scriptures say that in the jiva's whole career, there are fourteen stages—seven stages of ignorance, and seven of knowledge. The seven stages of ignorance begin with the jiva's entry into creation. His first stage of ignorance is in



the collective consciousness of plant life, the second stage in the collective consciousness of germs, the third stage in the collective consciousness of egg-born creatures, and the fourth stage is in the collective consciousness of the sac-born animals. When the jiva becomes a perfect animal, man, then he comes to the fifth stage of ignorance. Then he reaches the sixth and finally the seventh stage of ignorance. Then he gradually rises to the seven stages of knowledge. Thus the jiva evolves.

When the jiva becomes a man and has come up to the fifth stage of ignorance, he is liable to be hurled back to the lower stages as a reaction or retribution for his misdeeds.

When the jiva arrives at the sixth stage, he on his death goes either to naraka or to the pitriloka, he does not go further upwards. And when the jiva is in the seventh stage of ignorance, he, on his death, can go up to the swarga loka, the third heavenly loka. (Our mortal world is one fourth of one-fourteenth of the heavenly lokas—see the chapter on the occult world.)

As long as the jiva as a human being is in the fifth stage of ignorance, he is an atheist and a materialist, taking his body to be the soul, and impure and a barbarian (anarya–unaryan). And in the sixth stage, man believes in the soul as separate from the body, thus remaining immersed in the sense-enjoyments of the world. And in the seventh stage of ignorance, man infers the existence of a super-sensuous world and the happiness belonging to that world.

In other words, the principle of tamas chiefly dominates the jiva of the fifth stage; the principle of rajas, the jiva of the sixth stage; and the principles of rajas-sattwa in the seventh stage of ignorance. The principle of sattwa begins to make its appearance in the first stage of knowledge, as described above.

It will therefore be seen that all the philosophical systems of the world will come under one or the other of these ten stages of man.

# Chapter Thirteen

## Desh, Kala and Srishti

### Time, Space and Creation

According to the Vedas, all creation results from Ishwara, the Supreme Purusha, and His Prakriti (Maya). Amongst created things, time is regarded as the vibhuti, the distinct power and glory, of the Purusha, and space that of Prakriti.

Although particular macrocosmic and microcosmic creations have their end in time, yet the endless chain of creation goes on forever.

Hence Time (Kala) and Space (Desha) are regarded as eternal. Man cannot conceive these two as limited in any way.

Adi-kala, the vibhuti of the Supreme Purusha, and Adi-desh, the vibhuti of Para prakriti, each have again three vibhuties. Adi-kala has for its vibhuties Mahakala, Kala and Pita (father) and prakriti has mother country, body and mother.

That which swallows up everything is Mahakala. Kala is that which manifests itself as day, month, year, Yuga and Kalpa. The rest of the vibhuties bear ordinary meanings. The Hindu scriptures have to say a good deal about these vibhuties.

#### **Kala or Time**

According to the Vedic shastras Kala has been divided in the following way:

A hundred Trutis make one Par, thirty Pars make one Nimesh, eighteen Nimeshas make one Kashta, thirty Kashtas make one Kala, thirty Kalas make one Ghatika, two Ghatikas, make one Kshana, thirty Kshanas make a day and a night, and so on to week, fortnight, month and the six seasons.

A year is the time which the earth takes in once going round the Sun. A year has otherwise been divided as follows: Sixty Vikalas make one Kala, sixty Kalas make one Amsha, thirty Amshas make one Rashi (Sign of the Zodiac), and twelve Rashis make one solar year.

The time for which a solar system will last has also been calculated in terms of solar years. Satya Yuga consists of 1,728,000 years, Treta Yuga of 1,296,000 years, Dwapara Yuga of 864,000 years and the Kali Yuga of 432,000 years. Thus our Yugas together consist of 4,320,000 years, and this period is called a Mahayuga.

The devata who controls time is called a Manu. After a period of 71 Mahayugas, called a Manvantara, the Manu is replaced by another Manu. Fourteen such Manvantaras, including the time intervening between two Manvantaras, make one Kalpa, which therefore consists of 4,320,000,000 years.

Each world-system has a Brahma for its creator, a Vishnu for its preserver, and a Rudra or Shiva for its destroyer. Of these three Devatas, Brahma is the youngest in age, then comes Vishnu, and Rudra is the oldest.

Brahma's day consist of one Kalpa (4,320,000,000 human years), and his night of another Kalpa. It is said that Brahma lives for one hundred of his "years." This means that he lives for 311,040,000,000,000 human years.

A thousand days of Brahma is equivalent to a Ghatika of Vishnu. Vishnu lives for a hundred of his own years, which will therefore consist of 9,331,200,000,000,000,000 human years. It will appear from this that several Brahmas come and go in the lifetime of one Vishnu.

Twelve lakhs of Vishnu's Ghatikas make, only a half Ghatika of Rudra. And it is said that Rudra lives for a hundred of his own years, which calculated in term of our years, will consist of 22,394,880,000,000,000,000,000 years. Several Vishnus rule in the life-time of Rudra.

Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are not like ordinary devatas. They do not die like ordinary mortal beings, but after they have their day, they merge into the Supreme. These three are the last and final stages in the evolution of devas.

A brahmanda world-system lasts for the life of Rudra. At the end of the life of Rudra, the brahmanda (solar system) is destroyed. Such destruction is called Mahapralaya.

There are yet other kinds of pralaya. Brahma is said to create by day and sleep at night. A pralaya occurs when Brahma sleeps. Similarly pralayas occur at Vishnu's and also at Rudra's nights.

A Mahapralaya is the total and complete destruction of one brahmanda. The pralayas that occur at the night of Brahma and of Vishnu are partial destructions. Such pralayas are called naimittic (occasional—not permanent) pralayas.

At Brahma's night, three upper and seven lower bhuvanas or lokas out of fourteen, are destroyed. When Vishnu sleeps, four upper worlds (eleven in all) are destroyed, and when Rudra sleeps, five upper worlds (twelve in all) are annihilated. When Rudra merges into Brahman, all the seven upper worlds, that is to say, all the fourteen worlds—in fact, the whole brahmanda—melt into the Supreme One.

The rishis have in this way calculated a portion of eternal time with respect to a single brahmanda. Only persons possessing the far-reaching vision of yoga could make these calculations, which stagger all conception, and apprehension by the ordinary human mind.

## Space

Space is also, like Time, without beginning and without end. Who can imagine the limits of space? Who knows how far the ten directions extend? Philosophical arguments also tend to show that these have no end. Vedic science maintains that it is as impossible to count the jivas, as the myriads of brahmandas around this little world of ours. But our revered rishis consider a small portion of space, that of one brahmanda, by limiting it by rashis (consisting of other solar systems immediately surrounding this solar system of ours.) Just as they put limits to time of one brahmanda by the life of a Rudra.

Each world system, consisting of its suns, moons, stars, planets, etc., is

maintained in its position by the harmony of the forces of attraction and repulsion. And this revolving “wheel” of a world system is called the pitha of the brahmamda. Similarly, the circular (actually elliptical) path on which our earth travels is its pitha. The rishis of old perceived that the forces of attraction and repulsion of the “wheel” have a certain influence on human beings, and they have revealed to the world some wonderful truths concerning the same which is contained in astronomy and astrology. This mysterious influence which governs all human beings inhabiting the same planet, links them together in kinship. This is one of the reasons why our rishis regarded “the whole world as relations.” They advise us not only to “worship” our birthplace and our own country, but the whole earth. This is the Hindu conception of “patriotism.”

## Creation

The Hindu idea of creation may be briefly considered in three parts, namely:

- (1) The creation of the pinda or the jiva (the individual being).

The pinda is of three kinds:

- (a) The sahaja pinda, or the jivas of the first four stages of evolution.
- (b) The human pinda; and
- (c) The pinda of the devatas.

Our shastras say that pindas are found everywhere, whether on the earth and in other lokas. They are in the five elements, and also in the sun, moon, stars, etc. Modern scientific men have come to recognize this truth to some extent.

- (2) The creation of a brahmamda, or a solar-world system.

(3) The unbroken, continuous stream-chain of creation, without beginning and without end.

The above are respectively called (according to the Daivi Mimamsa Darshana):

- (1) Adhibhuta creation,
- (2) Adhidaiva creation, and
- (3) Adhyatma creation.

Of these, the first two have been held to have their beginning and end, while the third is eternal.

How a jivatma, encased in the five sheaths comes into being by the tying of the knot of consciousness and matter which takes place by virtue of the sahaja karma, and how again by the force of the same karma, he is finally absorbed in the Supreme One, has been explained in the section on “The Law of Karma.” By the study of that law, it will be evident that the jiva is freed from the operation of the law of karma, thus attaining liberation, when he ceases to do jaiva karma, and lets himself be guided by sahaja karma. This is the main teaching of the Bhagavad Gita on karma.

The creation of the jiva is explained in the Hindu scriptures in this way: It has been said that prakriti has three gunas or principles of creation—sattwa, rajas and tamas. Now, when prakriti begins to vibrate, the jivatma (conscious jiva) is tied to the *garbha* (womb—unconscious matter on the tamas side of prakriti). By this “tying” is born the pinda or jiva, first as a plant. The plant-jiva has only one sheath (kosha)

developed, and man, the fully developed jiva, all the five.

The jiva marches onwards towards perfection, going through twenty lakhs [one million] of plant life, eleven [1,100,000, lakhs of germ life, nineteen lakhs [1,900,000] of egg-born life, thirty-four lakhs [3,400,000] of womb-born life, until it reaches the stage of man. As a man, the jiva passes through two lakhs [200,000] of barbarian life, and then comes to the stage of civilized man.

The evolution of the jiva in the first four stages is even, smooth, and unchecked by any hindrances and adverse forces. There are certain devatas (gods) presiding over jivas of each stage, called “adhidaivas,” who guide and take the jivas from one yoni [womb or birth] to another. The jiva becomes fully developed when he comes to the state of man. There is a class of devatas, called pitris, who help men in their evolution. Those men only who are much advanced in their evolution are helped by the pitris.

These pitris guide and help men, barbarians in the beginning, to come within the pale of civilized men. It is at this stage that they become eligible for caste (varna) and ashram, which has been dealt with more fully in the chapter on the varna and ashrama system. The human pinda now attains the zenith of his evolution in this mortal world.

This is an envied state. For in this state the jiva obtains the fullest scope for doing karma; may rise to the position of deva by virtue of his own karma; and may work out his own salvation. The varnashram, and the sixteen samskaras are the means to help man to conquer karma and go outside the operation of the law of karma. When man goes outside jaiva karma, he attains freedom, which is the goal of the jiva. This is called in the shastras “atyantika pralaya” (absolute merging) of the jiva. This is possible only in the human stage of the jiva, and in no other.

Amongst the three kinds of creations, adhidaiva creation is that which is connected with the first creation of the brahmanda. And the creation of the pinda is the adhibhuta creation. Just as the pitris and the devas are at the root of adhibhuta creation, so Mulaprakriti and Paramapurusha are at the root of the creation of the brahmanda. The brahmanda comes into being from the Paramapurusha and His Shakti in the form of Mulaprakriti. The Paramapurusha is merely a spectator. It is the Mulaprakriti endowed with the three gunas that transforms Herself into all created things by virtue of Her principle of rajas. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, the presiding deities of creation, preservation and destruction respectively, have arisen with the help of the three principles of rajas, sattwa and tamas.

Creation—given in the Sankhya system: From Mulaprakriti is evolved Mahat (universal intelligence), Ahankara (Egoism), five subtle particles of matter called Tanmatras, Manas (Mind), the five senses of action, the five senses of perception, and the five great Bhutas (Mahabhutas). The subtle and invisible five Bhutas themselves are, through the action of the three gunas on them, transformed into the other Tattwas.

The five “elements” come into existence in this way: Akasha (Ether) existed from eternity. From Akasha is evolved Vayu (Air); from Vayu, Agni (Heat and Light); from

Agni, Jala (Water); and from Jala, Prithivi (Earth). This is the order at the time of creation. The order is reversed at Pralaya: that is to say, the earth first melts, and is converted into water; water into heat; heat into air; and air into Akasha. And then Akasha merges into the Mulaprakriti.

The three gunas are found in every existent thing. In the beginning of the world, Mahat is created out of the total sattwic portion of the five elements; Ahankara, (Egoism), from the total tamasa portion; and the Manas (Mind) from the rajasic portion. Again, the organ of hearing is made up of the sattwic portion of Akasha; the organ of touch from the sattwic portion of Vayu; the organ of vision from the sattwic portion of Agni; the sense organ of taste from the sattwic portion of water; and the organ of smelling from the sattwic portion of earth. Similarly, the organ of speech is created out of the rajasic portion of Akasha; the hands out of the rajasic portion of Vayu; the feet out of the rajasic portion of fire; the organ of generation out of the rajasic portion of water; and the organ of excretion out of the rajasic portion of earth. Of all these indriyas, the organ of generation and that of taste are most powerful, both being senses of knowledge as well as action. The organ of generation is extremely sensitive to touch and is also an organ of action. In the same way, the tongue is an organ of taste, as well as of speech.

The five gross bhutas as commonly seen in the world are formed in the following way: A gross bhuta takes a half portion from one of the five Mahabhutas, and an eighth portion from each of the other four Mahabhutas. The world with all things that we find around us, consists of the combination of the five gross bhutas. Brahma with the help of his ichha (will), creates, out of the twenty-four tattwas mentioned above, this beautiful universe with its sun, moon, stars, planets and so forth; and all jivas (sahaja pindas) in the four lower stages of evolution, and human and heavenly beings, and the fourteen worlds. This is the adhidaiva creation. At pralaya, all this merges into the Ultimate Cause. Then the universe is again created out of the twenty-four tattwas, and again annihilated in due course of time. This cyclic repetition of creation goes on for ever. It should be noted here that all the brahmandas are not destroyed at one time. Any one brahmanda, as any single being, may be annihilated at a certain time, but the rest remain. Hence the chain of creation is continuous and without beginning or end. This endless chain of creation has been called in our shastras “adhyatma creation.”

The spectator of this eternal creation—the play of prakriti—is Ishwara. Creation, which is for the purpose of displaying (revealing) the purusha’s own nature, and which is pervaded by Ishwara, is called the Viratpurusha. Beyond this is the formless one, the Parabrahman.

# Chapter Fourteen

## Daivi Jagat

### The Occult World

Physical science has hitherto concerned itself with the purely materialistic view of nature. Latest researches are leading the savants into the subtler regions beyond so-called matter. But the tendency is yet to devote all energy to the materialistic side only. It will be discovered later on that this is an unfortunate waste of power; but the time is yet distant. The world is always conservative, and afraid of unexpected discoveries. Only a few earnest students pursue their study fearlessly and succeed in molding the world's aims and ways.

Free thought reached its highest stage in India, and the bold flight of the Indian mind, when it is properly understood, will convince the thinker that much of our energy at the present time is misdirected. The fact is while the modern world is busy with the analysis and synthesis of material objects to add to the happiness of mankind, India in the immemorial past discovered the true source of man's happiness, and established practical guidance soundly based on those discoveries.

While thus the modern world starts with the gross perceptible objects, the intuitive mind of India went beyond gross perceptions and was able to see worlds and planes and beings and constitutions, and destinies of animate as well as inanimate beings. It is our object to give in this section a general idea of the subtle worlds with which this material world of ours is intimately connected, and on which it depends for its progress and protection, the whole forming the subject of man's study.

Behind this material world then—and before it, downward and upward of it—are worlds situated in their own occult connection with one another and suited to the evolution of each being in due conformity with a destined course, definitely perceivable by ordinary persons from the udbija or plant manifestation of life onward to humanity, and from humanity into higher and higher stages until the finality of all evolution is reached.

We have shown elsewhere that by a gradual higher and higher manifestation of life in matter, the human stage of life is reached through four grades: the udbija, the plant; the swedaja, the germ; the andaja, the egg-born; and the jarayuja, the sac-born (womb-born). The culmination of this last is man, the conscious spiritual being of the lowest grade. If we call the world, plane or stage of this self-conscious individual, the central one to start with, then in a sense upward from it are six more worlds, each representing a higher type of spirituality, making a total of seven. The human world is similarly connected with a lower series of worlds seven in number to the lowest stage. Thus the universe as known to and conceivable ordinarily by us, is a vast existence made up of fourteen worlds or planes. What is known as the mortal

world is but a part of a single stage in the series, though infinitely important regarding our human destiny. Modern science has gained a knowledge of the constitution of this world which is yet but imperfect when compared with the infinity in which the search of truth lies involved. The greatest geniuses have confessed that they are but gathering pebbles on the shore of the ocean of knowledge.

India starts from the subtle worlds and assigns to our gross world its proper position. The gross universe as perceivable by ordinary man is what we see around us, including the earth, the heavens, all other heavenly bodies, as far as our ideas about them can reach, about our solar system, of which we could take cognizance, our sthula prapancha (material world). It is lesser in size than a fourteenth part of the subtle universe with which it is in intimate connection. The fourteen worlds above-mentioned are usually called a brahmāṇḍa, and there is no end to the number of these brahmāṇḍas. Out of these fourteen lokas (worlds) seven of the worlds are called swargas, and the other seven patalas. [The names of the seven upper Lokas in order are Bhu, Bhuvā, Swah, Maha, Jana, Tapa and Satya. And the names of the seven lower worlds are: Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatala, Rasatala and Patala.]

The bhuvah loka is the first of the seven upper lokas, as already said; and the higher loka connected with it is called the pitriloka. The whole mrityuloka in the sthula brahmāṇḍa is again but a fourth part of an aggregate of four worlds—mrityu, (mortal world), preta, naraka and pitri—while itself it is less than a fourteenth of the whole brahmāṇḍa just mentioned. This four-fold existence belongs of course only to this, while other worlds above or below, have no such four-fold character.

Each brahmāṇḍa (solar system) has its own creative, preservative and destructive agencies: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. These three godheads are indestructible, though their number is infinite with the infinity of the brahmāṇḍas. The lower seven worlds are the abodes of asuras, and their capital is situated in Patala Loka, the lowest of all. The king of the asuras lives here. From his capital the king exercises control over all the seven asura (lower) worlds. Very strict enforcement of the law is needed to be practiced in these regions which is under the influence of tamas, because the beings inhabiting these parts are of lower spirituality than the devas. All kinds of misdeeds and mischiefs, abound in these, and the asura-rajya (the kingdom of the asuras, the seven lower worlds), consequently there always prevails a scene of havoc and crimes and corresponding severe chastisements also.

In man's habitation, the mrityuloka, the bhuloka, a better state of progress is reached, and karma can be freely performed by man to improve his lot. The human is here the king, and his social and moral progress takes place here. His further progress as a spiritual being is explained further on in the chapters on evolution, reincarnation and varnashama.

At the third world, swarloka—the third of the seven upper lokas from man's—lies the capital of Indra, the king of the devas. The first daiva world is man's (including pitri, preta and narakalokas), and as spirituality grows with each higher world, any kingly authority above man is needed up to swarloka, the third higher loka, only. Beyond these, the spirituality and wisdom of the inhabitants are so high as to require



no law for their government, just as in a well-refined society no such disciplinary or punitive measures are necessary, as are required to be put into practice in the government of barbarous, uncivilized classes. In the remaining four higher regions sattwa predominates. Indra is the king of the first three higher regions. His capital lies midway, and he has to control the first three worlds only, the human world also being under his general superintendence. Human kings govern their respective territories and Dharma-Raja-Yama-governs the other three sections of the bhuloka: pretaloka, narakaloka and pitriloka.

The asuras inhabit the seven patalas, the devas inhabit the seven swargas, and there are infinite gradations of both. Practically speaking, man's world is the bhuloka, and man is connected with all its four sub-worlds (the mrityuloka, the pretaloka, the pitriloka, and the narakaloka). The controlling king of these is Yama, whose authority is direct in the pretaloka and the narakaloka, and indirect in the pitriloka and the mrityuloka—our mortal world.

All the fourteen worlds have certain destinies. As with man, so with Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, there is a succession of days and nights. During Brahma's day or waking condition all creation thrives. When Brahma's night comes, or in other words, when Brahma goes to sleep, the whole of the bhuloka together with the two upper worlds, and the seven (lower) asura worlds go into unmanifestation. Then comes the period of Vishnu's sleep, and the fourth upper world becomes unmanifest. Then during Rudra's sleep, the fifth upper world becomes unmanifest. The upper sixth and the seventh world are so high that they do not undergo any change until the resolution of the whole brahmada (solar system) into unmanifestation takes place.

These two highest worlds are the region where the highest representatives of saguna upasana (worship) and of jnana (knowledge) live, and where the liberations called samipya, salokya and sarupya but not sayujya are realized. The higher devas, the mahatmas and higher rishis live in these highest worlds.

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are eternal. They never fall lower. They are Iswaras, not jivas. There is no death for them as there is for the jivas. They are absorbed into the Supreme on the disappearance of the whole brahmada, over which they preside.

The devatas are of three kinds: devas, rishis and pitris. There are numerous sub-classes among them, and varna and ashrama dharma also prevails in their midst.

The devas are nitya (eternal) and naimittica (temporary). Indra, Yama, the eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Adityas, Varuna, Agni, etc., are nitya, as occupants of the kingly offices. The individual occupants are liable to change, but the offices are permanent like what are called in law corporations sole. The naimittica devas are connected with or preside over, certain parts of the creation, namely, a locality, a river, a forest, a pitha—any single repository of power or beauty, etc. These naimittica devas appear with the objects they preside over, and disappear with them.

We now come to the destiny of man which immediately concerns us in the system under consideration. When man is fully developed, he becomes fit to advance himself to higher spirituality. The devas and the pitris and the rishis come to the help of man

in his upward course in various ways. The human king is an incarnation of the devata principle, partaking of the nature of Indra, Yama, etc., who are kings in the swarga and preta and pitri worlds. The rishis and devas incarnate themselves for the good and the spiritual advancement, of humanity from time to time. The pitris provide a father when a highly developed soul is needed to be born among men.

The main question in connection with spirituality is that of death and after. In the case of the ordinary man as evolved in his first human stage, death takes him to the pretaloka, the world of ghosts. Here there is little of conscious responsible bhoga—it is like the case of insane persons in the world who move about but are not responsive to the situation of enjoyment or suffering in which they find themselves. So it is with innocent pretas generally. Persons in the lower stages of civilization always go to the pretaloka after death. At the appointed period men in the first stage return to our mortal world—mrityuloka. This alternate birth and death goes on until certain positive karma gives a particular shape to the future existence.

The sthula sharira and the mrityuloka are conditions of bhoga, and the jiva is the bhokta. It is in the sukshma sharira that rebirth comes into play. The sthula sharira dies in the ordinary course. But the sukshma sharira survives and helps rebirth. Besides being a bhokta, man in this world is a karta (doer) also, and this active side of his existence has everything to do with his future development.

In the relation he can keep with the three kinds of karma—the sahaja, the aisha and the jaiva, lies his destiny, (as explained in the section on karma) and it is thus almost wholly in his hand. This is a supreme advantage, it will be remembered, accruing to man in his human stage in life-evolution. If he follows his individual karma which may be good or bad as determined by the shastras, the consequence will be correspondingly good or bad; the latter leads to his fall back into the lower stages of life, the former contributes to his spiritual advancement. The jaiva karma is capable of taking the jiva to the highest stage—the seventh higher world—if he performs the karma in conformity with the shastras, conquering at the same time the recurrence of alternate birth and death. If he follows the aisha karma, he grows in power, gradually reaching the highest sources of power—the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva)—and ultimately becomes one with them. If he follows the sahaja karma, he enjoys the happiest and most useful and most powerful of all conditions, becoming a jivanmukta in life, and a mukta after death.

Short of this high goal, conscious karma of either of the two sorts (jaiva and aisha), or both may be practiced. In this connection the practice of yoga plays a vital part. Every human being doing any responsible karma is a practicer of yoga in some form or other. The ordinary performer of kamya, or nitya, or naimittic karma is unconsciously doing it under yogic conditions. The yogi is conscious of what he is doing, and can achieve positive progress, both his own as well as that of others. For example, the karma yogi at the shraddha ceremony is able to raise his consciousness to the pitriloka, and thus help the offering to reach the souls of the pitris invoked at the shraddha in whichever world the souls might be at the time. These facts are known to the jnana yogi by virtue of the knowledge he possesses of the five sheaths

around the conscious soul. The five sheaths pervade all worlds—of the devas and also of the asuras. The yogi of the higher class has the power to raise his consciousness into those regions. He can communicate with the devas and in fact in proportion to his power can raise his prana, manas and buddhi to any of the fourteen worlds.

The sthula sharira is known to a great extent to modern physiologists. But life is yet a mystery to them. The yogis alone have true knowledge of it. They command this knowledge on account of their knowledge of the koshas—the five sheaths. At the performance of shraddha, the ordinary performer mechanically raises his shakti to the superior worlds, while a yogi does this consciously, reaching the worlds and souls concerned and gratifying them with offerings.

The path of jnana includes this knowledge, but is a more independent means of the growth of spirituality. The seven darshanas are intended to help the soul on from plane to plane, or world to world in the seven-fold daiva spheres as contrasted with the lower seven-fold asura spheres.

To explain the philosophy of karma in connection with the occult world in a more lucid way, it is clearly explained in Hindu shastra that in karma there is a three-fold destiny. The first involves the two paths called shukla gati [light path], and krishna gati [dark path]. The krishna gati produces repeated births and deaths, while the other gati leads to mukti without any interruption, and takes a man to the seventh highest loka according to the Bhagavad Gita. The second leads to the four muktis (salokya, samipya, sarupya and sayuja), but on the saguna sakama side, raising man to higher and higher power till at last he becomes one of the Trimurtis—the Triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The third, the last and the best, is what leads to jivanmukti. The pure jaiva karma is one of a militant character, a work of heroic struggle in which one has to perform the shuddha (pure) karma, and avoid the ashuddha (impure) karma. By the performance of the shuddha karma, man can reach the seventh world in the end, reaching the dignity of mahatmas and obtaining mukti directly. This is called the shukla (light) gati in the Bhagavad Gita. The other gati is the krishna (dark) gati. It has been said that in his primary human condition, man alternately becomes preta and man, by death and rebirth. Then by progress in karma (right action), he comes into connection with the pitriloka and naraka. For man in this condition, the pitriloka is the swarga—the place of happiness; while naraka is the place of suffering, both involving conscious bhoga. Again, the pretaloka is the place for bhoga, and the mortal world is the place for karma. The alternate recurrence, without further progress, from mrityuloka to pretaloka, then naraka, preta and mrityulokas, then pitri, pretalokas and mrityuloka according to the nature of the karma is the krishna gati.

The second case is the dedication of the jaiva karma to the aisha karma. By the performance of sacrifices winning the favor of the devatas and rising to higher and higher powers with the desire of ruling, the jiva wins the positions of the devas themselves, gradually realizing salokya, samipya, sarupya and sayujya muktis, the last being selfless absorption into the object of devotion. The ideal of this karma is to become one of the Trimurtis (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva). But the sayujya of the

nirguna character must be distinguished from this. Here there is consciousness of Self and power as realized in the supreme deity, subject and object being distinct; while in the nirguna sayujya the condition is not one of subject and object, but Self, and one only without a second.

The third which is the main philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita is the dedication of the jaiva karma to the sahaja karma, without having any thoughts of self (nishkama karma). All action is understood not as being done by the individual, but only as a part and parcel of the universal karma treated with unconcern by the spirit, even, when the body and the senses are acting; this being understood as the performance of the prakriti and not of the jiva. This is the most applauded condition of jivanmukti easy for the right-minded man and superior to the other two above-mentioned sorts of liberation. The body in the case of the jivanmukta acts under the power of the prarabdha karma, and there is final mukti at death. Thus all the worlds are governed by the law of karma. This mortal world of ours is regarded by the Hindus as gross, material. That which regulates the workings of this mortal world is the subtle world, inhabited by devas and asuras. In the occult world the devas stand for what is good and the asuras for what is bad. Consequently we find good and bad propensities in the human world. Sometimes there is a struggle in the occult world between the devas and the asuras, which is reflected in the mortal world. This conflict of the devas and asuras has been described in some of our Puranas as in the Saptasati Gita (Sri Devi Mahatmyam or Durgasaptashati).

As with the world at large, so with the individual. There is a constant struggle between the devas and the asuras, the good and the evil, in the human heart; and there is a correspondence of influences in the pinda, and in the brahmada.

# Chapter Fifteen

## Abhivyakti and Janmantara

### Evolution and Reincarnation

Evolutionists know that man is a development from previous life. The Indian idea of evolution extends the theory both before and after the ordinarily recognized life. The first manifest life is recognized in the vegetable stage. Plant life is a common expression and consciousness is being posited for it in the most recent experiments on the subject; that life is discovered to be as interesting as that of any other being of sense and consciousness. From the most primary stage of plant life, ferns or grasses or other forms, yet earlier, the most developed and varied structures have developed, such as the cocoa-palm to the mighty oak or the ever-branching banyan. But all fall within the vegetable kingdom.

These are recognized in the Indian philosophy as the udbhijya—the sprouting stage of life-consciousness. The first animal life according to the earlier conclusion of zoology is reptile life. It will be easily seen that this stage is a later one. The idea of the protoplasm now established in zoology shows the long chain in the evolution of life. Hindus do not stop at protoplasm and man. They go behind protoplasm and after the state of man. The Indian idea has based its enquiry on the first form assumed by the new evolute in nature's changing stage. As sprouting is noted as the general characteristic in the first stage of plant life, so the vapor-born (germ) swedaja is taken as the next stage; all minute germ life belongs to this class; the idea of the baccilli, germs of disease, occurred to ancient India for long back, as a necessary stage before the idea of the more positively manifest life could develop. At the next stage is recognized another division—andaja, the egg-born life. It will be contended that the embryonic or egg-condition is common to all life whatever. But it should be remembered that these divisions into stages of evolution are only conventional just as they are in all enquiry of such subjects. For example in the analysis of the white ray of light the vibgyor (seven colors: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange red) are not distinct compartments, but one developing infinitesimally their shades into another. Yet for convenience the seven colors are admitted as separate facts. Differences merge into unity when gradual growth from one type of being into another is admitted to be a perpetual fact. The anatomy in the case of the quadruped is found to be but the further development of the anatomy of the feathered biped and this can be traced back until we go back into the structure where animal life and plant life are hardly distinguishable, where the difficulty of defining animal life becomes patent but for this very reason that there is an underlying unity of structure in all stages of sthula sharira waiting only for opportunities of further manifestation.

The egg-born stage is noted to where the egg-condition in animal propagation

becomes distinctly noticeable. In the further evolution of the animal the egg-born stage continues up to mammal life. In the succeeding stage, the egg-shell loses its strength and becomes a bare, thin watery bag containing the embryo, which, when full-grown, is to leave the maternal womb and bursts the bag almost simultaneously. The distinguishing feature between the two stages being that while in the one case, the egg stands separate from and develops growth apart from the maternal womb, there is no such waiting required at this last stage; the uteric bag covering the fully developed mammal is called jarayu and this fourth class is therefore named jarayuja. The culmination of the jarayuja stage is man. Man is then to be taken as a distinct stage of development of animal life. This fifth stage is considered a fully developed condition in evolution.

There are stages of evolution after this culmination which Western science has not yet rightly understood and which it will not understand until it assimilates Indian thought on the subject and discovers the nature of the next field of enquiry. The spontaneous operation of the law of nature which we may express by the Sanskrit term swabhavica or sahaja karma develops the growth of life from the udbhijya to the highest form of the jarayuja stage: Man. Man thus is a naturally evolved stage in the spontaneous course of nature. But when the stage of man is reached an extraordinary phenomenon is developed and the trend of nature's work itself meets with a new phase of activity. Man as a reflecting animal becomes self-conscious in a distinct manner and develops free will which was not the characteristic at any previous animal stage in the line and the onward march of evolution. The very advantage of free will, the boon as it were for furthering his right and safe and glorious evolution towards the highest goal, acts as an obstruction or hindrance in his course; and with the animal instincts and passions and propensities predominant in his nature, he exercises that free will not in harmony and consonance with nature, but against it, so as to serve his individual purposes that are no longer suggested by nature, but invented by himself only to lower his aptitude for progress. He suffers in consequence and the goal and object of nature regarding his advance are frustrated.

If he had left himself to the motherly care of nature that nurtured him from the earliest udbhijya condition of life to the previous stage, he could have smoothly and straightway gone on to the very goal that nature has in view, giving him perfect freedom (and) absolute Self-realization. But instead of that smooth onward march, man with the animal instincts yet violently aggressive retarded his upward evolution and falling back into animality created for himself the lowest round of recurring life and death, undergoing a repeated struggle in the onward march from repeatedly incurred back stages of his animal evolution.

We will now try to show of what man as an individual being is constituted. At the very outset we are easily impressed by the fact that man's body is made out of the food that he eats, just as in the case of all the previous four stages of life-evolution—the plant, the germ, the egg-born, and the sac-born. (It has been stated in the chapter on Time, Space and Creation through how many lakhs of yonis [wombs] the jiva passes.) But there is a subtler combination of elements entering into evolving life at

each of these four stages. In the first or udbhijya stages the food element consisting of gross substances predominates; in the next, the swedaja stage, life manifests itself more emphatically as not so earthbound as in the first plant stage. The prana (vital-airs) play an important part in this and the food element is only a foundation as it were of a growing upper structure. At the next stage, the egg-born life, the mind force or mentality develops itself subordinating the previous two constituents. In this fourth or jarayuja stage the expanding mental faculties of intelligence, imagination etc., unfold themselves as a culmination of the stage in the fully developed man. In this fifth stage the main powerful constituent feature of life is that of ananda, which we may explain as due to a sense of the soul's independence not as actual realization but the mere idea.

Thus we have four distinct stages of intellect, all abundantly illustrated in the animal and human worlds about us—all equally illustrated in the individual growth of the cosmic conscious mind and all four existing together in that mind as the first three exist together in the ordinary human mind. These four stages are:

1. The perceptual mind—the mind made up of percepts or sense impressions;
2. The mind made up of these and receipts—the so-called receptual mind, or in other words the mind of simple consciousness;
3. We have the mind made up of percepts, receipts and concepts—called sometimes the conceptual mind, or otherwise the self-conscious mind—the mind of self consciousness; and
4. Last, we have the intuitional mind—the mind whose highest element is not a receipt or a concept, but an intuition. This is the mind in which sensation, simple consciousness, and self-consciousness are supplemented as crowned with cosmic consciousness.

English words do not fully express what is meant in the description just given. We will therefore use the Sanskrit terminology which is not only clearly expressive but easily intelligible as well.

In the vegetable stage the sheath of gross food constituents, the annamaya kosha, is all-powerful; in the vapor-born stage the pranamaya kosha, the sheath of vital-airs, grows superior to the gross; in the third, the egg-born stage, the manomaya kosha or the mind factor is predominant over the other two. In the sac-born or uteric stage the intelligence or the vijnanamaya kosha rises to superiority. And in the human animal, the anandamaya kosha or the factor of joy impulse is all-powerful.

His evolution during the earlier stages of his human life being completed by degrees, man is able to establish a conscious connection with the world of higher beings than himself. The devatas and asuras who also have a gradation among them, possess higher physical and superphysical powers than man. Man becomes intimately connected with them in proportion to his own advance, until in the ultimate stage he enjoys all the bliss that may be desired by him and that is intended by nature for him. He enjoys perfect advancement in the happiness in this world and the highest bliss in the form of Self-realization from which there is no return to this painful existence.

The first manifestation of phenomenal life is philosophically explained as the

knotting together of the conscious chit with the unconscious jada. The untying of this knot is the necessary condition of the final beatitude. An essential condition of realizing this desirable end is that man should yield himself up entirely into the hands of mother nature. The man—to receive the exalted endowment of which there is her question, must himself do something, must place himself (perhaps not intentionally or consciously) in the right mental attitude. What this is has been pointed out already many times both indirectly and directly, and may be once again indicated in the words of an undoubtedly inspired writer. (It is the deity or cosmic sense that speaks:) “Hear again my highest teaching, most secret of all, because you are dearly loved by me; therefore I shall tell you what is [for your] good. 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; then I shall free (liberate) you from all evils (sins; demerits), do not grieve” (Bhagavad Gita 18:64-66, cited in Bucke’s *Cosmic Consciousness*, p. 314). And with a free will owned by him and the lower passions yet forceful, it is certainly not an easy task, no light work to withdraw from those forces and take the path of spontaneous evolution. Man interferes and in his ignorance of what he is about, he interferes willfully and suffers a fall where he could by quiet yielding to nature’s motherly prompting have definitely advanced.

The law of karma must be noticed in this connection. Nature’s spontaneous karma works only for the advancement of all individual beings. It meets with a hindrance in ignorant, self-willed man and he himself has to be the sufferer for that. He falls into bondage in proportion to the interference he makes for enjoying the gross pleasures of life. His individual karma ought, if he is rightly guided, to run on in harmony with nature’s karma and then his pure progress is accelerated; the contrary is the case when he acts contrariwise.

The orderly advancement is certain, safe and uninterfered with in all the four earlier stages. “The whole history of man as well as that of the organic world is simply the history of the evolution of new faculties one after the other.... In the self-conscious human being as we know him today, we have the psychic germ of not one higher race only, but of several” (*Cosmic Consciousness*, p. 308). When man is fully developed and acts independently by virtue of his free will, his conduct involves a question of life and death for him. While nature in her spontaneous course leads him on to mukti, he with his counter-acting, robs himself of his own happy prospect and is an ever-standing spectacle of pity as we daily see him in this mortal world.

A later part of this chapter treating of varnashram dharma will show the remedies provided against this perpetual contingency. From here onward the subject will be intelligible to those who already believe that there are stages of advancing life beyond its evolution as man; and further that the microcosmic man is a full and perfect type (symbolic imaging) of the macrocosm—the universe. The constituents physical and superphysical in both are the same; they emanate from one and the same source and after due stages of progress are re-absorbed into the same source. In Sanskrit terminology the pinda and the brahmanda are the same.



Now the brahmāṇḍa has been determined by Hindu philosophers to be fourteen-fold and from a central plane are conceived as sapta swargas and sapta patalas in opposite directions, the former being deemed as being above the plane, the latter below it. The human being has to bear all the responsibility, by the very fact of his evolution and satisfying his connection with these worlds. They are related to his being as helpful in view of his progress or harmful as leading him to fall.

It is in man's power to have direct knowledge of these worlds and having risen to the middle plane in nature's own course of his evolution, he has to administer to his progress upward by subordinating his animal instincts and developing the spiritual ones. He succeeds in developing the inner sight and is able to enjoy a vision of all in proportion to his progress. The progress is a matter of man's achievement. Nature is indeed furthering his higher evolution, just as she has been doing through the earlier four stages of udbhidjya, swedaja, andaja and jarayuja. But nature further blesses him with a power at the very stage of his human evolution. It is a power and as such it depends on its master and user to obtain good from its use or reap evil from its abuse. The free will that comes to man, the self-consciousness, the reflecting power, is that power. And as already said, it is on his willingness to use this power rightly that he will help the course of evolution started by nature. His connection with the other worlds is the vital point in the case.

Uncivilized man in evolution is subject to life and death and rebirth and redeath in his own sphere until his free will improves his lot. In the previous four stages of evolution, the animal perfection came to man without any hindrance to his progress from an inferior to a higher type of life. Nature then was all-powerful and her task was to lead the individual onward to the human stage until free will was developed. But at this stage the force of nature although helpful to the full extent, gives up mastery and the reins of power into the hands of the properly developed individual soul. He understands what is right for him and what is wrong; where the animal is predominant in him and where he should rise superior as man. Until the judgment resulting from this knowledge bears on his conduct, he is subject to the cycle of birth and rebirth, death and redeath. Death takes the soul to the land of the ghosts called the pretaloka which he inhabits until another body for rebirth is developed, but there is no progress but only the alternate ingress and egress into preta forms and human forms. He is not sent back into the animal stages again unless his will corrupts him and retards his evolution. For it is equally possible in that case that he will fall into a backward stage of life and undergo all the evils of it.

In the earliest uncivilized condition the natural man as we may call him does not harm his own interest and remains passive. He experiences the preta life after death. Then, if by positive effort of will, he improves his lot, his next higher experience is in connection with the pitriloka, while persisting in a degrading use of his will he will go down to the naraka world. In the pitriloka the soul of man attains fitness to rise to the devaloka (worlds of devas) from which there is little danger of falling back to the bhuloka (mortal world.) The first four—bhuloka, pretaloka, pitriloka and narakaloka—all are the lower set of worlds connected with the our bhuloka, from the devaloka the

higher worlds are enjoyed by a safer progress, the pitris help the soul to rise to the devaloka and he goes on receiving help in the way from the devas and rishis until he reaches the satyaloka, the seventh highest one which is also called jnanaloka.

To reach this final goal a three-fold purification is necessary—adhibhuta shuddhi, adhidaiva shuddhi and adhyatma shuddhi. The latter two proceed from karma, upasana and jnana with the help of the devas and of the rishis. Karma and upasana have been treated of in separate chapters—karma in Chapters Four and Twenty, and upasana in Chapters Five to Eleven. And jnana is the gradually rising realization of knowledge as developed in the darshanas which also are explained in due order in other chapters. The first, the adhibhuta shuddhi which depends by far on the disciplining of the body and control over external circumstances, is attained by means of the main factor of the special dharma of Hindus—the varnashram dharma which is dealt with in a separate chapter. The help of the pitris plays an important part in the progress of the soul in the stage in which the larger part of life has to be passed by man.

From the beginning of the knotting up of chit and jada as described in the section on the law of karma, up to the evolution of man at this stage, the progress is almost automatic, being the result of nature's own karma, the sahaja karma. This progress needs not be understood as reincarnation of the Self, which will be pointed out as an essential fact in the progress under jaiva karma next treated of. In this progress there is no responsible conscious karma on the part of the Self, but such karma as is helped on by the devatas for general advancement of the Self to a stage of ability to perform responsible karma which is called jaiva karma by the Karma Mimamsa Darshana. The four stages of prehuman progress comprehend 84 lakhs of yonis (wombs), each stage being a group-self under the care of a particular devata. In the succession of births in each of the four kingdoms, there is no delay in passing from one yoni to another. But when one whole kingdom is over, some time is taken by the devatas before the progress in the next kingdom commences. When all the five koshas are developed as in the earliest human stage, the human soul becomes fit for performing the jaiva karma, subjecting himself to responsibility for the results of his action, going under the name of papa (sin) and punya (holy merit). Here man is conscious of himself as an individual being, and this consciousness is so intense that in the beginning of his evolution in this primary human condition, he takes on the preta (ghost) body corresponding to his human personality undergoing a recurrence of preta and man, until his jaiva karma helps him to rise to higher stages of spirituality. This progress requires as many as two lakhs of yonis to pass through. After this he is able to evolve himself by the force of his own karma into the pitri and higher worlds, going higher and higher in proportion to his karma.

So complete is the conception and conviction of the Indian mind regarding the existence of rising to spiritual worlds already spoken of, that there is nothing like a question or doubt regarding reincarnation of the human Self in the Hindu mind. The philosophy of the Hindus starts with enunciating the futility of the doctrine of considering the body as the Self—the atheistic view.

In the natural course of evolution there is no fall backward except as a matter of retribution, as in the case of criminals, and the progress from the fallen condition will be to humanity and no intermediate lower stages. For example, Bharata was reborn as an antelope, and was immediately restored to humanity after the death of that body. [This is a reference to the ninth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavatam which tells of a King Bharata who was so attached to a pet deer that after his death he was reborn as a deer, though with completely human consciousness. *Editor's note.*]

Man is equally apt to rise or fall to any one of the fourteen worlds, the seven lower ones, or the seven higher ones. He may be undergoing the revolution of the cycle of birth and death, involving appearance in the worlds of preta, pitri, narak etc. And he may as well become an asura or devata through this same human stage according to the nature of his karma.

# Chapter Sixteen

## Vedic Darshan

### Hindu Philosophy

We have already dealt with the seven upper planes of knowledge in another chapter and we have also shown in it that each of the seven systems of Hindu philosophy is connected with a plane of knowledge. As the seven planes of knowledge are complete and comprehensive, so are the seven systems of philosophy; and they include all schools of Hindu philosophy. The darshanas of the Shaiva sect such as Pashupata Darshana, and Shaiva Darshana etc., and the darshanas of the Shaktas, such as several Tantric systems of philosophy, and also the systems of the Vaishnava sect, consisting of the doctrine of Dualism (Dvaita), and Qualified Dualism (Vishishtadvaita), and so on are all included in one or other of the aforesaid seven systems of Hindu Philosophy.

We can divide these seven systems into three groups (prasthanas). The first group is called Padartha-Vada, the second is Sankhya-Pravachana, and the third is the Mimamsa.

The Seven Systems of Philosophy are:

1. The Nyaya System.
2. The Vaisheshika System.
3. The Yoga System.
4. The Sankhya System.
5. The Karma Mimamsa, Systems.
  - (a) The first half by Bharadwaja; and
  - (b) The second half by Jaimini.
6. The Daivi Mimamsa System.
7. The Brahma Mimamsa or the Vedanta System.

Thus we find that the division of philosophy into seven systems is a perfectly natural division. The first two are the Padartha-Vada group, the third and the fourth belong to the Sankhya group; and the last three to the Mimamsa group of Philosophy.

#### **The aim of the Seven Darshanas**

All the seven systems lead to the one goal of wisdom: seeing the Self as real, and everything else as unreal. All the schools start with the enquiry: What is the way to attain perfect beatitude, moksha, or salvation? They all assert that the deliverance from the bond of rebirths and from pain, here and hereafter, is secured only by knowledge. The aim of all these philosophies is to point out what this knowledge is.

There is as a fact no antagonism in the seven systems. They are best understood by being viewed in relation to each other. They form in their entirety one great

scheme of philosophic truth, leading to one goal. All the systems have but one object in view: to rescue men from miseries and sufferings and rebirths. The way of rescue is one and the same, the removal of ignorance, or false knowledge, which takes the unreal to be real, such ignorance being the prime cause of bondage and misery. When such ignorance is removed by true knowledge, there is moksha.

## I. Nyaya Philosophy

The founder of this system of philosophy was Goutama. It aims to lead to the goal with the help of logical reasoning as the main thing. Goutama in his Nyaya system sets out, like the founders of other systems, with the enquiry: What is the way to obtain nishreyasa (nihshreyas), perfect beatitude? And he then asserts that perfect knowledge or knowledge of truth is the only means. This knowledge embraces a variety of subjects but is chiefly directed to the true nature of the Self as distinct from the body. He who obtains this knowledge is freed from all pains and evils of life here and hereafter, and goes beyond all rebirths. In fact he attains nishreyasa–perfect beatitude and moksha–final liberation.

The pains to which the human life is subject are due to the Self's connection and union with matter, the material body, and its continued and frequent rebirths. These births are the results of the human mind's constant pravritti (activity), which produces karma. And karma again produces results, requiring rewards for meritorious deeds and punishments for evil acts.

This pravritti of the mind has sprung from the fault of dislike, or desire, or stupidity. The origin of these defects is traced to mithya jnana or wrong knowledge, or ignorance. The Nyaya intends to remove this ignorance concerning the Self and the universe by the true knowledge. This will destroy the faults of desire and dislike, and with that will pass away pravritti. Rebirths will then cease, and pain and misery will be entirely removed. The removal of all pains and the restoration of the Self to its original state of rest is nishreyasa, which is the summum bonum at which the Nyaya aims.

The nishreyasa is to be attained through knowledge, which means the conviction of the Self's eternal existence distinct from the body. Gotama enumerates sixteen topics to be studied which will help one to attain true knowledge. They are as follows:

1. Pramana, means of right knowledge.
2. Prameya, object of right knowledge.
3. Samshaya; doubt.
4. Prayojana, motive, purpose.
5. Drishtanta, illustration.
6. Siddhanta, proved truth.
7. Avayava, members, or syllogistic premisses.
8. Tarka, confutation.
9. Nirnaya, decision, ascertainment.
10. Vada, discussion for arriving at truth.

11. Jalpa, somehow to support one's own statement without regard to truth.
12. Vitanda, cavil; idle carping; a frivolous, perverse or fallacious argument or commentary; destructive criticism; destructive argument.
13. Hetwabhasa, semblance of reason; fallacious reasoning.
14. Chala, perversion, quibble.
15. Jati, futility.
16. Nigrahasthana, refutation, confutation, occasion for rebuke, vulnerable points.

The aim of Nyaya is to prove that which is proved. What then is to be proved? The Nyaya answers: The Self.

## II. Vaisheshika Philosophy

This system of philosophy which has Kanada for its founder also starts with the enquiry: What is the way to attain perfect beatitude (nishreyasa)? It asserts that deliverance (moksha) is only to be attained by the knowledge of truth. And the knowledge of truth comes by discussion of the agreement and disagreement of the six padarthas or categories.

These six padarthas, the objects of knowledge, are the following:

1. Dravya, substance, thing, object; the ingredients of anything.
2. Guna, quality.
3. Karma, action or motion.
4. Samanya, genus.
5. Vishesha, species.
6. Samavaya, intimate relation or combination.

To the above six categories, the commentators add a seventh, called abhava, non-existence, which has been included in the categories to bring out clearly the meaning of bhava or existence by showing the contrast between the two though Kanada has not expressly enumerated abhava as one of the categories, yet he deals with it. So the categories might be taken as seven.

Substance is the sole substratum. It is existent, non-eternal and possesses qualities and actions. It is the intimate cause of an aggregate effect or product.

Substance is divided into nine classes, viz:

1. Earth.
2. Water.
3. Energy.
4. Air.
5. Ether (Akasha).
6. Time.
7. Space.
8. Self (Atma).
9. Mind.

Kanada regards the Self as ubiquitous and infinite—it has the qualities of number and the like, which are possessed by space and time. Its existence is proved by the I-

ness (self-identity) and also from the fact that there is an agent who controls the senses, as a knife cuts. Without it, the senses would be useless, for they are instruments of an unseen ruler.

All material substances, according to Kanada, are primarily atoms, and secondarily aggregates of atoms. They are eternal in atoms, and transient in aggregates. Kanada thus explains the “existence” and “aggregation” of atoms.

Kanada dwells on the categories to the minutest point—so much so that perhaps it includes all that modern physical science says. In fact his system is a diagnosis of nature (matter)—of what we perceive by the senses. In Kanada’s opinion, therefore, the study of nature to the minutest point, to understand Her thoroughly, thus being able to see the difference of the Self with nature, is the way to final beatitude.

### III. The Yoga Philosophy

Patanjali the founder of this system says that God, Ishwara, the Supreme Ruler, is a Self or Spirit distinct from other souls, unaffected by the ills with which they are beset, unconcerned with good or bad deeds and their consequences, and with passing thoughts. In Him is the utmost omniscience. He is infinite and unlimited by time.

The Yoga system further says: objects capable of degrees reach their limit somewhere, as smallness in atoms, and magnitude in ether; so knowledge, which more or less is in all beings, must reach its extreme limit somewhere, and that somewhere cannot be anywhere else but in Ishwara.

Patanjali then points out the means by which pains can be avoided, rebirths prevented, and final beatitude attained. According to him, liberation means union with God—the complete merging into the Supreme One. This is Yoga.

The system of philosophy under discussion is rather a science than a philosophy. It deals only with the practical means by which complete union with Ishwara can be attained. It has left most of the philosophical side of its system to be dealt with by the Sankhya philosophy.

Patanjali has discussed his philosophy in four chapters. The first deals with samadhi or superconscious experience, the second, the means of its attainment, the third, the transcendent powers obtained by it, and the fourth, kaivalya or union with Ishwara.

How is this kaivalya to be attained by man? The Yoga philosophy replies: By samadhi. And what is this samadhi and how is it to be gained? This is the main question that Patanjali attempts to answer in his Yoga Sutras.

The Yoga philosophy starts with the resolve that pain, here and hereafter, must be prevented. The evil with which man has to contend lies, according to Patanjali, in the various mental states. How is this to be done? How is the thinking principle of the mind to be brought under complete control? How is the mind to be made perfectly calm, as this is the only way to attain samadhi or superconscious experience? Patanjali says: “Yoga is the hindering [nirodha] of the modifications of the thinking principle [vritti] of the mind.” Yoga is that state in which the mind is perfectly stilled—in which complete separation of the Self has taken place in regard to the body,

and therefore the mind's occupation is gone [removed or eliminated]. Yet the Self remains awhile invested with body and works, as the potter's wheel continues whirling for a time by the force of the impulse given to it previously. Therefore Yoga and its result—samadhi and kaivalya, can be attained even in this life.

The Yoga philosophy then goes on to describe the different steps by which kaivalya can be attained. They are eight in number, namely:

1. Yama, control of the senses.
2. Niyama, to acquire purification of the mental faculties.

These two prepare one for the practice of Yoga.

3. Asana, bodily postures that help meditation.
4. Pranayama, control of the prana through the control of the breaths.
5. Pratyahara, gathering the senses inwards.
6. Dharana, holding the mind to a certain point in the supersensual world.
7. Dhyana, the mind's remaining fixed in an unbroken current in God.
8. Samadhi—super-consciousness.

This great samadhi is the end of Yoga, this union of the human soul with the Supreme Self. This is kaivalya.

#### **IV. The Sankhya Philosophy**

This system of Philosophy has the great rishi Kapila for its founder. The Sankhya system avoids the discussion of the existence of God. It does not say that there is no God. It simply says that the existence of God will not be attempted to be proved by Sankhya. Sankhya is not an atheistic philosophy, as is erroneously supposed by many. It holds that God can be perceived and seen, but only by superconsciousness.

Sankhya tries to find the way by which man can be made happy here and hereafter and to point out the way by which he can attain moksha.

Complete and perpetual exemption from every sort of ill is the moksha which Sankhya proposes to attain by the acquisition of true and perfect knowledge.

True and perfect knowledge by which deliverance from all evils is attainable consists in rightly understanding and discriminating the twenty-five principles (tattwas).

The following are the twenty-five principles enumerated by the Sankhya philosophy:

1) Prakriti, mulaprakriti, or pradhana (nature, primordial matter in a subtle state).

2) Buddhi, or Mahat (consciousness, intelligence).

3. Ahamkara (egoism), self-consciousness.

4-8. Five Tanmatras (subtle particles).

9-19. Five jnanendriyas, five karmendriyas, and manas—five organs of sense, five organs of action, and the mind.

20-24. The five bhutas—five elements, viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether.

25. Purusha, (Atman, or Self.)

Prakriti or pradhana (nature) is the plastic origin, or the universal material cause,



of all things. It is eternal matter, an extremely rarified essence, out of which everything in the universe has been built up.

By the side of this eternal and infinite prakriti stands purusha or Atman (Self). The Self is neither produced nor productive. It is unchangeable and, immaterial.

The purusha is innumerable in number. It exists in multitudes from eternity. It exists along with prakriti. It is united to prakriti in order to contemplate Her and be abstracted from Her. By the union of purusha and prakriti takes place creation, consisting of the other principles.

All the changes, expansions, manifestations and developments of prakriti in creation are due to Her three inherent gunas, or principles of creation, namely, sattwa, rajas and tamas.

The first and highest is sattwa. It is alleviating, enlightening, attended with happiness, and virtue predominates in it. The second is rajas. It is active, and attended with misery. The third and the lowest is tamas. It is heavy and obstructive, attended with sorrow and dulness. These three gunas are not mere accidents, or qualities of prakriti, but are of Her essence and substance, and enter into Her composition.

Thus we find that prakriti and purusha exist from eternity in a mysterious union. Prakriti, on account of Her three gunas, is productive and produces this universe. The result of this mysterious union is the production of mahat or buddhi (understanding, intelligence, superconsciousness). It is the first creation of prakriti.

From buddhi proceeds ahamkara (egoism) which brings the perception of "I Am." From this ahamkara are produced the five principles, called tanmatras, which are five subtle particles or atoms. The five grosser elements are earth, water, fire, air and ether. From ahamkara are also produced eleven organs of sense and action: five indriyas—eyes, ears, etc., being those of knowledge, and five (hands, feet etc.) of action. The remaining eleventh sense is internal—an organ both of knowledge and action. This organ is termed manas or mind.

These eleven organs with ahamkara and buddhi are thirteen "instruments of knowledge." An external organ of knowledge brings in the sensation, the internal organ (mind) then examines it. Ahamkara appropriates the perception as being the perceiver's own; buddhi resolves, and an organ of action executes.

The desire of the purusha is fruition or liberation. For this purpose he is in the first place invested with a subtle body, formed only of all the above-mentioned principles, except the five grosser elements. This person or subtle body is called linga sharira or sukshma sharira. It is affected by sentiments, but incapable of enjoyment until invested with the grosser body, the sthula sharira.

For the purpose of fruition or enjoyment, the purusha clad in this subtle frame is invested with a grosser body composed of all the five gross elements. This grosser body is perishable.

Corporeal creation, consisting of souls invested with bodies, comprises many orders of beings.

In all this creation, the purusha experiences ills arising from decay and death,

evils and miseries. Thus it passes through innumerable reincarnations till it is finally liberated from its union with prakriti. How is this liberation to be attained, the liberation which is the salvation, the perfect beatitude by perfect knowledge of the five and twenty principles? This liberation naturally takes place at the end; for the purusha desists, because he has seen prakriti in all Her phases. And She too desists, for She has nothing more to show.

#### **V-a. Bharadwaja's Karma Mimamsa Philosophy**

This system deals mainly with the mysteries of action and the law of karma. It is divided into four chapters. The first deals with the following topics:

1. Dharma.
2. Divisions and sub-divisions of dharma.
3. The nature of God, His powers.
4. Dharma for men and for women.
5. Rules of good conduct.
6. Ashram dharma and caste dharma.
7. Chastity of women.
8. Karma as connected with papa and punya; and so on.

The second chapter deals with the seed of karma, and discusses how karma is the cause of inborn impulses and tendencies; the relation of karma to creation, which is said to be dependent on karma; the scientific explanation of caste and ashram systems; reincarnation of souls, and the sixteen Vedic samskaras, their philosophy, and how the purification of karma is attained by the purification of samskara, and so on.

The third chapter deals mainly with karma, its nature, its relation to inborn impulses and tendencies, and to the law of karma in general, the philosophy of reincarnation, the three kinds of principal karma, jaiva karma, aisha karma and sahaja karma (these have been explained at length in the chapter on the law of karma), and similar topics.

The fourth and the last chapter deals with moksha or liberation; how it can be attained by good and virtuous acts; what is renunciation; how to control nature; special aspects of karma, and other topics.

#### **V-b. Jaimini's Karma Mimamsa System**

This is rather a defence of the Vedic rites and rituals than a philosophy. Its whole scope is the ascertainment of dharma, dharma here signifying sacrifices, rites, rituals and other acts of religion ordained in the Vedas.

Both these two systems together, namely V-a and V-b, form one system, called the Mimamsa System, of which V-a is the first part, and V-b the second. The first part deals with the law of karma in general, the second deals with the Vedic system of karma-Vedic rites and ceremonies and sacrifices.

### **VI. Daivi Mimamsa Philosophy**

This system lays emphasis on the blissful character of the Supreme and holds that Brahman and Its Shakti, like fire and its burning quality, are identical; that creation proceeds from Shakti; and urges its followers to see God in His three aspects of Brahma, Ishwara and Virat. It holds that the Supreme Lord is love, and is of the nature of unutterable bliss. The aim of man ought to be to try to obtain that holy love and bliss and be immersed in it.

A man's love for his brother, or his sister, or his son or wife, his reverence for his superiors—all this is but the shadow of the great love which pervades everything. (This subject has been dealt with in the chapter on bhakti.)

How to acquire this holy love for God? Various methods are prescribed for the bhakta or the traveller on this path, some of which are: hearing His Name, uttering and singing His Name, reciting hymns in praise of Him, worshipping Him, meditating on Him in solitude, serving the country and fellow-beings with the thought that he is serving Him he loves, etc.

This is the first stage (called vaidhibhakti) of devotion to God, this is acquired by practice.

The second stage (called ragatmika bhakti) of the bhakta arrives when he establishes one of the following relationships with God, and loves Him as such.

A bhakta may regard himself either as God's servant, or as His friend, or as His son/daughter, or as His beloved.

When by continued practices a bhakta's feelings of devotion to God intensify, and rise to the highest pitch, he sees his object of love everywhere and in everything—in which state he is one with the Supreme Being. This is the third and last stage of the bhakta. This is called parabhakti.

The first chapter of this system of philosophy deals with the above considerations. The remaining chapters deal with devatas, rishis and pitris; the creation of the subtle worlds, and their influence on and relation to, this physical world; and how liberation is possible through bhakti.

Some of the topics discussed in this system of philosophy have been drawn upon to explain and illustrate the sections on "The Occult World" and "Worship."

## **VII. The Vedanta Philosophy**

This 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 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 life-breath 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 (yogurt), 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 worn out suit of clothes for a new one. "Worn-out garments are shed by the body: worn-out bodies are shed by the dweller within the body. New bodies are donned by the dweller, like garments" (Bhagavad Gita 2:22).]

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 Seventeen

## Varnashram Dharma

### The System of Castes and Stages of Life

### The Special Dharma of the Hindus

We have dealt with the growth of the human Self from the automatic condition to the self-conscious responsible man, on whom his progress in the future devolves as a responsible being. This progress is fully helped by the time-honored religious system of India, well-known under the Indian name of Varnashrama.

We will first inquire into the question as to how the Varna or Caste by birth is inevitable in evolution. The social and religious condition of every nation will show us with the slightest thought that castes and progressive stages of life from ignorance to wisdom, are common features among men prevailing silently in practice and not always clearly or emphatically defined by man. Nay, further, inter-marriage and inter-dining are equally exclusive in their character in such nations. This natural exclusiveness asserts itself when classes differ in status or power. In India this characteristic of society was fully recognized, and the principles of caste as an inevitable nature-made institution were formulated depending solely on the individual's aptitude for the performance of certain duties, depending on the body, on the mind, on the intellect and on the spirit of the man. The tendency of the whole race being to fit the body for work and the mind for thought and the spirit with the intellect for a certain final goal of life, the stages of advance towards, and the realization of, this goal were termed, in the same natural course of the needs of advancing life, the four ends of human life: kama (satisfaction of worldly longings), artha (material gain), dharma (righteousness) and moksha (liberation). The conduct of life was shaped accordingly by the masters of wisdom and power, and a thoroughly trustworthy code of laws assured the progress of the human soul towards the desired culmination.

With such a high ideal to be reached through human life, one can see how very vitally important the first appearance of man is in the course of evolution. Each human individual likewise comes into being fraught with all the encumbrances, ties and responsibilities from the humblest station in life to that of becoming the highest prophet and leader of mankind. The birth of man, then, in evolution is a most important fact that bears fully on the future of the individual, as also of his surroundings. And further, the birth of the civilized, self-controlled and spiritually-



mindful man is an event that puts the whole spiritual world astir. The perfection lies in the perfection of the sattwa principle in man; all the sattwic powers of the universe, therefore, offer their help where it is needed to assure the safety, purity and growth to the desired perfection of such a human being.

The thinkers of old appreciating the value of man on this ground and knowing from the Vedic teachings the best chances that could be given to him for his most desirable development at this stage, prescribed rites to be observed for the most prosperous evolution of each coming human Self. And how? From the very conception, indeed, the individual is counted as a member of the religious polity. This is, as a matter of fact, unintelligible to the non-Indian world, surpassing even their imagination as to what meaning it may have. A regular Samskara [see the second definition of Samskara in the Glossary], the first purificatory rite or still more strictly, the first spiritualizing rite, has to be performed by the future parents to ensure the safe, sound and proper conception in the mother's womb of the nation's expected new member. At this juncture what happens in all the planes of life with which the human soul is connected is thus described in the shastra:

It is a matter of common experience that powers other than human belonging to higher planes, such as the pitris and the devas, are attracted to certain select spots, or persons, or combination of certain mystic figures, or syllables, to which all is given the name of pitha. We may call it a mystical shrine. A holy water place, an image representing some devas, the sacrificial fire, man's own body, can be used as such pithas. With proper spiritual arrangements and mantras the devas come to be present at the pithas, and help human beings respecting their wants and wishes. Woman and man as wife and husband devoted to each other in perfect purity and chastity, uniting to procreate offspring, form in their union such a pitha, to which the pitris and devas are attracted with the benign desire to help the conception of a pure Self in the expected offspring. This pitha is formed in coition automatically for good or for evil, according to the condition, mental and physical, of the two.

A general fact about the agency of the pitris in governing the generation of beings may be noted here. The pitris govern the changes of the seasons, and their action in the case of human propagation is like a spontaneous act in the case even of wild, uncivilized tribes. This is so far as the gross body alone is concerned, but their agency is especially useful in the spiritual way only where the operation of varnashram dharma is an established fact. This spontaneous formation of a pitha is explained more fully in the tenth chapter. The soul (jiva) is endowed with the gross body, the sthula sharira, by the pitris, and the devas convey the jiva in the sukshma sharira to the pitha and help the jiva to settle in the mother's womb when the moment of conception comes. This is a purification of the seed imparted by the rite called the Garbhadhana (Giving of a Womb) Samskara.

It is in fact in proportion to the purity of the parents that a proper body with the high qualities will be developed with the help of the pitris and devas. In lesser purity the development from the original animal man is poor. Ugly, misshapen monstrosities, low characters with a fair exterior—incongruities like these are due to

heredity in this way. The character of the parents makes the pitha of a holy nature or unholy and the offspring is in consequence godly or ungodly and so on. This purification or spiritualization of the seed is a matter known and provided for only in India. Equalities in society may be apparently secured by the impartation of external qualifications but genius, purity and spirituality come only by the operation of heredity. Long inner purification through spiritual discipline and sadhana is necessary to the growth of spirituality in the Self and a series of births and deaths are gone through before an individual jiva develops a high spiritual character. But while this fact is deemed to be but accidental in other religions and philosophies, it has been determined and prearranged in the Indian religion as a scientific synthesis since ages past. The birth of the jiva from the lower to a higher caste is a necessity according to that synthesis. The birth of the highest spiritual type is an event of world-wide importance and the whole pitriloka and deva loka are active in helping the appearance into the world of a national spiritual hero or of a religious teacher.

But growths are gradual as much in the spiritual sphere as in the material. From savage condition man has to grow into the most civilized spiritual man, one who, according to ancient Indian usages, is a god on this earth. Four usual grades are recognized in this growth: Shudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Brahmin.

As shown above, when parents strive to be pure the offspring rises in spirituality and must in the long run through repeated births and deaths reach the stage of the highest varna. It is a spiritual function, not mechanical and worldly. You cannot turn a butcher of today into a brahmin tomorrow, nor a shepherd into a mighty ruler or administrator in one birth. The science of religion recognizes no accidents. Everything comes as regular cause and effect, and as effects follow causes duly, religious science takes hold of the causes and commands the appearance of the results. All mankind is to be led finally to moksha-kama, artha, dharma and moksha being the stage-goals for the whole of mankind. This is a natural arrangement growing out of the existing state of things, just as life grows through the four stages of udbija (seed-born), swedaja (moisture/heat-born), andaja (egg-born), and jarayuja (womb-born).

The perfected jarayuja, the human animal, has correspondingly to pass through four stages, which can be determined by the function each aspires to serve:

1. Kama, a function of the animal instinct, marks the shudra stage.
2. Artha, which contributes to the fulfillment of kama, at the same time governing it, is the characteristic of the vaishya stage.
3. Dharma, which implies the government of the Self over and above kama and artha, is the characteristic of the kshatriya stage, where spirituality first manifests itself emphatically.
4. Moksha, which is the perfection of spirituality, inducing the individual to attain it for oneself as well as to guide other Selves towards it, characterizes the Brahmin stage.

Santana Dharma knows no partiality, no national distinction or racial predilection, neither sexual prejudice of which we shall speak later on. She is the mother of all

creatures. In the life of man no mother could care more for her child than Santana Dharma does for every human being, male or female, and in a manner far superior to the ordinary mortal mother. This mother in fact receives her guidance from Santana Dharma and is able to rear a powerful Self in a fit body. Varna thus is as much an inevitable stage as any in the progress of evolution. They speak nonsense who condemn the caste system as a man-made inconvenience. Outward cosmopolitanism, nay universal Brahmoism [a nineteenth-century religious movement in India that opposed caste distinction—itsself now virtually extinct], is a misnomer and impossibility, as unthinkable as sunlight without the Sun.

The crux of the question of varna is whether a varna can be changed to a higher or lower and especially the higher varna, by human agency without the intervention of birth and death, and some such occult agency. We offer an emphatic “No” in reply to the question, and consider it a danger and drawback to the progress of man as a Self to amalgamate castes. It is a matter of common experience that hybrids resulting from the union of different species become barren, as for example, the mule never propagates its own species. The principle equally applies to mankind in the case of very widely different species of the race. Any possible propagation must result in the ultimate extinction of the artificial species.

Long heredity is a potent factor in the growth of the inner man and the inner working of the spirit. Varna therefore has been fixed by heredity and is a fact that comes into being by the help of higher agencies than man. Now to help the growth of each individual in each grade of society, four stages are prescribed in the individual’s single life.

The universal first assumption in Indian Philosophy is that all things consists of three aspects, or principles, or gunas: sattwa, rajas and tamas. These characterize not only the gross perceptible objects such as earth, water, air and fire, but the inner functions also, such as the mind, the feelings and the will. All these are sattwic, rajasic and tamasic, combining the three gunas in unequal proportions. The superiority or predominance of sattwa is a characteristic of the supremely spiritual jiva. The predominance of tamas is the characteristic of the earthly jiva. Between these stand two rising grades, the rajas-sattwa and rajas-tamas. These are the four classes of Shudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Brahmin. The actual life-work of these depends on their constitution.

Now it is true that in the respective classes there are exceptional people, very few, indeed, who rise superior to their fellows, or sink far below them. The spiritual growth that takes place under the direct help of the pitris is necessarily gradual, sudden leaps being almost impossible in nature, and even as unthinkable as a bee transforming into a horse or an elephant in the very next birth. There are exceptions of course, but, as already pointed out, exceptions should be considered only as exceptions, and the general character of the class is not affected thereby.

Sattwa implies governance of the will by the individual jiva, the killing out of all animal proclivities, attaining knowledge and inner light and independent absolute joy in Self-realization, the finality of which is moksha. The brahmin’s Self is the ideal in

the case, the perfected human Self that has the vision of the final everlasting bliss before him and out of sympathy with his fellows in bondage, that strives to show the path to them to attain freedom, before he himself finally merges into the universal Self, the abode of that beatitude. He leads other Selves on from the lowest human type through rising grades until the Shudra blossoms out after a long series of births and deaths into the flower of the highest caste.

“Thus we have four distinct stages of intellect all abundantly illustrated in the animal, all abundantly illustrated in the animal and human worlds about us—all equally illustrated in the individual growth of the Cosmic Conscious mind, and all four existing together in that mind as the first three exist together in the human mind—the mind made up of precepts or sense-impressions; second, the mind made up of these and receipts—the so-called receptual mind, or in other words, the mind of simple consciousness; third, we have the mind made up of precepts, receipts and concepts, called sometimes the conceptional mind, or otherwise the self-conscious mind—the mind of self-consciousness; and fourth and last, we have the intuitional mind—the mind whose highest element is not a receipt or a concept, but an intuition. This is the mind in which sensation, simple consciousness and self-consciousness are supplemented and crowned with Cosmic Consciousness” (Bucke’s *Cosmic Consciousness*, p. 13).

The discipline of the body by subjecting it to hard work and spare diet, of the mind by entering into the field of learning and grasping the principles of life’s comforts and of the Spirit by a preparedness to sacrifice life for the protection of the helpless and of the whole Self by perfect renunciation so as to be fit for merging into the Divine. These are the clearly defined aims of the four castes.

We have shown the synthetical process of nature’s work in comprehending all progress of life ultimately in Varnavyavastha—the caste system. The disposal of man, the last evolved physical being in four orders. But there has been recorded an analytical process also in ancient Indian lore. As it will serve to answer one phase of criticism against India’s classification of men, we give it here.

The question is: Why is there inequality at all? Why did nature or God create unequal beings with different stations and destinies and rear up animosities and discontent in nature’s harmonious possibility?

The fact is, at the end of a previous universal deluge or destruction (kalpanta) all creatures were produced as in the past, but each in its own perfection. In the case of man the process of creation was this: Brahma was desirous of creating; the first human beings that appeared were the perfect men: Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanata (Sanatsujata) Kumara—the Four Eternal Kumaras. (In their case there was not mind-creation too as in the second stage.) Being perfect themselves they were free from all desire and would not therefore exercise their will in any activity or direction. But Brahma, anxious to see progressive creation, was therefore obliged to create the ten Prajapatis to help himself in the work of creation. At the third stage general humanity came into existence. The difference between the Prajapatis and human beings was that the former were mind-born from Brahma and were themselves able

to procreate mind-issue, while the latter came with divided sex, as two beings, males and females. The latter of these sexes represents prakriti, the primordial matter. The nature of prakriti is to make the purusha liable to fall. With such limitations involved in their condition what happened was this: Every man coming into existence in the course of creation after the ten Prajapatis was a man of the highest spirituality and caste from the point of view of modern humanity. In fact there was perfection of humanity in every one and all were vipras or perfectly refined Brahmins. But according to the Mahabharata by their union with the other sex the work of procreation began to fall. The mental creative power was no longer present because they gave all that power to prakriti and depended on her for procreation. The nature of prakriti is to cause degradation from perfection. The baiji-srishti—the procreation by virtue of the combination of the blood of the sexes, leads to a descent from perfection in proportion to man's attachment to the other sex. The sthula sharira is the great factor in contributing to the attachment and the consequent degradation. The more one identifies oneself with the sthula sharira, the lower does one fall from the original vipratwa, the perfect Brahminhood. By falling lower and lower through this sexual attachment, the four classes of men were ultimately formed, and at this stage comes the divine help to regenerate the falling creatures. The means for effecting that regeneration is the institution of varnashram dharma, Much have been said in the shastras about the usefulness of this dharma of the Hindus. The principal aim of varnashram dharma is four-fold.

1. The preservation of spiritual man's race, by the help of the pitris.
2. Help in critical times when man's spirituality is in danger by breaking the social order.
3. Preservation of Atmajnana or Self-knowledge.
4. The accomplishment of the mukti of deserving souls.

Man's races at different ages have become entirely extinct, for example, the old Roman race is extinct, a race that seems from historical accounts to have been the ideal in the western world. The old Persian type has similarly disappeared. On the other hand, it is not a mere chance-case that the Indian race, the true Indian type of old, has not been lost after the lapse of thousands of ages and millions of vicissitudes. This fact is due to the institution of varnashrama. An adverse view is taken of the institution of the four varnas that subcastes have been multiplying in scores, and the original four castes in their pure, ancient form cannot be said to exist in these days. This view is a mistaken one, because the preservation of the seed of the old spiritual race which has never been lost in India still continues, and will continue safe and sound through all the future on account of the system of varna and ashram order.

Having thus briefly indicated the natural formation of the varnas, we proceed to describe the ashramas and the dharmas attaching to each of both the institutions. In a word, all such dharmas can be expressed by achara. The usual definition of achara is bodily activities agreeable to the advancement of dharma. Achara is the greatest factor in the varna and ashrama dharmas. It is the root of habit in the ordinary tenor of life, and the background of fashion in fashionable society. It has the most

beneficent or the most baneful effects on one's end and aim of existence. Achara therefore ought to be properly guided, governed and carried out. One of our greatest works on Dharma Shastra, the Manu Smriti, devotes one main part of its body to achara. It includes the rules of life of all classes of men and in all stages of mortal life. Every religious community has its own achara in all countries and in all societies. The genius of the ancient rishis found that the Vedas taught the general as well as particular ways of life to be followed by men so as to serve the fulfillment of the four-fold purpose of life, the four purusharthas in due course. The Indian religion, as already pointed out, neglects no human being and offers help to every one towards the fulfillment of one's purpose, the highest spiritual purpose for which all life-activity in the universe is going on. Each individual then in proportion as he has risen from the early animal condition, coming to possess some mental refinement is taken to be fit for education as the first thing. Every young member of society of the world's religious polity must undergo proper training to be the future stay of his society, must be possessed of the necessary stock of worldly as well as spiritual knowledge by the time he reaches adult age, and care is taken that such training is available to the person as soon as he becomes fit for it in age, strength and intellect.

It will be remembered that heredity being an important factor in the capacity of the individual to receive suitable education, the classes or the varnas are naturally taken into account in the very commencement of the work of education. The details of the training of the particular classes will be found in their own place in the special treatment of the subject in other works. It is sufficient to point out here how the first aim was to secure capacity in the young for achara, the formation of right habits in the routine of life. As in military training all the physical faculties and activities are brought under the entire control of discipline, so that under that exercise man becomes automatic like a machine, so in the earliest training the first aim is to develop an ability to exercise entire control over the body to inure it to hardships, privations and self-denial, and service in a perfect spirit of self-sacrifice.

It might be stated in passing that an inner principle of self-control, the control over the pranas, or the vital principles, is taught in this early stage. A fuller treatment of it will be found in the sections on the yogas in this work.

Not only personal control, but social etiquette and moral government go hand in hand with it. Respect toward elders and toward the learned and spiritual members of society, a universal sympathy, ready will for service and considerateness in conduct towards all and in all sorts of situations—these are made as habitual as nature itself. The discipline of life as taught in the shastras would even appear to the modern mind as positively cruel if one could not think of the antidotes provided against mishaps in such training. Achara is intimately connected with the dharma of all the varnas and all the ashramas. Further details will be given later on. Achara, as already said, is considered the supreme dharma; that is, in its practical aspect, Achara is itself dharma.

And as in the case of the male sex, so in that of the other sex. Woman, who is imagined by Western people to be a wholly neglected person in Indian society was far

from being so in ancient India. The traditional training of women in India where characters like Sita, Damayanti, Savitri and Taramati were developed, passes description. The holiest ideal of womanhood was illustrated by the actual life of Indian ladies and is so illustrated in hundreds of instances at this day, unnoticed for their very modesty, unboasted of for their very commonness in a society of spiritual ideals, as Indian society has always been and will even continue so to be. The influences created by the inroads of Western civilization will vanish with all their vain pomp, and the serenity of perfect purity, holiness, chastity and devotion will again prevail in this land, curing the evils that have slyly crept in, with the selfish, animal instincts that yet largely characterize non-Indian nations and particularly those that do not believe in Achara Dharma and the special dharma of womanhood, which is dealt with in separate chapter.

Achara in the case of both sexes has been the first thing attended to in the government of the home and of society in the land of India.

For the attainment of spirituality by the curbing of the animal instincts in the way above shown, a life-long discipline has thus been prescribed. Each stage of life is devoted to the achievement of a grand step in the march. The life of the celibate student in which all kinds of rigor of bodily discipline is enforced is the first step towards the goal. Habits contracted during the early years of life become confirmed and the plastic flesh of youth can be very easily moulded to the life of dutifulness even under unfavorable physical conditions. The future man is supplied with all necessary knowledge required by his future life in the world and prepared for strenuous work to advance the prosperity of society in his own field of work. (The Hindu system of education will be dealt with in a separate chapter.)

The next stage of life is that of the house-holder—the citizen, or the married man—a life of self-sacrifice based on self-government and a spirit of contributing to the welfare of every being in the world. The body is dedicated to actual service, one's very sustenance being subject to priority of the claims of the needy. The house-holder has to perform daily a five-fold sacrifice, contributing his quota to gratify the needs of all grades of life in the universe: the gross life of plants and lower stages, the life of animal beings from the least insect upwards to the highest subhuman animals, the life of man such as he himself, the life of the pitris, the ancestors in the super-human spheres, the life of the rishis the superior, long-lasting spiritual men, and the life of the devas, the self-shining super-human class of powerful beings.

All classes in the range of creation are mutually helpful to one another's prosperity. As the devatas are able to help mankind, so are men able to afford help to the devatas. "In the beginning along with mankind Prajapati created sacrifice and said: 'By this shall you increase: this shall be the granter of desires. May you foster the gods [devatas] by this, and may the gods then foster you. Then, each the others fostering, you shall attain the highest welfare'" (Bhagavad Gita 3:10-11).

The house-holder thus affords help to all and performs one other important function: that of propagation of his stock. His married life is dedicated to add to the strength of his class as marriage is emphatically pronounced in the marriage rite as

intended to beget progeny. Very solemn are the conditions of contracting the marriage-bond, and solemn still is the actual duty of procreation, where every step in the act is a religious duty. It is a regular discharge of a spiritual responsibility, the aim of coition of the two sexes being the production of spiritual heroes—the longing of the parents is to get heroic progeny, not worthless vermin. The house-holder in asking a favor of the pitris after performance of the shraddha rite prays in these words: “Let me, O pitris, have a hero for a son,” one that will heroically perform the duties of his class as prescribed in the shastras. The Vedic rishis knew the value of the best class of human beings, and used to pray to the devas saying: “May we have great heroes amongst us!”

The life of a house-holder will thus be seen as the most important stage for the preservation, progress and prosperity of the world. But the spiritual aim is never to be lost sight of as contributing to the advancement in that direction of the individual as well as of the world at large.

The next stage comes when the house-holder begins to be too weak for the responsibilities of worldly life. Then comes the duty of practical renunciation. One stage of life is dedicated to this practice. The home is abandoned and the wife too is left to the care of the son, or taken along with oneself, if she too is prepared for the spiritual course along with her husband. The foot of the tree is then the home, and wild sustenance is resorted to, and a complete subordination of bodily comfort to the spiritual aim is practiced, until finally all ties to the body and to the world become relaxed, all attachments are forgotten, and the individual can live only as a spiritual being in love of and dedication to, the final goal of emancipation. This is the last stage. The four-fold course of life for kama or desire, artha or gain, dharma, and moksha or freedom, leads to the destination, and the soul of the individual is united with the universal Supreme Self, contributing at every step in his advance to the good of the universe and his own.

[For a description of the vanaprastha ashrama referred to by the previous words, “The foot of the tree is then the home,” see pp. 83 and 84 in *Sanatana Dharma The Eternal Religion*. Editor’s note.]

The fact may here be noted that nations among whom varnashram dharma is not formulated and enforced will become extinct in course of time. License of any kind is injurious to the existence of any society. Varnashram dharma is a preventive against license. Whole nations have become extinct and gone into oblivion in the last few thousand years, while the Indian nation persisting in its varnashram dharma has lasted from time immemorial and will last through the future abiding by that dharma.



# Chapter Eighteen

## Murti Puja

### Image Worship

We now discuss another special dharma of Hindus: murti puja—image worship—which has an intimate connection with karma, upasana, and jnana as well as with mukti. The main point in the practice of image worship is bhava. The idea of bhava ought to be properly understood, before the subject is dealt with on the philosophical standpoint. Bhava, as its etymology shows, means “becoming” and also “being.” We can understand a sequence between first becoming and then being. This is the secret of bhava explained by Hindu philosophy.

Bhavana is another term giving the same meaning in a more explicit way. The word has the causal sense of “causing to be.” There is a very deep meaning having almost the force of creation in this causal root. In the Purva and the Madhya Mimamsa Darshanas, it is used in the sense of “creating” or “causing to be.” Even the Sat, Chit and Ananda experience of Brahman is nothing but bhava.

Creation, preservation and destruction are due to the three gunas, rajas, sattwa and tamas, and the objectivity of these is due to the subject of bhava with reference to each. They belong to the original elements in the conceptions of the Atma: Sat, Chit and Ananda. In the condition of mukti, the three gunas of prakriti become absorbed into the mulaprakriti, or the primordial matter. The mulaprakriti disappears into that same balanced conditions of the three bhavas of the subject. Bhava, therefore, will be understood as the essential principle in connection with mukti.

What the Hindu does in the worship of images is that he makes use of his bhava, and to help this, he uses the material image. He may begin with the mere worship of the image, but as soon as he learns the principle of bhava underlying the worship, he conceives his beloved ideal in the image, and with the reciprocal action of the bhava on the image, and the image on the bhava, his ideal of love gets strength and form. This is what has been described as vaidhi bhakti. This is the lowest sort of love or bhakti to be enjoined on the novice. When his love becomes firm on the ideal by this process, he rises to the second stage of bhakti, called ragatmika bhakti. The Hindus will continue their worship of images, which appears to others as mere material statues and objects. But as the stages rise, the mental ideal will grow strong, and the external object will only be an occasional help. The image is a mystical shrine like various other objects explained in detail as sixteen in number. Just as cow’s milk is obtainable only through the teats so the omnipresent Brahman can be realized with the help of sixteen mystical shrines, treated of in the section on worship and the section on pitha, such as fire, water, a painting, some diagrams etc.. The image is a pitha or mystic shrine, whence spiritual powers can rise to help seekers.

Fuller treatment of the subject is possible. But it is unnecessary if the few facts, particularly those about bhava and bhavana, are properly understood and borne in mind.

Image-worship, usually termed idolatry by adverse critics, is unintelligible to them until they can look into the psychological and philosophical aspects of it. As a matter of fact, it is not the gross, material objects that are worshipped, but these objects merely help the creation of the mystic shrine (pitha), and images are only one kind out of sixteen such already-alluded-to objects mentioned in the shastras or Mantra Yoga. Critics of idolatry believe fetishes and images to be the same thing. They ignore the spiritual side of the whole subject, and pose as critics by merely looking at the superficialities.

The thinking mind will with the exercise of a little thought perceive the subtle feeling that underlies image-worship, remembering how statues and emblems and portraits, etc., of worthy personages are held in reverence and adorned with wreaths of flowers and such other things, and looked at with reverence to such an extent that any abuse in respect of these is considered as little less than sacrilege. The Indian religious thinker has taken note of the subtle action of external objects in the psychical and spiritual line and turned it to the advantage of the aspirant.

Image-worship has three principal practical processes: dhyana or meditation, stuti or singing praises, and japa or constant thinking of the beloved one represented by the image. Dhyana has, of course, a rupa or form, as its basis. Stuti refers to the attributes, and japa refers to the Name of God. Japa, dhyana and stuti, the three aspects of image-worship, are able finally to merge into one, when samadhi or superconsciousness results, which in its finality is mukti. The philosophy of japa has been explained in full detail in the tantras, and there is a special chapter on it in the Shakti Gita. To help the reader we subjoin here a translation of some verses from the Shakti Gita, bearing on the dhyana and stuti of god-hood imaged as the Almighty Mother, MahaShakti. A perusal of it will enlighten the reader on the true essential character of image worship.

“Then all those gods (devas) beheld before themselves how, having burst through the mass of darkness shaped as a dense sphere, a wonderful, indescribable, excessively brilliant, and sublime luster shone dazzlingly forth in the form of a compact sphere.

“That light, charming and blazing, poured out reducing to pointlessness the flood of the splendor of numberless crores [ten millions] of suns. Then in the midst of that light, there became visible a sixteen-year old Goddess, fascinating to the whole universe, appearing like a mass of molten gold.

“Possessing a woman’s form of a beauty of which there was no like before, Ambika [The Mother], in whom fresh and glorious stores of luster were all combined, shone forth adorned with four arms with many heavenly jewels on them, carrying in Her four hands a noose, a goad, the promise of freedom from fear, and a boon for the devotee.

“That Goddess, who effects the creation, continuance and destruction of the worlds, sat on a lotus emanating from God, the Highest of the High, the form of whose Self is Shiva, the Nirguna Brahman.

“Ambika’s face, though grave, possessed a beautiful appearance and graced with its beaming smile that spread a fascination over the world; and though she did not utter anything, yet there rose incessantly from her mouth the utterance of Om, pervading the world.

“And further, that Divine Mother, though standing beyond all principles of creation, pervading the whole world by means of her divine powers, repeatedly grants her favor, giving happiness to the universe, to the whole class of living beings that inhabit the world.

“Although Herself consisting of Sat or pure existence, Chit or pure consciousness, and of Rasa or joy; though without duality, She as the Great Goddess in Her own person ruling Her Prakriti-Shakti in the form of existence and consciousness, taking the form of duality, pervaded the whole universe by means of Her power, consisting of joy-rasa.

“Beholding the Great Goddess full of the Brahman power, in this sort of appearance before them, the devatas became motionless and speechless, as it were, for a time, remaining wholly entranced. Then having their minds freed from the darkness of ignorance, with hearts full of consciousness, the assemblages of the devatas holding forward their folded hands in peace, praised the Great Goddess.

“The Devatas said: As Thou, O Goddess, O Shiva, removing the distress of those coming to Thee for relief, are not to be definitely known by the speech, the mind and the intellect; none indeed is therefore able to praise Thee by words.

“But overpowered by the violent impulse of the mind, we try to express in words Thine essential being, though incomprehensible to the speech, mind and intellect. O Goddess, the Ocean of Compassion, pardon this fault of ours.

“And in the securing of pardon in this manner, Thine infinite graciousness alone, O Mother, is the ground, O Goddess having Brahman as Thy personal form, O Mother of the Universe, we repeatedly salute Thee, who are full of grace and compassion.

“Higher than the High, possessing a form through the Highest Principle [Mahat Tattwa], Thou appearest glorious by excelling all the principles of creation; and again, through the united work of Thine existence and consciousness Thou personally manifestest a dual form in the relation of the husband and the wife.

“O Mother of the worlds, Thou spreadest out in perfection this beginningless and endless creation, together with the sportive beauty and adornment, characterized by the sentiment of Love, whose manifestation contains the flowing tide of the outpourings of joy.

“By a mere glance of Thine eye, O Mother, rise sportive appearances through the Lord, and so do, O Goddess, there arise the sportive appearances of the multitudes of brahmandas of various sorts and in infinite numbers.

“The work of Creation, its continuance and its re-absorption, is a mere wave of

Thy sportive pleasure. Thou art able to create the whole in a moment. Salutation to Thee, therefore, All-powerful, O Goddess.

“Although devoid of attributes Thou art, and void of form; although standing outside the province of objective existence; although beyond the range of the senses; although only one and whole, and without a second, and all-pervading:

“Because assuming a form possessed of attributes for the well-being of Thy devotees, Thou givest them the highest good. We salute Thee, O Goddess, in whom all the three conditions of existence become manifest.

“There is no limit, O Mother, to Thy kindly grace—in the case of Thy devotees, who are not able to realize Thy form, consisting of the ideal forms, through their imperfections in the knowledge of the principles.

“Showing them mercy, Thou grantest them, with Thy natural glances of grace, the sight of Thine own Self by Thyself assuming attributes; and Thou grantest them temporal prosperity as also liberation.

“Neither are we, the gods, O Goddess, nor again the daityas, able to know Thy true essence—what to speak of man? And, O Highest Beyond The High, O Ocean of Grace, O Thou who hast the three gunas as Thy form, we salute Thee.

“O Ocean of compassion, what description of Thee is possible? How wonderful: Thy devotees, made dull by the meshes of ignorance and thus losing sense, do not at all know Thy greatness.

“Only with one-pointed devotion to Thee, if they cling like bees to Thy lotus-like feet, Thou, O Mother, dost not deny them the realization of Thy presence, which is the source of freedom (moksha).

“Thou makest them happy by becoming manifest according to their taste in the great five-fold Godheads: Vishnu, Gauri, Shiva, Ganesh and Surya.

“And when sometime in God’s kingdoms, there rises a havoc among the righteous, owing to the fearful war between the gods and the demons, then, O Merciful One, Thou—

“Taking from us our bright powers to sufficiently effect a blessed amelioration of the world, Mother, and assuming a bright, manifested form by means of those powers, that spread illumination all round: Thou killest those demons and establishest order in God’s vast kingdoms:

“So sometimes when there occurs, as is occasionally the case, a great overthrow of dharma, Thou, O Mother, incarnating in various beings, dost destroy the unrighteous by Thy power, and protect the righteous, and thus establishest the kingdom of righteousness.

“When a nation is on the brink of ruin, Thou incarnatest Thyself in the form of leaders and protectest it. O Wrathful One in the battle-field, O Goddess of the forms of the fivefold Gods, Vishnu and others, we bow to Thee!

“How wonderful! Thou utterest the Great Utterance (Mahavakya) of the Vedas: ‘Thou art that,’ [Tat Twam Asi] true in its sense, by helping Thy devotees possessing knowledge to realize Thy presence in Thy Brahma-form; by helping Thy worshipping devotees to realize the same in Thine Ishwara form; by helping the aspirants who

place their faith in the continued performance of the sacrifice in a desireless spirit to realize the same in Thy Virat form.

“O Mother, possessed of all power and grace! O Unmanifested, and O Manifested One! O attributeless One! O Goddess with attributes! Thou art nescience, deluding all the individual souls. Thou art thyself the knowledge conferring absolute freedom.

“O Goddess, who art the bridge along the numbers of mystic verses! O Goddess, who appearest before creation! O source of the Vedas! O beginningless and endless! O Thou, who hast the Omkar as Thy form, O pervader of everything, O worthy of salutation, we bow to Thee!

“O Mother, Thou by conferring Thy powers protectest the sovereignty of knowledge through the distinguished rishis; the whole sovereignty of karma through us; and the sovereignty of the gross, mortal world through the pitris.

“Thou art Thyself the dispenser of the status in the position of the fourth condition [moksha]. Thou Thyself existest as Brahman. O Mother of the Gods, having the form of the sacrificial formulas Swaha, Swadha and Vashat, we salute Thee.

“In every period of creation, Thou Thyself, O Divine Mother, assumest the forms of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning, inspirest with Thy spiritual power the calm minds of the rishis, and revealest the Vedas to them.

“From Thy presiding power over the Gayatri Mantra Thou conveyest and instillest the power of mystic utterances into the Vedas, and from Thy presiding power over the Savitri Gayatri, Thou conveyest and instillest power into the sacrificial observances.

“And Thou givest prosperity and the final bliss to those that aspire to win them by those performances. Hence, O Giver of Knowledge, do we in great humility salute Thee, O Mother of the Vedas.”

# Chapter Nineteen

## Maha-Yajna

### The Great Sacrifices

Yajna is a great concept in Hinduism. It is in fact almost a synonym for dharma. But in usage, yajna is ritualistic action and especially action based on, and characterized by, the three-fold purification—the purification of adhibhuta, adhidaiva and adhyatma, all taking place simultaneously. In the Vedic yajna, purification of dravya, of kriya and of mantra is effected as a means of right procedure. The purification of dravya, *i.e.* articles, leads to the purification of adhibhuta. The right procedure according to sacred injunctions, which occasions the purification of kriya, gives the purification of the adhidaiva. The mantras help to give the purification of adhyatma. The dravyas include the articles, the material means, such as cow's milk or ghee, the construction or arrangement of the sacred spot or shrine, the erection of the mandapa or sanctum, the fire to be produced for the ceremony and other things required according to the nature and form of the sacrifice. When these are in the proper order the adhibhuta purification is secured.

Adhidaiva purification occurs when the prana comes into the place, and thus a pitha (of which we have spoken elsewhere in the chapter on pithas) is created by right procedure according to the karmakhanda of the Vedas or Tantras. Consecration by means of the recitation of the prescribed mantras establishes a connection with the devas or occult world, thus giving the Adhyatma purification.

In all action that which gives spiritual elevation to the Self is yajna. Regarding this the Bhagavad Gita says:

“Some yogis offer sacrifice to the gods; others offer sacrifice by sacrifice itself into the fire of Brahman. (Some yogis offer sacrifice to the gods alone, while others offer the Self as sacrifice unto the Self into the fire that is Brahman.)

“Others offer senses such as hearing into the fires of restraint (control); others, sound; and others objects of the senses into the fire of the senses.

“Some offer all the actions of the senses and the functions of the life force (prana) into the fire of the yoga of self-restraint, which is enkindled by knowledge.)

“Those whose sacrifices take the form of yoga offer material possession(s) and tapasya as sacrifices; while ascetics with stringent vows offer self-study (self analysis) and knowledge (jnana) as sacrifice.

“Some offer inhalation into exhalation, and exhalation into inhalation, restraining the paths of inhalation and exhalation, intent upon control of the breath (pranayama).

“Others who have restricted their food offer the pranas into the pranas [since all the forms of prana are derived from food]. All these are knowers of sacrifice whose

wrongdoings (sins) have been annihilated through sacrifice.

“Eating the amrita of the sacrificial remains, they go to the Eternal Brahman. Even this world is not for the non-sacrificing—how then the other [worlds]?”

“Sacrifices of many kinds are spread out before the face of Brahman. Know them all to be born from action. Knowing thus, you shall be liberated” (4:25-32).

The difference between a yajna in general and a maha-yajna is this: karma for the individual is yajna. The fruit of it is intended to contribute to the well-being or prosperity of the individual, and the advancement of the performer’s personal interests. The Maha-Yajna serves a universal function: in fact it is a sacrifice of his own interests to be undergone by the individual for not only his own class of beings, but for every being of every sort in the whole universe, from the minutest vermin to the highest developments of life where the very perfection of spirituality is reached.

Five grades of this are recognized in the shastras: they are known as the five mahayajnas, the five great sacrifices, that are compulsory on every house-holder. He has to contribute by all means in his power to the sustenance of all those grades of beings and to take for his use only the leavings according to the nature of the article dedicated to those beings. The five grades are:

1. Brahma-Yajna
2. Deva-Yajna
3. Pitri-Yajna
4. Bhuta-Yajna
5. Nri-Yajna

We now explain the nature of these to show how essential they are to the well-being of the sacrificer and of all those grades of life. Nothing could be more generous, more comprehensive, more holy, spiritual and bliss-giving: the very essence of the beauty of religion is presented herein, that will not fail to induce the right-minded thinker to assimilate these ideas and these forms in his daily life.

### **The Brahma-Yajna**

Knowledge is the chief thing on which the existence of the universe and the mukti of the jiva depends. The safety, continuity and prosperity of the universe rest on knowledge. Every human being as the enjoyer of the advantages accruing to him from the world, owes a debt to it. Knowledge is the first thing we owe to all beings and the sacrifice in the form of knowledge for them in whatever form they exist must receive our due contribution. Knowledge is contained in the Vedas and shastras. The sphere of knowledge is in the hands of the holy, immortal rishis. They subsist on knowledge—that is their actual food which we can serve out to them from our position as house-holders. When with a view to the satisfaction of the rishis one pursues knowledge, with no other object but the acquisition and advancement of knowledge—knowledge for its own sake—one is able to perform the Brahma-Yajna. By the performance of this great sacrifice, the rishis are gratified and they help the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge on the part of mankind. We have touched upon this subject in the section on Veda and shastra.

Nishkama karma, desireless performance of sacred action, is the holiest and the worthiest. The house-holder's performance of the Brahma-Yajna in a desireless spirit is the first and the highest duty enjoined on him. The Brahma-Yajna is the revision and acquisition of all sorts of knowledge of Brahman, of the Vedas and the shastras—holy knowledge which is the source of all power, all bliss, all safety and immortality. All this is mukti in the long run.

### **The Deva-Yajna**

The previously-cited verses in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita about the creation of yajnas together with that of the creatures are well-known.

All dualistic relations are conditional. "Give and take" is a law of duality. Dependence on material offerings reigns supreme in the spiritual as well as in the physical universe. The devas exist and thrive not by their own karma, power and sustenance, but by what is contributed by conscious man towards their well-being from the central organization—the mrityuloka. The directions of natural utility are, however, different. As in the case of plant life and human life, these are mutually contributory to the prosperity of both, so in the case of devas and men both can contribute to each other's strength and happiness. Through fire, offerings are sent up from mrityuloka to the devas in their daivaloka. Fire is the great physico-spiritual medium for conveying sacrificial offering to the devas, one fact about which is often quoted.

To feed the devas and to keep them pleased without selfish desire is the duty in the performance of the deva-yajna. And this sacrifice is to be offered into the fire. To please the devas by special ceremonial for the welfare of the whole humanity is a maha-yajna (great sacrifice) no doubt. The devas as described elsewhere, are the agencies in the proper disposal of karma in the nature of evolution and rebirth and reincarnation and the giving of bhoga (the realization of the result) corresponding to the karma of the individual.

### **The Pitri-Yajna**

We have also explained how in the administration of the brahmanda, there are separate departments in charge of the rishis, the devas and the pitris as in the human kingdoms. The pitris form and keep the sthula sharira or the gross body in right condition and contribute to the fitness of the same for higher advancement in the case of humanity.

Our debt to the pitris is correspondingly great. It is necessary therefore to keep these pitris well-pleased towards us. The pitriloka is the link between humanity and spirituality. If the pitris are kept pleased by the house-holders as a daily duty, their good pleasure contributes to the well-being of the whole humanity, and prevents a race over which they preside from becoming extinct. The formal performance of the ceremonial to please the pitris is the pitri-yajna, which as referring to the welfare of the whole of humanity is one of the maha-yajnas.



## **Bhuta-Yajna**

A far nearer mutual helpfulness is to be noted with reference to the bhuta-yajna. Our bodies and their sustenance, and our comforts and conveniences are due to the use we are required to make of all beings from the least to the highest. Matter and life in almost all shapes and grades contribute to our well-being—in drinking, in eating and similar bodily comforts and entertainments. The subhuman living beings such as animals contribute everything, undergoing total sacrifice for us. A return for this sacrifice is necessary. We could not of course bless all the beings by our actions, so we therefore dedicate our actions to the devatas that are the guides of the group souls of the bhutas. This is the bhuta-yajna, and it is a maha-yajna inasmuch as it is intended to be a universal contribution through the devatas referred to.

[Despite its omission here, one very important aspect of bhuta-yajna is the care and feeding of animals, domestic and non-domestic. *Editor's note.*]

## **Nri-Yajna**

Lastly, we come to the Nri-Yajna. Every human being is under obligations to his fellow human beings. The parents and kinsfolk, neighbors and towns-people, and countrymen and religious brethren and benevolent humanity all over the world have been instrumental in bringing about the vast amount of happiness, comforts, pleasure, and reliefs that we enjoy in this world. Our devotion in every way depends far more on our human association than on others. A daily and regular contribution towards the well-being of that humanity is a duty devolving on us. It is evidently impossible to gratify the entire human race, to make a return of the obligations. The solution to the difficulty of contributing to this end lies in the service of the guest. A man of any nationality, of any caste, and of any religion who chances to come accidentally to the house of a house-holder before his mealtime is an atithi—a guest. The atithi or guest of the house-holder is a god, even if the guest happens to be of the lowest caste, or an out-caste altogether. When we possess the spirit of self-sacrifice which contributes its quota first to the need of the guest, and when we are content to feed ourselves with what is left after satisfying the atithi, it is a true sacrifice and the food we thus eat is sacrificial food. It is a sacred portion enjoyed by us out of the performance of that holy sacrifice.

The uppermost explanation for this observance is that the Hindu Dharma understands the Self, or Atma, as pervading all beings. Everyone else, man and animal, plant and insects nay, even material substances, as well as the various kinds of invisible spirits around us, all these are phases of our own Self, and whatever we, as simple beings do, is to be done for the sake of the whole. To teach this great ideal in life the maha-yajnas are compulsory for every Hindu house-holder. Much less should there be with the Hindus anything like hatred for the votaries of other religions or races or castes. Hatred of this sort is condemned by the Hindu shastras. A liberal, generous, grateful heart is developed by the guidance and practice enjoined in the shastras and the five great sacrifices are one of the best illustrations of the universally sympathetic nature of the Hindu religion.

The great rishi Yajnavalkya says: “The dharma which stands in the way of other dharmas, is not dharma at all, but is a wrong dharma. That which is not contradictory to the dharmas of other sects, etc., is real dharma–this is the truth.”

# Chapter Twenty

## 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 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 the nature of liberation 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 will. 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 [path of light] 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 paths, 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 through 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.

# Chapter Twenty One

## Veda and Shastra

### The Hindu Scriptures

Before we proceed to deal with the Vedas and the shastras as fundamental to the Hindu religion, we will consider the spiritual sources through which the Vedas and the shastras become revealed to the world.

It must be admitted that like this phenomenal creation all knowledge must proceed from a highest divine source. The three highest divine manifestations are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. All universal stock of knowledge is contained in them. Next to these are the great sages, the rishis, who are also divine in their nature and who exist in numerous grades and classes. They inhabit all the fourteen worlds that make up each brahmāṇḍa. From the lowest to the highest plane and world, they are the representatives of the spiritual side of the universe. In the lower worlds their material power is great. But from the pitri-world upwards the grades of spirituality rise superior and continuously increasing over the lower worlds, so that from the second upper world to the fifth, the power of spirituality of the rishis becomes more and more divine in character, until in the sixth and the seventh, the spirituality becomes almost perfect. Between these last, there is a small difference. The perfect jñānis live in the seventh world, while those near to perfection live in the sixth world.

As divine beings these rishis are able to incarnate themselves, especially in the human world. These incarnations are of three grades according to the nature of the function to be performed. Some appear as perfect (complete or total) incarnations (purnāvatara), others as partial incarnations (kalāvatara or aṁśāvatara); others as incarnations by possession (overshadowing) for temporary purposes, called aveśāvatara. Maharishi Vasishtha, for example, is a purnāvatara. Rishis to whom some portions of the Vedas manifest themselves are aṁśāvatara, while those that manifest power only temporarily are aveśāvatara.

It will be seen from this that, knowledge being the product of the spiritual power of the rishis, all kind of knowledge that becomes revealed to the world in all branches of enquiry and in all shapes comes from the rishis of the various grades, according to the nature of each line. It also comes from the various planes (or worlds) and possesses the character of each world out of a total of fourteen in the matter of the utility of the knowledge to be pointed out further on. Further than this, the very great men, men of genius as we call them, are the actual incarnations of the grades of these rishis, proportioned to the nature of the knowledge revealed. This fact will enable us to understand how inspired savants of the highest truths of knowledge appear, as it were, quite unexpectedly in the various parts of the world: scientists, philosophers, prophets, heroes, poets—men in whom the divine glory is, as it were,

revealed. They are all incarnations of the rishis. The Indian shastras count all such among these, to whatever country, or nationality, or race, or age they belong. We take account of the whole world and the whole of humanity in the manifestation of the Divine Power and Knowledge.

Knowledge is again to be divided as: (a) asura or demoniac, (b) daiva (daivic) or divine, and (c) muktiprada, or that giving final liberation (moksha). The asura shastra aims at self-gratification for the longings of the senses and for the lower, mortal world. Destructiveness is often its purpose, because without himsa or harm to others, self-gratification in the way of the world is not possible. The daiva shastra is intended for the raising of the spirit from the lower to the higher planes. The mukti shastra, which belongs to the highest world, the seventh, the satya loka, is what leads to pure bliss, the *summum bonum* of existence.

In the mortal world knowledge of all sorts becomes revealed according to the need of the time as appreciated by the rishis. And as a variety of knowledge is in this way in demand, as it were, the various kinds of knowledge come from the different occult worlds into ours all at one and the same time.

We next consider the nature of the utilities of the knowledge revealed. These are termed yathartha: exact, pure and true; rochacka: the charming, coaxing and sweet; and bhayanaka: the threatening, fearful and overbearing. The utilities correspond to the mental constitution of the recipients of the knowledge. Men are usually to be classified as sattwic, rajasic and tamasic, and the impartation and character of the knowledge given must suit the condition of each, remembering that the whole of humanity is virtually to be raised from the lowest to the highest grade of spirituality. The threefold utility will be illustrated by the threefold character of the Vedas, as explained further on—the adhyatma, the adhidaiva, and the adhibhuta, which are the bases of jnana, upasana and karma.

With such a background we are to consider the nature and variety of the Veda-shastras which are the everlasting bases of our everlasting religion. And the first Lords and inspirers of the knowledge that is to manifest itself in varied forms in the world are the first Lords of this creation: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

The aim of education according to the Hindu ideal is the development of humanity in man, and the acquisition of progress in dharma with final liberation of the Self as the goal.

# Chapter Twenty Two

## Dharma in Summation

The aim of all true dharma is the realization of the divine. This realization assures freedom from the pain so common to mortal life. By the power of intuition man becomes conscious of his divine nature, and has the one goal of reaching the Most High in spirit, which results in the natural emancipation from bondage. The yearning for this emancipation begins in a feeble way in the semicivilized heart, but as civilization and refinement grow more effective, more and more definite forms come to be prescribed for the purpose of the emancipation. The forms do vary, but the goal is the same.

From the materialistic yearnings, a new road comes to be opened to the Self in a higher psychology—Yoga—by which an opening is made unto the road to the divine. The gross body is found to be as but the husk around the grain of the spirit, and the realization of the power and permanence of the latter urges thought and action towards making it one's own.

The Indian mind intuitively perceiving this possibility determined a regular course of life to be followed for the realization of that goal. The outer form of the course will be found to depend on the surroundings in which each section or individual of humanity stands situated. Forms, even mutually antagonistic, will be found prescribed in the scriptures for the advancement of particular cases. But the goal is one: the realization of the divine. Many religions there are whose votaries have a spirit of discord against other creeds than their own. The Sanatana Dharma of India does not disown any creed whatever, and finds no cause for difference and discord. There is a place for every grade in the scale.

All prophets, all revelations, all liturgies (forms of worship), have their due places assigned to them, in the Indian Continent of Religions. Names differ, but that matters little, the goal being one and the same. The idea of God as a personal being is represented in the various godhoods in the Indian religion. God, the judge, is represented by Yama; God, the creator is represented by Brahma; God, the preserver, is represented by Vishnu; God, the destroyer [more accurately: dissolver], is represented by Shiva. In this way Ishwara and Virat and Brahman are definite representations of different conceptions of godhood in various religions.

The five-fold saguna forms [Vishnu, Surya, Shakti, Ganesh and Shiva] unknown in other religions involve a masterly philosophy leading to realization of godhood by the path of worship.

The ideals of worship found in Sanatana Dharma in all its phases includes all gradations from fetish worship and the worship of the dead and the demon-worship of uncivilized communities to the highest abstraction of the worship of Brahman, the one without a second. The ideal of any religion under this head will find its proper

place in this system.

It has been already pointed out that the external situation of individuals as also their mental constitution is the basis of the practical side of religion. In the Indian religion this principle has been considered from its crudest shape to its extreme perfection, and it has been adopted to whole classes and grades of humanity falling within the pale of Hindu influence. It is a question of priority or posteriority in one and the same line of progress, the progress of the Self from matter to spirit. And it has been many times shown before that the Indian religion—Sanatana Dharma—is the store-house of well-arranged spiritual principles with corresponding practical regulations.

The fact is *achara* is a matter intimately connected with the gross body, and *varnashrama dharmas* are connected with the occult side of the world. Although we find signs of the functions of these special dharmas in all other advanced societies of the world, no doubt those are the special dharmas of India. The Indians believe that the organization of *varnashrama dharma* ever gets help from the occult world.

May the Holy Spirit of Eternal Dharma pervade all humanity, and may the supreme Lord shower His blessings on all, bringing harmony, and peace, and goodwill on earth!

*Om—Peace be to all Beings.*



# Glossary

**Abhava:** Nonexistence; absence; negation; nothing.

**Abhaya(m):** “Without fear;” fearlessness; a state of steadfastness in which one is not swayed by fear of any kind.

**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 (1):** Immobile.

**Achara (2):** Right conduct; good behavior; custom; practice; external observance of established rules and laws; teaching.

**Achetana:** Non-conscious; unconscious; insensible; inanimate; inert; matter.

**Adhama:** The low; below; lowest; vilest; worst; degraded.

**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 (1):** Primal God.

**Adhidaiva (2):** Rulers or governors of the subtle dimensions.

**Adhikara:** Authority; qualification; jurisdiction; prerogative; office; claim; privilege.

**Adhikari(n):** An eligible or qualified person; a worthy person. It implies both fitness and capability.

**Adhimatra:** Excessive; above/beyond measure; supremely intense; the degree of vairagya when worldly enjoyment becomes a source of pain.

**Adhyatma:** The individual Self; the supreme Self; spirit.

**Adi Shankaracharya:** Shankara; the title of the head of one of the major monasteries (maths) of the Swami Order founded by Shankara. There are four maths in the four quarters of India: Sringeri, Dwaraka, Badrinath and Jagannath Puri.

**Aditya:** The sun; the Sun God.

**Adityas:** The twelve solar deities that preside over the twelve months of the year: Dhata, Aryama, Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Vivaswan, Tvashta, Vishnu, Anshu, Bhag, Pusha and Parjanya. The greatest of these is Vishnu.

**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.

**Aisha Karma:** The karma belonging to the Supreme Lord or occult (astral) world.

**Ajna chakra:** “Command Wheel.” Energy center located at the point between the eyebrows, the “third eye.” The seat of the mind. The medulla center opposite the point between the eyebrows, having two “petals” or rays.

**Ajnana:** Ignorance; nescience.

**Akarma:** Inaction; non-doing.

**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.

**Ambika:** Mother; a title of Parvati; literally “good woman.”

**Amrita:** That which makes one immortal. The nectar of immortality that emerged from the ocean of milk when the gods churned it.

**Amsha:** Part; component; limb; fragment.

**Amshavatara:** A partial incarnation of God.

**Ananda:** Bliss; happiness; joy. A fundamental attribute of Brahman, which is Satchidananda: Existence, Consciousness, Bliss.

**Anandamaya kosha:** “The sheath of bliss (ananda).” The causal body (karana sharira). The borderline of the Self (atman).

**Anarya(n):** Not aryan; ignoble; unworthy. See Aryan.

**Andaja:** Egg-born body.

**Anga:** Limb; individual part; accessory; member; step. The yoga expounded by Pantanjali in the Yoga Sutras (Yoga Darshan) has eight limbs: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, dharana, dhyana, pratyahara, and samadhi.

**Angira:** A Vedic rishi, one of the Seven Great Rishis, composer of many hymns in the Rig Veda, and founder of the science of Brahma Vidya, the way to knowledge of Brahman.

**Ananta(m):** Infinite; without end; endless; a name of Shesha, the chief of the Nagas, whose coils encircle the earth and who symbolizes eternity, and upon whom Vishnu reclines.

**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:** Food; matter.

**Annamaya kosha:** “The sheath of food (anna).” The physical, material body, made of food.

**Antahkarana:** Internal instrument; the subtle bodies; fourfold mind: mind, intellect, ego and subconscious mind.

**Anu:** “Atom”; atomic; elementary particle; that which cannot be further divided; an individual being.

**Anubhava:** Perception; direct personal experience; identity of the Jiva with Brahman; spiritual experience; intuitive consciousness and knowledge.

**Antar:** Internal; middle; interspace.

**Apaddharma:** Dharma under emergency.

**Apavarga:** Liberation; release; escape from pain; release from the bondage of embodiment.

**Aprakrita:** Unmanifested; unperceived; not published; concealed; hidden.

**Arjuna:** The great disciple of Krishna, who imparted to him the teachings found in the Bhagavad Gita. The third of the Pandava brothers who were major figures in the Mahabharata War. His name literally means “bright,” “white,” or “clear.”

**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.

**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.

**Arya Shastra:** Scriptures of the Vedic religion—Sanatana Dharma.

**Aryama(n):** Chief of the Pitris.

**Asadharana Dharma:** Extraordinary dharma—dharma outside the general or ordinary dharma.

**Asakti:** Attachment; bondage.

**Asana:** Posture; seat; meditation posture; Hatha Yoga posture.

**Ashram(a) (1):** A place for spiritual discipline and study, usually a monastic residence.

**Ashram(a) (2):** stage of life. In Hinduism life is divided ideally into four stages (ashramas): 1) the celibate student life (brahmacharya); 2) the married household life (grihastha); 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.

**Ashtanga Yoga:** The “eight-limbed” Yoga of Patanjali consisting of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi (see separate entries for each “limb”).

**Ashuddha:** Impure; incorrect.

**Asmi:** I am; I exist.

**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.

**Ashwabhava:** Lacking or contrary to one’s swabhava.

**Atithi:** Guest. The practice of feeding a stranger or unknown guest is known as atithi yajna and is one of the duties of a householder.

**Atma(n):** The individual spirit or Self that is one with Brahman; the essential being, nature or identity of each sentient being.

**Atmajnana:** Direct knowledge of the Self; Brahma-Jnana.

**Atmanivedana:** Dedicating one's entire self to the divine; self-surrender.

**Atmapratyaksha:** Direct perception of the Self.

**Atyantika pralaya:** Final; ultimate; the state wherein the individual obtains release from the bondage of matter.

**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.

**Avayava:** Premise; member; component part; portion; particle.

**Aveshavatara:** Avatara for temporary purposes; temporary avatara by overshadowing or possession.

**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.

**Avidya-devi:** Mahamaya, the "Great illusion;" divine Power operating as identified with the Supreme Lord. A title of Shakti, the Goddess.

**Avyakta(m):** Unmanifest; invisible; when the three gunas are in a state of equilibrium, the undifferentiated.

**Bali:** sacrifice; offering; oblation.

**Baul or Bauls:** A group of mystic minstrels from Bangladesh. There are also some people in the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura and Assam's Barak Valley, who came from Bangladesh. Bauls constitute both a syncretic religious sect and a musical tradition. Bauls are a very heterogeneous group, with many sects, but their membership mainly consists of Vaishnava Hindus and Sufi Muslims. They can often be identified by their distinctive clothes and musical instruments. Although Bauls comprise only a small fraction of the Bengali population, their influence on the culture of Bengal is considerable.

**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.

**Bhagavan:** The Lord; the One endowed with the attributes: infinite dominion, infinite might, infinite glory, infinite splendor, infinite wisdom and infinite renunciation; the Personal God.

**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 Yoga:** The yoga of attaining union with God through the prescribed spiritual discipline of the path of devotion.

**Bhakti Yogi:** One who practices Bhakti Yoga.

**Bharat(a):** The proper Sanskrit name for India; one of the brothers of Rama; a

title of Arjuna.

**Bharati; Indian:** Indian.

**Bhava:** Subjective state of being (existence); attitude of mind; mental attitude or feeling; state of realization in the heart or mind.

**Bhavana(m):** Meditation. “Bhavanam is setting the heart on the Lord” (Shankara, Commentary on the Yoga Sutras). It has the connotation of all the awareness becoming focused and absorbed in it.

**Bhavatmic:** Related to the actuating cause of feelings and emotions of the mind (bhava).

**Bhaya:** Fear; terror.

**Bhayanaka:** Fear-inducing; threatening; fearful, dreadful; terror.

**Bhishma:** A venerable teacher of dharma in the Mahabharata.

**Bhoga:** Enjoyment, pleasure; experience; perception; also food (usually what has been offered to a deity).

**Bhogyā:** Object of experience or enjoyment.

**Bhokta:** Enjoyer; experiencer; subject of experience or enjoyment.

**Bhuh/Bhuloka:** The earth-plane.

**Bhumi:** The earth; ground; region; place; plane.

**Deva (1):** What has come into being; an entity as opposed to the unmanifested; any of the five elementary constituents of the universe; element.

**Bhuta (2):** A spirit. Some bhutas are subhuman nature spirits or “elementals,” but some are earthbound human spirits–ghosts. Bhutas may be either positive or negative.

**Bhuta (3):** All living subhuman creatures, especially animals.

**Bhuta-yajna:** Sacrificial offerings to the various kinds of spirits: bhutas; offerings made to animals.

**Bhuvah:** The higher etheric or the astral world.

**Bhuvana:** World; loka.

**Bija Mantra:** A “seed” mantra from which realization grows as a tree from a seed; usually a single-syllable mantra.

**Bindu:** Point; dot; seed; source; the creative potency of anything where all energies are focused.

**Bindu dhyana:** Meditation on the mystic Point from which all creation arises and into which it resolves.

**Bishikh:** Weapon; arrows.

**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.

**Brahma-sad bhava:** The feeling or attitude: God Is The Sole Reality.

**Brahma dhyana:** Meditation on Nirguna Brahman which is beyond all tattwas and which transcends mind and speech.

**Brahma Sutras:** A treatise by Vyasa on Vedanta philosophy in the form of

aphorisms. Also called the Vedanta Sutras or Vedanta Darshana.

**Brahmabhava(na):** Feeling of identity with Brahman, as well as of everything as Brahman.

**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 Brahmajnani.

**Brahmana (2):** A member of the Brahmin caste.

**Brahmana (3):** 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.

**Brahmarandhra:** “The hole of Brahman,” the subtle (astral) aperture in the crown of the head. Said to be the gateway to the Absolute (Brahman) in the thousand-petaled lotus (sahasrara) in the crown of the head. Liberated beings are said to exit the physical body through this aperture at death.

**Brahmin:** See Brahmana.

**Buddhi:** Intellect; intelligence; understanding; reason; the thinking mind; the higher mind, which is the seat of wisdom; the discriminating faculty.

**Buddhi-tattwa:** Principle of intelligence.

**Chakra:** Wheel. Plexus; center of psychic energy in the human system, particularly in the spine or head.

**Chala:** Arguing; quibbling; sophistry; fraud; deceit; pretense; pretext; guise; delusion.

**Chandala:** An untouchable, or outcaste; literally: “wild” or “bad.”

**Chidakasha:** “The Space (Ether) of Consciousness (Chit).” The infinite, all-pervading expanse of Consciousness from which all “things” proceed; the subtle space of Consciousness in the Sahasrara (Thousand-petalled Lotus). The true “heart” of all things. Brahman in Its aspect as limitless knowledge; unbounded intelligence. This is a familiar concept of the Upanishads. It is not meant that the physical ether is consciousness. The Pure Consciousness (Chit) is like the ether (Akasha), an all-pervading continuum.

**Chala:** Fraud; deceit, pretext, guise.

**Chit:** Consciousness (that is spirit or purusha); “to perceive, observe, think, be aware, know;” pure unitary Consciousness. The principle of universal intelligence or consciousness.

**Chitra:** Bright; clear; various; strange; wonderful; variegated color; a picture.

**Chitswarupa:** Of the very form of pure 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.

**Chittadagranthi:** The knot or tie of consciousness (chitta), joining the consciousness with something.

**Crore:** Ten million.

**Daitya(s):** 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 aryas were also called demons–daityas or asuras.

**Daiva:** Belonging to or coming from the gods/God; celestial; divine; God who controls all beings and gives them what is their due; chance; fate; destiny; controlling power; royal; relating to powers.

**Daiva Jagat:** The world, the realm, of the gods (devatas).

**Daiva Loka:** The world, the realm, of the gods (devatas).

**Daivi(c):** Same as Daiva and Divya; divine.

**Dana:** “Giving;” gift; charity; almsgiving; self-sacrifice; donation; generosity.

**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.

**Dasaratha:** The father of Rama.

**Dasya:** The attitude of a devotee expressing the relationship of a servant with God.

**Deha:** Physical body.

**Dehabhimana:** Egoistic attachment to the body.

**Dehadhyasa:** False identification with the body.

**Dehashuddhi:** Purity or purification of the body.

**Dehi:** One who has a body; the conscious embodied self; Jiva or the individual soul.

**Desha:** Place; locus; spot; space; country.

**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.

**Devata:** Godhead; god; divinity; celestial being. See Deva.

**Devi:** Goddess; the Supreme Shakti (Divine Power) or Divine Mother, or a demigoddess.

**Dharana:** Concentration of mind; fixing the mind upon a single thing or point. “Dharana is the confining [fixing] of the mind within a point or area” (Yoga Sutras 3:1).

**Dharma-raj(a):** See Yama and Yudhishtira.

**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.

**Dharma shastras:** Scriptures which set forth the rules for society and individuals, including spiritual observances. Manusmṛiti is the most authoritative—and the foundation—of all the dharmashastras of India.

**Dhatu:** Element; original element; core; constituent; the vital force in the human being by conserving which, through celibacy, the yogi develops ojas and tejas.

**Dhira:** Steadfast; strong; bold; courageous.

**Dhirata:** Equipoise or steadiness.

**Dhwani:** Sound; noise; thunder; vibration; tone.

**Divya:** Divine; divine nature; heavenly; celestial; sacred; luminous; supernatural.

**Divya desha:** A holy place; a place where the Divine Presence dwells; a heavenly, celestial place.

**Dravya:** Substance, thing; object; the ingredients of anything.

**Drishtanta:** Typical instance; illustration; example.

**Dhyana(m)/Dhyana Yoga:** Meditation; contemplation.

**Durga:** “Incomprehensible One;” “Difficult to reach;” the Universal Mother; she rides a lion (or tiger) and carries a weapon in each of her eight arms symbolizing the powers of the Self against ignorance and evil. She is invoked against all forms of evil—physical and metaphysical. Considered the consort, the shakti, of Shiva.

**Dvaita/Dwaita:** Dual; duality; dualism.

**Dwandwa(s):** The pairs of opposites inherent in nature (prakṛiti) 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.

**Dwapara Yuga:** Dwapara Yuga consists of 864,000 years.

**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.

**Ekatattwa:** The principle or state of unity, union, or oneness; All-in-One-and-One-in-All.

**Ganapati:** “Lord of the Ganas” (the spirits that always accompany Shiva). See Ganesha.

**Gandha:** Smell; scent.

**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.

**Garbha:** Womb; belly; embryo; act of conception; inside, middle, or interior of anything; offspring of the sky.

**Garbhadhana (Giving of a Womb) Samskara:** The ritual done by a prospective father to ensure that conception will take place and to ensure that the prospective



mother's womb and the event of conception itself will be of optimum nature. Implied in this rite is the intention that the jiva to become incarnate in the mother's womb will be of the highest character in all ways, including its level of evolution and its karma.

**Gati:** Way; path.

**Gauri:** "The Golden One." A title of the Divine Mother, consort of Shiva.

**Gayatri Mantra:** A Rig Vedic mantra in the gayatri meter invoking the solar powers of evolution and enlightenment, recited at sunrise and sunset.

**Ghee:** Clarified butter.

**Gita:** Song; The Bhagavad Gita.

**Gopis:** The milkmaids of Vrindavan, companions and devotees of Krishna.

**Grihastha:** One who is living in the second stage (ashrama) of Hindu social life; married householder's life.

**Grihastya:** 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.

**Hanuman:** A powerful monkey chief of extraordinary strength and prowess, whose exploits are celebrated in the epic Ramayana, the life of Rama. He was an ideal devotee (bhakta) and servant of Lord Rama.

**Hari-Hara:** A divine form that is half Vishnu and half Shiva, demonstrating their oneness as God.

**Hatha Yoga:** A system consisting of physical exercises, postures, and breathing exercises for gaining control over the physical body and prana.

**Havan(a):** Fire sacrifice through offerings into fire; yajna.

**Hetwabhasa:** Fallacious argument or semblance of reason; fallacious inference or reasoning.

**Himsa:** Injury, violence; killing.

**Hridaya:** Heart; essential center or core of something; essence; the Self; a special mantric formula that is felt to embody the very being of the deity specially worshiped by the devotee.

**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.

**Ida:** The subtle channel that extends from the base of the spine to the medulla on the left side of the spine.

**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.

**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.

**Ishwarabhava:** Lordliness, exercising rulership.

**Jada:** Inert; insentient; unconscious; matter.

**Jadatmika:** Possessing the qualities of jada.

**Jagat:** World; cosmos; the ever-changing.

**Jaiva/Jaivika:** Pertaining to the jiva.

**Jaiva karma:** The karma of the individual soul–jiva—which includes the past karma accrued by the individual jiva in his previous lives, and the right action each jiva must perform to elevate his being and consciousness and lead to his liberation through Self-realization.

**Jala (1):** The Element of Water.

**Jala (2):** Not real; a net; a snare; illusion.

**Jalpa:** Arguing constructively as well as destructively for victory in a debate; sophistry; somehow to support one’s own statement without regard to truth.

**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.

**Japa:** Repetition of a mantra.

**Jarayu:** Womb.

**Jarayuja:** Womb-born beings; born in a living state.

**Jati (1):** Birth: species; class; classification; creation; kinsman; relative; community; race; caste; lineage.

**Jati (2):** Futility; specious.

**Jiva:** Individual spirit.

**Jiva deha:** A living body—a body inhabited by a jiva.

**Jivanmukta:** One who is liberated here and now in this present life.

**Jivanmukti:** Liberation in this life.

**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 Bhumi:** Planes of knowledge.

**Jnana Kanda:** The parts of the Veda dealing with the knowledge of the Absolute Brahman; the Upanishads.

**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.

**Jnana yogi:** One following the path of knowledge–jnana yoga.

**Jnanada:**

**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).

**Jyoti:** Light; flame; illumination; luminosity; effulgence.

**Jyotir dhyana:** Meditation on the Inner Light aspect of Brahman.

**Jyotishmati:** Effulgence; full of light.

**Kairya:** Action; karma.

**Kaivalya:** Transcendental state of Absolute Independence; state of absolute freedom from conditioned existence; moksha; isolation; final beatitude; emancipation.

**Kala (1):** Time; death (or Yama); fate; black.

**Kala (2):** A unit of time; part; aspect; bit.

**Kalavatara:** A partial incarnation of God.

**Kali Yuga:** Kali Yuga consists of 432,000 years.

**Kalpa:** A cycle of time of an extremely long duration; way; method; a “day” of Brahma—4,320,000,000 years is the duration of one day or one night of Brahma.

**Kalpanta:** The end of a kalpa; the end of a cycle.

**Kama:** Desire; passion; lust.

**Kampan:** Vibration.

**Kamyakarma:** Any action done with desire for fruits thereof.

**Kanta:** Beloved, liked, loved desired, lovely, beautiful, dear.

**Kapila:** The great sage who formulated the Sankhya philosophy which is endorsed by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. (See the entry under Sankhya.)

**Karana:** “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 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.”

**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 Mimamsa.

**Karma Yoga:** The Yoga of selfless (unattached ) action; performance of one's own duty; service of humanity.

**Karma Yogi:** One who practices karma yoga.

**Karmakhanda:** The ritual portion of the Veda. The philosophy that Vedic ritual is the only path to perfection.

**Karmakhandi(n):** One who follows the Karma-kanda as philosophy and practice.

**Karma-samskara:** Actuating impulse or impression of karma.

**Karmashaya:** Deep layers of consciousness where the karmas are stored in the form of impressions, symbols or archetypes; repository of karma; aggregate of works done; latent impressions of action which will eventually fructify.

**Karmendriyas:** The five organs of action: voice, hand, foot, organ of excretion, and the organ of generation.

**Karmi:** One who acts.

**Karmic:** Having to do with karma.

**Karta:** The doer, the agent—specifically, of action.

**Karttikeya:** See Subramanya.

**Kavacha(m):** A protective amulet inscribed with mantras of a particular god or goddess that is worn on the body. Some consider that a tilak, a sacred mark made on the forehead or between the eyebrows, denoting what form of God the person worships, also functions as a kavacha.

**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.

**Krishna (1):** Dark; black.

**Krishna (2):** 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.

**Krishna Gati:** Black or Dark Path.

**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.

**Kriya Shakti:** The power or faculty of action.

**Kriyamana:** Literally: “what is being done;” the effect of the deeds of the present life to be experienced in the future; same as Agami.

**Kshatriya:** A member of the ruler/warrior caste.

**Kulakundalini:** The primordial cosmic energy located in the individual.

**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.

**Lakh:** One hundred thousand.

**Lakshmi:** The consort of Vishnu; the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

**Laya:** Dissolution; merging.

**Laya Kriya:** See Laya Yoga.

**Laya Yoga:** Dissolution; merging; process of absorption of the individual soul into the Supreme Soul; another name of Nada-yoga or Kundalini-yoga.

**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.

**Lila Vighraha:** The Virat Purusha's material expression, embodying His cosmic "play"; literally "play image," i.e., the cosmos and the play of His will in cosmic phenomena all combining to form His image, as it were. The Lila Vighraha which transcends the limit of word and mind.

**Lilonmukti:** The fourth state of Realization, where Prakriti (root-nature) is known, and Maya (illusion) overcome.

**Linga:** Mark; gender; sign; symbol. Usually a reference to a column-like or egg-shaped symbol of Shiva.

**Lingasharira:** Subtle body; astral body (also called sukshma-sharira); the subtle or psychic body that becomes particularly active during the dream-state by creating a world of its own; the three sheaths of intelligence, mind and vital energy constitute this body.

**Loka:** World or realm; sphere, level, or plane of existence, whether physical, astral, or causal.

**Madhyama:** Middle; moderate; the middle stage of sound as it develops from silent to fully audible or spoken. Sound in its subtle form as it exists in the mind/psyche before its gross manifestation.

**Mahabodha:** The Great Awakening.

**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.

**Mahabhava:** Samadhi; supreme love and yearning for God, exemplified by Sri Radha.

**Mahabhutas:** The Five Elements (Panchabhuta): ether (akasha), air (vayu), fire (agni), water (ap), and earth (prithvi).

**Mahabodha:** The Great Awakening.

**Mahakala:** Literally: great or endless time; cosmic time; undivided time; timelessness; Shiva in his aspect of dissolver (not “destroyer”).

**Mahakasha:** Limitless Space (Ether).

**Mahalaya:** The Great Dissolution, Great Merging; process of absorption of the individual soul into the Supreme Soul.

**Mahamaya:** “Great illusion;” divine Power operating as identified with the Supreme Lord. A title of Shakti, the Goddess.

**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.

**Mahapurusha:** Great being; great soul; a person of supreme spiritual character and realization; a sage; the Supreme Lord.

**Maharani:** Great Queen. In India the wives of the rulers of very large states, the Maharajas (Great Kings), were called Maharanis. The rulers of lesser states were called Rajas (Kings), and their wives were Ranis (Queens).

**Maharishi:** Great sage.

**Mahat:** Great; the first product from Prakriti in evolution, according to Sankhya philosophy; intellect; the principle of intelligence or Buddhi; Hiranyagarbha or Brahma.

**Mahatma:** Literally: “a great soul [atma].” Usually a designation for a sannyasi, sage or saint.

**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.”

**Mahavakya:** Literally: “Great Saying.” The highest Vedantic truth, found in the Upanishads expressing the highest Vedantic truths or the identity between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. There are four Mahavakyas: 1) Prajñānam Brahma—“Consciousness is Brahman” (Aitareya Upanishad 3.3); 2) Ayam Atma Brahma—“This Self is Brahman” (Mandukya Upanishad 1.2); 3) Tat Twam Asi—“Thou art That” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7); 4) Aham Brahmasmi—“I am Brahman” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10).

**Mahavishnu:** See Vishnu.

**Mahayajna:** Great sacrifice.

**Mahayuga:** The cycle of Kali, Dwapara, Treta and Satya Yugas, consisting of 4,320,000 years.

**Mahesh/Maheshwara:** The Great Ishwara (Lord); Shiva.

**Mahishasura:** A terrible demon killed by the goddess Durga as related in the Devi Mahatmyam, a scripture of seven hundred verses extolling the goddess.

**Manana:** Thinking, pondering, reflecting, considering.

**Manas(a):** The sensory mind; the perceiving faculty that receives the messages of the senses.

**Manasic/Manasika:** Mental; having to do with the mind (manas).

**Manasika japa:** Mental repetition of a Mantra.

**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.

**Mandapa:** Tent; open hall; pavilion; pandal; temple.

**Manes:** Spirits of the dead.

**Manomaya kosha:** “The sheath of the mind (manas–mental substance).” The level (kosha) of the sensory mind. The astral body.

**Mantra(m):** 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.

**Mantra Yoga:** The Yoga of the Divine Word; the science of sound; the path to divine union through repetition of a mantra—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.

**Manvantara:** An age of Manu (1). Within a cosmic age (kalpa) there are fourteen manvantaras.

**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.

**Mithya:** Not real; neither real nor unreal; illusory; false; untrue; incorrect.

**Mithyajnana:** False knowledge.

**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.

**Mridu:** Mild.

**Mrita(m):** Dead.

**Mrityu(h):** Death; of death; a title of Yama, the Lord of Death.

**Mrityu Loka:** Any world, especially the physical, material world, where undergoing a death process is possible; one of the seven sub-worlds.

**Mrityum:** Death.

**Mudra:** A position—usually of the hands/fingers—which inherently produces a

desired state in the subtle energy levels (prana) according to the Tantric system; a Hatha Yoga posture; a position of the eyes in meditation.

**Mukta:** One who is liberated–freed–usually in the sense of one who has attained moksha or spiritual liberation.

**Mukta jiva:** A person liberated from all kinds of bondage; One freed from birth and death.

**Mukti:** Moksha; liberation.

**Muktiprada:** That giving final liberation (moksha).

**Muktis (Four):** Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya and Sayuja–the four states of Liberation.

**Muladhara chakra:** “Seat of the root.” Energy center located at the base of the spine. Seat of the Earth element.

**Mulaprakriti:** Avyaktam; the Root [Basic] Energy from which all things are formed. The Divine Prakriti or Energy of God.

**Murdha:** The spot between the eyebrows; the ajna chakra; the forehead; the head in general; the crown of the head; the foremost or topmost part of anything; roof of the mouth.

**Murti:** Image; statue; idol; figure; embodiment.

**Nabhi:** Navel; center; origin; affinity.

**Nada:** Sound; the resonance of sound; mystic inner sound; the primal sound or first vibration from which all creation has emanated; the first manifestation of the unmanifested Absolute; the inner sound of a mantra experienced in meditation.

**Nadi:** A channel in the subtle (astral) body through which subtle prana (psychic energy) flows; a physical nerve. Yoga treatises say that there are seventy-two thousand nadis in the energy system of the human being.

**Nadi shuddhi:** Purification of the Nadis.

**Naimittica:** Occasional; temporary; not permanent.

**Nama-rupa:** Name and form; the nature of the world.

**Nandi:** The bull on which Shiva rides; or the cowherd “father” of Krishna.

**Narada:** A primeval sage to whom some of the verses of the Rig Veda are attributed.

**Naraka/Narakaloka:** Hell. In Sanatana Dharma’s cosmology there are many hells according to the karma of those dwelling in them before being reincarnated.

**Nari:** A woman; a female; wife.

**Nari dharma:** Duties of females.

**Narmadeshwar Shiva Linga:** See Shiva Linga.

**Nastik(a):** An atheist.

**Nididhyasana:** Meditation; contemplation; profound and continuous meditation. It is a continuous, unbroken stream of ideas of the same kind as those of the Absolute. It removes the contrariwise tendencies of the mind.

**Nigrahasthana:** refutation, confutation, occasion for rebuke, vulnerable points.

**Nirguna:** Without attributes or qualities (gunas).

**Nirguna Brahman:** The impersonal, attributeless Absolute beyond all description



or designation.

**Nirlipta:** Unsmearred; undefiled; unattached; unconcerned.

**Nirnaya:** “Establishing”; decisive knowledge; conclusion; ascertainment; confirmation.

**Nirodha:** Restraint; restriction; suppression; dissolving/dissolution; cessation; disappearance; control inhibition; annihilation; process of ending.

**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.

**Nirvichara samadhi:** A stage in samadhi wherein the mind (chitta) no longer identified with a subtle object or assumes its form, simply resting in perception without analytical awareness of its nature by means of the buddhi, whose operation has become completely suspended so that only pure awareness remains; without deliberation and reasoning or inquiry.

**Nirvikalpa Samadhi:** Samadhi in which there is no objective experience or experience of “qualities” whatsoever, and in which the triad of knower, knowledge and known does not exist; purely subjective experience of the formless and qualitiless and unconditioned Absolute. The highest state of samadhi, beyond all thought, attribute, and description.

**Nishkama:** Free from wish or desire; desirelessness; selfless, unselfish; action without expectation of fruits.

**Nishkama bhava:** Motiveless, spontaneous feeling; the attitude of non-expectation of fruits of action.

**Nishkama karma:** Desireless action; disinterested action; action dedicated to God without personal desire for the fruits of the action; selfless action.

**Nishkama Karma Yoga:** Action without expectation of fruits, and done without personal interest or egoism.

**Nishkriya:** Actionless; inactive; beyond all activities; without movement.

**Nishreyasa/Nishshreyas:** Supreme bliss; unification with God final emancipation; see Moksha.

**Nishtha:** Steadfastness; establishment in a certain state.

**Nitya:** Eternal; permanent; unchanging; the ultimate Reality; the eternal Absolute. Secondarily: daily or obligatory as in Nityakarma.

**Nityakarma:** Daily obligatory rite, as Sandhyavandana, etc.

**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.

**Nri:** Man; person; mankind; people.

**Nyasa:** The practice of assigning the various parts of the body to different deities, which is usually accompanied with mantras and corresponding gestures or mudras.

**Nyaya:** Logic; one of the six schools of Indian philosophy.

**Om:** The Pranava or the sacred syllable symbolizing and embodying Brahman.

**Omkar(a):** Om.

**Om Tat Sat:** A designation of Brahman; used as a benediction, a solemn invocation of the divine blessing.

**Pada:** Foot.

**Pancha Saguna Devatmaka:** The five divine attributes.

**Panchatattwa:** The five elements: earth (prithvi), water (apa), fire (agni), air (vayu) and ether (akasha).

**Panchikarana:** The theory that every physical object contains all the five elements in various proportions.

**Panchopasana:** The five different kinds of worship related to worshipping the five deities: Ganesha (Ganapati), Surya, Shakti, Vishnu and Shiva.

**Panchupasana:** See Panchopasana.

**Pani:** Hand.

**Papa:** Sin; demerit; evil; sinful deeds; evil deeds; trouble; harm; anything which takes one away from dharma.

**Para:** Highest; universal; transcendent; supreme; beyond.

**Parabhakti:** Supreme devotion to God. This leads to jnana.

**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.

**Paraloka:** The world beyond this world; the future life. Not a technical term for a particular level or loka, but just a general term for a/the world we go to after death.

**Param[a]purusha:** The Supreme Spirit; Supreme Person. See Purusha.

**Paraprakriti:** The higher cosmic energy through which the supreme Brahman appears as the individual souls.

**Paratpara:** Greater than the great; higher than the high.

**Parvati:** “Daughter of the Mountain;” the daughter of King Himalaya; the consort of Shiva; an incarnation of the Divine Mother.

**Patala/Patala Loka:** Nether world; hell. In ancient Sanskrit texts the Western Hemisphere is called Patal Desh, the Underworld.

**Payu:** Anus; the organ of excretion.

**Pinda:** Part of the whole; individual; the body—either of the individual jiva or the cosmic body of Ishwara. It can also mean an organized whole or a unity of diversities.

**Pingala:** The subtle channel that extends from the base of the spine to the medulla on the right side of the spine.

**Pita:** Father.

**Pitha (1):** Seat; throne; chair. It also indicates a place where something is centered or established. For example, a place of power may be referred to as a “shakti

pitha” or a place favorable to meditation as a “yoga pitha.” A shrine to a deity may also be called a pitha, such as “Sarada pitha,” etc., meaning that the deity resides or is established there.

**Pitha (2):** Each world system, consisting of its suns, moons, stars, planets, etc., is maintained in its position by the harmony of the forces of attraction and repulsion. And this revolving “wheel” of a world system is called the Pitha of the Brahmanda. Similarly, the circular path on which our earth travels is its Pitha.

**Pitri:** A departed ancestor, a forefather.

**Pitriloka:** The world occupied by the divine hierarchy of ancestors.

**Pitriyajna:** Sacrifice made to the ancestor-pitris.

**Pradhana:** “The Chief.” The root-base for all elements; undifferentiated causal matter. See Prakriti.

**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.

**Prakrita:** Original; natural; ordinary; vulgar; vernacular; 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).

**Prakritic:** See Prakrita.

**Pralaya:** Dissolution. See Mahapralaya.

**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.

**Pranava Dhwani:** The sound of the Pranava: Om.

**Pranavayu:** The upward moving prana in the body, controller of the heart and lungs.

**Pranayama:** Control of the subtle life forces, often by means of special modes of breathing. Therefore breath control or breathing exercises are usually mistaken for pranayama. It also means the refining (making subtle) of the breath, and its lengthening through spontaneous slowing down of the respiratory rate.

**Prapancha:** The material world.

**Prarabdha:** Karma that has become activated and begun to manifest and bear fruit in this life; karmic “seeds” that have begun to “sprout.”

**Prasthanatraya:** The triple canon or foundation of Sanatana Dharma: the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Sutras.

**Prasupta:** Dormant; fallen into sleep; fast asleep; sleeping; having slept; asleep–insensible; quiet; inactive; latent.

**Pratyahara:** Abstraction or withdrawal of the senses from their objects, the fifth limb of Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga.

**Pravritti:** Action; endeavor. Literally: “to turn forth.” Active involvement in the world; attached action.

**Prayojana:** Result; fruit; the final end.

**Prema:** Love; divine love (for God).

**Prema-bhakti:** Intense love of God.

**Premabhava:** Feeling of love.

**Preta:** Ghost; spirit of the dead.

**Preta Loka:** World or realm of the dead.

**Prithvi:** The element of earth with density and fragrance as its characteristic features.

**Prithivitattva:** Principle of earth-element.

**Priyatama:** The most beloved one.

**Puja:** Worship; ceremonial (ritual) worship; adoration; honor. Usually involving the image of a deity.

**Punya:** Merit; virtue; meritorious acts; virtuous deeds.

**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.

**Purna:** Full; complete; infinite; absolute; Brahman.

**Purnavata(a)r:** A full or total incarnation of God: one who has evolved through all the levels (worlds) of relative existence and returned to earthly rebirth for the salvation of mankind–virtually the Absolute in human form.

**Purusha (1):** “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).

**Purusha (2):** A male human being.

**Purusha dharma:** Duties of males.

**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.

**Purva Mimamsa:** See Mimamsa.

**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-bhakti:** Supreme love, making one attached only to God.

**Raga-dwesha:** The continual cycle of attraction and repulsion; like and dislike; love and hatred.

**Raga-ragini:** Melodic structures in music.

**Ragatmika:** Having the character of Raga.

**Raja:** King.

**Raja Yoga:** See Ashtanga Yoga.

**Rajarshi:** “Royal sage;” a king who knows Brahman; an epithet of King Janaka.

**Rajas:** Activity, passion, desire for an object or goal.

**Rajoguna:** Activity, passion, desire for an object or goal—the quality or guna of rajas.

**Rajya:** Kingly; princely; royal; kingdom; royalty, kingship; rulership; sovereignty; country; realm.

**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.

**Rashis:** Other solar systems immediately surrounding this solar system of ours.

**Reta-dharana:** Control-retention of the vital forces/semen.

**Retas:** Semen.

**Rishi:** Sage; seer of the Truth.

**Rochaka:** Pleasure-inducing; charming; interesting; brightening; enlightening, pleasing; agreeable.

**Rudra:** Shiva. Derived from *rud*—he who drives away sin or suffering.

**Rudras (1):** “Roarers;” Vedic deities of destruction for renewal, the chief of which is Shiva; storm gods.

**Rudras (2):** Minor deities associated with Shiva (Rudra): Nirriti, Shambhu, Ajapad, Kapali, Pingal, Bheem, Virupaksh, Vilohit, Ahirbudhannya, Bhav, Chand and Shastray.

**Rupa:** Form; body.

**Sachchidananda:** See Satchidananda.

**Sadachara:** Morality; right behavior.

**Sadhak/Sadhaka:** One who practices spiritual discipline—sadhana—particularly

meditation.

**Sadhana:** Spiritual practice.

**Sadharana Dharma:** General or universal Dharma.

**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.

**Saguna Dhyana:** Meditation on the Divine with attributes; meditation on a divine form—a god or goddess.

**Sahaja:** Natural; innate; spontaneous; inborn.

**Sahaja Karma:** That to which one is born or naturally inclined; a particular action—spontaneous karma.

**Sahasr(ar)adala:** The Sahasrara chakra located in the center of the brain according to the Nath Panth tradition.

**Sakama:** Action with expectation of fruits; desire-oriented attitude, motivated by selfish desire.

**Sakhya:** The attitude of a devotee, expressing the relationship of a friend with God; examples are Arjuna, Uddhava and the cowherds of Brindavana.

**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.

**Samanya:** Genus; general; generality; common; ordinary; having common characteristics or common nature; class universal feature; concept.

**Samashti:** Cosmic; collective; an integrated whole of the same class of entity.

**Samavaya:** Combination; union; conjunction; constant and inseparable connection or inherence; existence of one thing in another.

**Samipya:** Being in close proximity and association with one's object of meditation and worship; being near to God.

**Samshaya:** Doubt; suspicion.

**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 (annaprasannam), 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.

**Samyavastha:** State of equilibrium; harmony of the three gunas; the state of the unmanifested being.

**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.

**Sanchita:** Sanchita karma.

**Sanchita karma:** The vast store of accumulated actions done in the past, the fruits of which have not yet been reaped.

**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.

**Sannyasic:** Pertaining to sannyasa and the life and thought of a sannyasin.

**Sannyasini:** A female renunciate; a nun.

**Saptamadhikar:** The reaching of the seventh highest stage after passing through the six prior stages of Hatha Yoga.

**Saptasati Gita:** The Sri Devi Mahatmyam; the Durgasaptashati).

**Saraswati:** Vidya Devi—the goddess of speech, wisdom, learning and the arts—particularly music.

**Sarupya:** Having the same form as God.

**Sat-Chit-Ananda:** See Satchidananda.

**Satchidananda:** Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; Brahman.

**Sati Dharma:** The dharmic code for women.

**Satta:** Being; Existence.

**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.

**Satya Yuga:** Satya Yuga consists of 1,728,000 years. See Yuga.

**Savichara:** With deliberation and reasoning or enquiry.

**Savichara samadhi:** A stage in samadhi wherein the mind (chittta) is identified with some subtle object and assumes its form, being aware of what it is and capable of analyzing it by means of the purified buddhi; with deliberation and reasoning or inquiry.

**Savikalpa Samadhi:** Samadhi in which there is objective experience or experience of “qualities” and with the triad of knower, knowledge and known; lesser samadhi; cognitive samadhi; samadhi of wisdom; meditation with limited external awareness. Samprajñata samadhi.

**Savitri:** The sun; a title of Shiva; a title of Indra.

**Savitri Gayatri:** A mantra of the Rig Veda which is recited for unfoldment of the intellectual powers leading to enlightenment.

**Sayujya:** Closely united with; united with God; becoming one with God.

**Sayujyata:** The state of being in Sayujya.

**Shabda:** Sound; word.

**Shabda Brahman:** Sound-God; Brahman in the Form of Sound; Soham; the Vedas.

**Shabda tanmatra:** Subtle principle of sound.

**Shaiva/Shavite:** A worshipper of Shiva; pertaining to Shiva.

**Shakta:** A worshipper of Shakti, the Divine Feminine.

**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.

**Shankaracharya:** Shankara; the title of the head of one of the major monasteries (maths) of the Swami Order founded by Shankara. There are four maths in the four quarters of India: Sringeri, Dwaraka, Badrinath and Jagannath Puri.

**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.



**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. The natural egg-shaped stones found only at one place in the sacred Narmada river are considered actual embodiments of Shiva and so are called Narmadeshwar Shiva lingas.

**Shraddha (1):** Faith; confidence or assurance that arises from personal experience.

**Shraddha (2):** Rituals for the welfare of the dead, done in the days after the death and then usually done on the anniversary of the death.

**Shravana:** Hearing; study; listening to reading of the scriptures or instruction in spiritual life.

**Shruti:** That which is heard; revealed scripture in the sense of divine communication. Usually applied to the Vedas, Shankara also spoke of the Upanishads as Shruti.

**Shuddha:** Pure; clear; clean; untainted.

**Shuddhi:** The state of purity (shuddha); purification.

**Shudra:** A member of the laborer, servant caste.

**Shukla:** Light; white.

**Shukla Gati:** White-, Light-, or Bright Path.

**Siddha:** A perfected—liberated—being, an adept, a seer, a perfect yogi.

**Siddhanta:** Established tenet; proved truth; or doctrine.

**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.

**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).

**Sneha:** Affection, love, kindness, tenderness; friendship, emotional attachment.

**Sparsha:** Touch; sense contact.

**Sparshana:** Touching.

**Srishti:** Creation; manifest universe; manifestation; emanation; letting go; projection or gradual unfoldment of what exists potentially in the cause; evolution of the universe from its seed state.

**Sthana:** Position; abode; residence.

**Sthula:** Gross material; physical entity; atomic matter.

**Sthula Brahmanda:** A material, physical world.

**Sthula dhyana:** Meditation on some externally visible form as representing the Supreme, the Saguna Brahman.

**Sthula kriya:** Physical processes.

**Sthula Prapancha:** The material world.

**Sthula sharira:** Gross body; physical body; body of atomic matter.

**Sthulavayu:** Physical breath.

**Stotra:** A hymn or verse in praise of a deity or an avatara.

**Stuti:** Praise; glorification.

**Subramanya:** The god of war and son of Shiva and Parvati; Skanda.

**Sukshma:** Fine; subtle; intangible; invisible; belonging to a subtler order of existence than the physical.

**Sukshma Kriya:** Subtle super-physical processes.

**Sukshma sharira:** Subtle body; astral body (also called linga sharira).

**Surya:** The sun; the presiding deity of the sun, sometimes identified with Vishnu (Surya-Narayana) or the Absolute Brahman.

**Surya-mandala:** The circle (orbit) of the sun.

**Sushumna:** A subtle passage in the midst of the spinal column, corresponding to the spinal cord, that extends from the base of the spine to the brahmarandhra at the top of the head.

**Sushupta:** Fast asleep.

**Sushupti:** The dreamless sleep state.

**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.

**Swadha:** The equivalent of Swaha, used in offerings for the departed.

**Swaha:** An oblation or offering made to gods; an exclamation used in offering oblations to gods.

**Swarga:** Heaven-world; the celestial region.

**Swarga loka:** Swarga.

**Swarodaya:** Science of breath: special forms of breathing and control of the breath.

**Swarupa:** "Form of the Self." Natural-true-form; actual or essential nature; essence. A revelatory appearance that makes clear the true nature of some thing.

**Swedaja:** Sweat (moisture) born; born spontaneously or generated automatically from inorganic matter through the action of moisture and heat.

**Tamas:** Dullness, darkness, inertia, folly, and ignorance.

**Tamasic:** Possessed of the qualities of the tamo guna (tamas). Ignorant; dull; inert; and dark.

**Tamoguna:** The quality or guna of tamas.

**Tanmatras:** The pure elements; the subtle essence of the five elements, elemental

essence.

**Tanmaya:** Made up of That (Tat); formed of That; absorbed in That; identical with That; consisting of That—especially where “That” is the Absolute.

**Tantra:** A manual of, or a particular path of, sadhana laying great stress upon japa of a mantra and other esoteric practices relating to the powers latent in the human complex of physical, astral, and causal bodies in relation to the cosmic Power usually thought as the Divine Feminine.

**Tantric/Tantrika:** Pertaining to Tantra.

**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 practising Tapas.

**Tarka:** Reasoning; argumentation; logic; debate.

**Tarpana:** Libation of water for gratifying the manes.

**Tat:** That. A neuter pronoun expressing the indescribable Absolute. (See Tat Twam Asi).

**Tat Twam Asi:** “Thou art That.” The Mahavakya (Great Saying) of the Chandogya Upanishad.

**Tattwa:** “Thatness.” Principle; element; the essence of things; truth; reality.

**Tattwa Jnana:** Knowledge of the elements; knowledge of the true principle or truth, insight into the true principles of philosophy; realization of Brahman; Brahmajnana.

**Tejas:** Radiance; brilliancy (especially spiritual); the element of fire; Agni; heat.

**Tejomaya:** Full of tejas; full of light; resplendent.

**Tilak:** A sacred mark made on the forehead or between the eyebrows, often denoting what form of God the person worships.

**Tirtha:** A sacred place of pilgrimage; a river or body of water in which it is auspicious and spiritually beneficial to bathe; the water offered in ritual worship and then sprinkled on or drunk by the devotees. Also, a name of a Dasanami Sannyasin belonging to the Dwarka Math.

**Trasarenu:** The smallest visible substance, according to Nyaya-Vaisheshika. It is made up of three dyads (dvyanuka).

**Treta Yuga:** Treta Yuga consists of 1,296,000 years.

**Trimurti:** “The three forms”—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, the Hindu “Trinity.”

**Truti:** See Trasarenu.

**Udbhija; Unbhijya:** Born from a seed; sprout born; a plant.

**Unmada:** Madness; insanity; madness; intense passion.

**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 eleven principal upanishads: Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, 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.

**Upastha:** Genital organ.

**Uttama:** Highest; best.

**Uttara Mimamsa:** See Vedanta.

**Vada:** Doctrine; intellectual theory; discussion for arriving at truth; discourse; proposition.

**Vaidhi:** According to a set code of injunctions; ritualistic; ceremonial; formalistic.

**Vaidhi bhakti:** Formalistic devotion (at the initial stage on the Path of Love); practice of devotion through a set code of rituals, as a preparatory course for developing intense love for God.

**Vairagya:** Non-attachment; detachment; dispassion; absence of desire; disinterest; or indifference. Indifference towards and disgust for all worldly things and enjoyments.

**Vaishamya/Vaishamyavastha:** The state wherein the equilibrium of the three gunas of prakriti is disturbed, leading to creation or manifestation. A state opposite to the state of equilibrium of the three gunas.

**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.”

**Vaishnava:** A devotee of Vishnu.

**Vaishnavism:** A religious sect of Hinduism, whose members follow the path of devotion to God as Vishnu or one of Vishnu’s avatars—especially Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, and (in Bengal) Sri Chaitanya.

**Vaishya:** A member of the merchant, farmer, artisan, businessman caste.

**Vach/Vak:** Speech.

**Vachaka:** That which is denoted by speech.

**Vachya/Vakya:** That which is denoted by speech.

**Varanasi:** The most holy city of India, called by Yogananda “the Hindu Jerusalem.” Located on the Ganges and dedicated to Shiva (Vishwanatha), it is believed that anyone who dies there will be liberated.

**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.

**Varnavyavastha:** The caste system.

**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.

**Vashat:** An exclamation used on making an oblation to a deity.

**Vashishtha:** One of the most famous of Vedic seers (rishis).

**Vasus:** Eight Vedic deities characterized by radiance, both fire and light: Dhara, Apa, Anala, Anila, Pratyusha, Prabhasa, Soma, and Dhruva.

**Vatsalya:** The attitude of a devotee expressing parental relationship with God, looking upon Him as a child.

**Vayu:** The Vedic god of the wind; air; vital breath; Prana.

**Vayu-dharana:** Control of the prana-vital breath.

**Vayu-nirodha:** Control of the vital breath.

**Veda:** Knowledge, wisdom, revealed scripture. See Vedas.

**Veda-Vyasa:** See Vyasa.

**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.

**Vedanta Sutras:** See Brahma Sutras.

**Vedantin:** A follower of Vedanta.

**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.

**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.

**Vichara:** Subtle thought; reflection; enquiry; introspection; investigation; enquiry/investigation into the nature of the Self, Brahman or Truth; ever-present reflection on the why and wherefore of things; enquiry into the real meaning of the Mahavakya Tat-tvam-asi: Thou art That; discrimination between the Real and the unreal; enquiry of Self.

**Vidhi:** Injunction; method; rule.

**Vidya:** Knowledge; both spiritual knowledge and mundane knowledge.

**Vidya Devi:** Saraswati, the goddess of speech, wisdom, learning and the arts—particularly music.

**Vigraha:** An image whose contemplation shapes the viewer's consciousness into the likeness/conformity with that which the image represents—usually a deity.

**Vijnana:** The highest knowledge, beyond mere theoretical knowledge (jnana); transcendental knowledge or knowing; experiential knowledge; a high state of spiritual realization—intimate knowledge of God in which all is seen as manifestations of Brahman; knowledge of the Self.

**Vijnanamaya kosha:** One of the sheaths of the soul consisting of the principle, intellect or Buddhi.

**Vipra:** Inspired; wise, gifted with superior insight; sage; seer; priest; Brahmin.

**Vipratwa:** The state of the perfect vipra; perfect Brahminhood.

**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.

**Virya:** Strength; power; energy; courage; seminal energy.

**Vishesha:** Special; distinctive qualification; distinguishable; particularity; propriety.

**Vishesha Dharma:** Particular or special dharma.

**Vishishtadvaita Vedanta:** The philosophy of Qualified Non-Dualism formulated by Sri Ramanuja.

**Vishwamitra:** An ancient sage who was born a kshatriya, but by his sadhana and holy life became classified as a Brahmin.

**Vishnu:** "The all-pervading;" God as the Preserver.

**Vitanda:** Cavil; idle carping; a frivolous, perverse or fallacious argument or commentary; destructive criticism; destructive argument.

**Vritti:** Thought-wave; mental modification; mental whirlpool; a ripple in the chitta (mind substance).

**Vyahritis:** Invocations or seed mantras of the seven worlds (lokas) or levels of relative existence: Bhur, Bhuvah, Swah, Maha, Jana, Tapa, Satya.

**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.

**Vyashti:** Individual; individual acting as a separate unit; microcosm; singleness; individuality; a separated aggregate (such as a man); viewed as part of a whole.

**Vishwaprana:** The universal life force (prana).

**Yajna:** Sacrifice; offering; sacrificial ceremony; a ritual sacrifice; usually the fire sacrifice known as agnihotra or havan.

**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.

**Yashoda:** The foster-mother of Krishna in Brindaban where Krishna was taken by his father Vasudeva on the night of his birth for his protection from his mother Devaki's brother, Kansa, the king of Mathura. His foster-father was Nanda.

**Yathartha:** In accordance with reality; true; real; correct; a things as it really is; right; suitable.

**Yoga Darshan(a):** See Yoga Sutras.

**Yoga Sutras:** The oldest known writing on the subject of yoga, written by the sage Patanjali, a yogi of ancient India, and considered the most authoritative text on yoga. Also known as Yoga Darshana, it is the basis of the Yoga Philosophy which is based on the philosophical system known as Sankhya.

**Yogananda (Paramhansa):** The most influential yogi of the twentieth century in the West, author of *Autobiography of a Yogi* and founder of Self-Realization Fellowship in America.

**Yoni:** Womb; source.

**Yudhishtira:** The first of the Pandava brothers, whose name means: Firm In Battle. He is considered the perfect embodiment of dharma, and is also referred to as Dharmaraja—the King of Dharma.

**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.

## About the Author

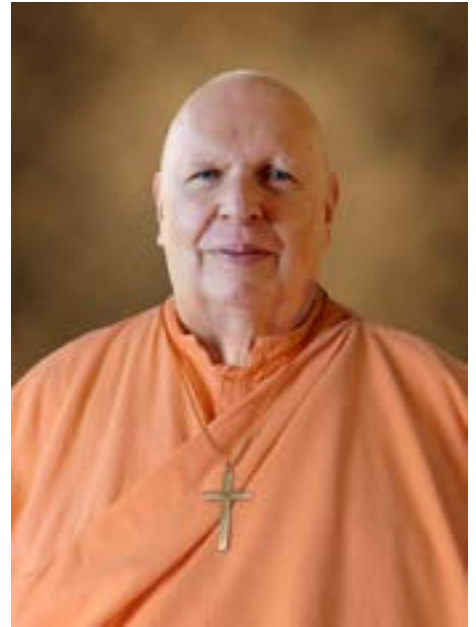
**Swami Nirmalananda Giri** (Abbot George Burke) is the founder and director of the Light of the Spirit Monastery (Atma Jyoti Ashram) in Cedar Crest, New Mexico, USA.

In his many pilgrimages to India, he had the opportunity of meeting some of India's greatest spiritual figures, including Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and Anandamayi Ma. During his first trip to India he was made a member of the ancient Swami Order by Swami Vidyananda Giri, a direct disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, who had himself been given sannyas by the Shankaracharya of Puri, Jagadguru Bharati Krishna Tirtha.

In the United States he also encountered various Christian saints, including Saint John Maximovich of San Francisco and Saint Philaret Voznesensky of New York.

For many years Abbot George has researched the identity of Jesus Christ and his teachings with India and Sanatana Dharma, including Yoga. It is his conclusion that Jesus lived in India for most of his life, and was a yogi and Sanatana Dharma missionary to the West. After his resurrection he returned to India and lived the rest of his life in the Himalayas.

He has written extensively on these and other topics, many of which are posted at [OCOY.org](http://OCOY.org).



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The public outreach of the monastery is through its website, [OCOY.org](http://OCOY.org) (Original Christianity and Original Yoga). There you will find many articles on Original Christianity and Original Yoga, including *Esoteric Christian Beliefs*, *Foundations of Yoga* and *How to Be a Yogi* are practical guides for anyone seriously interested in living the Yoga Life.

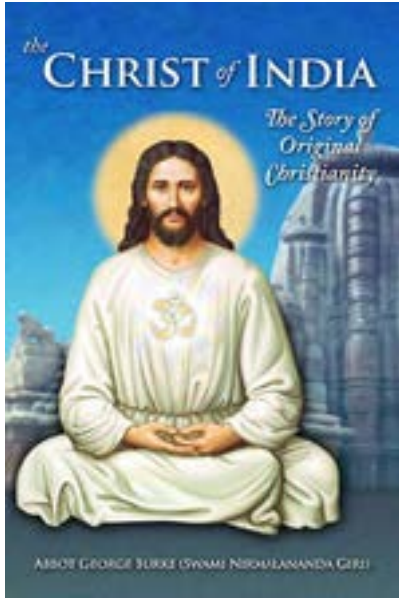
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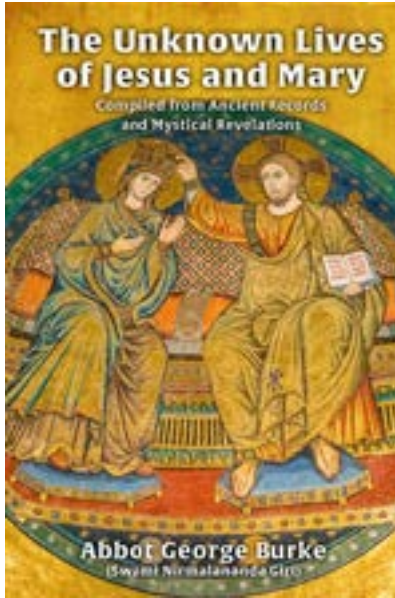
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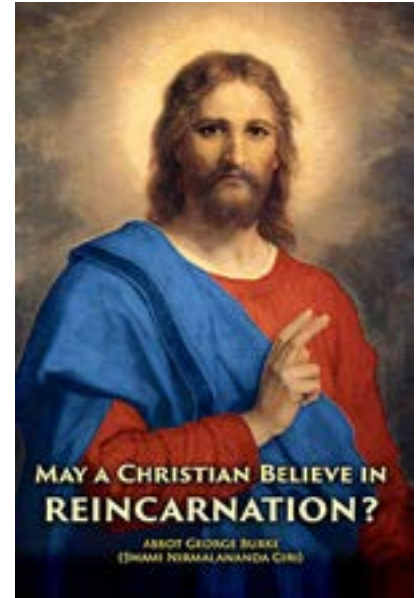
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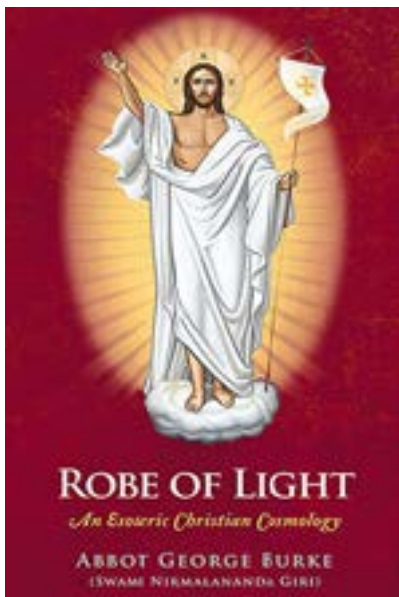
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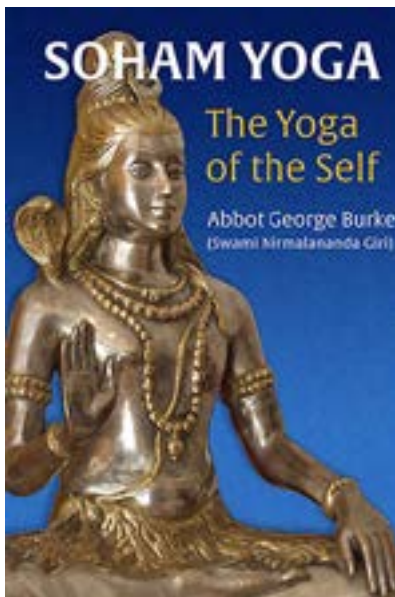
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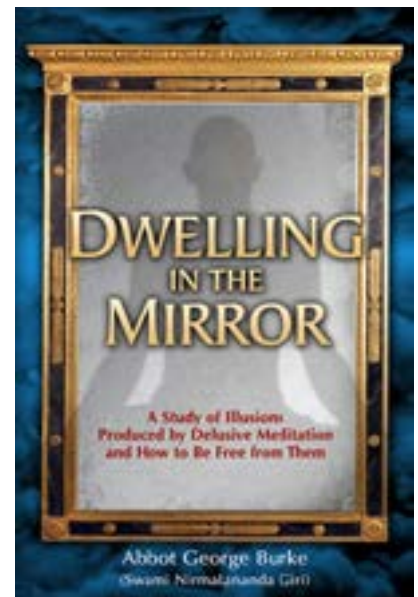
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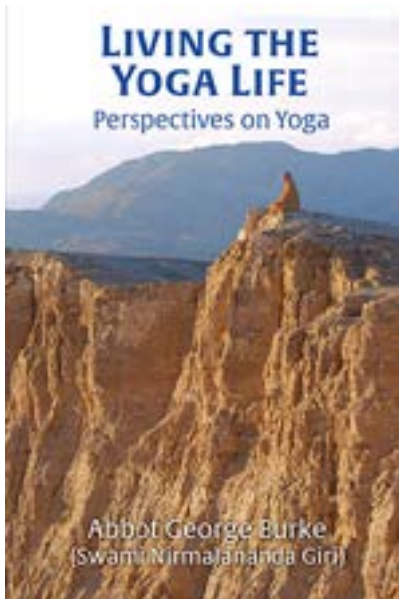
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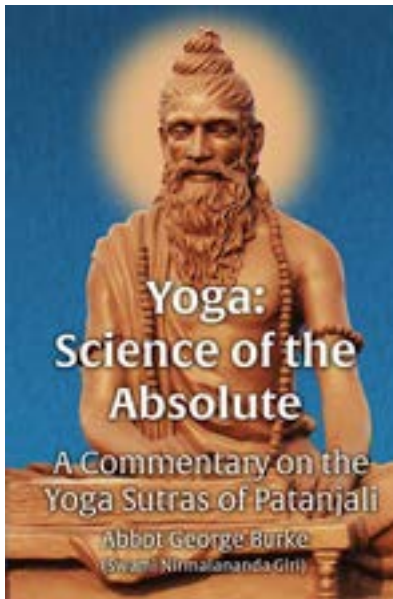
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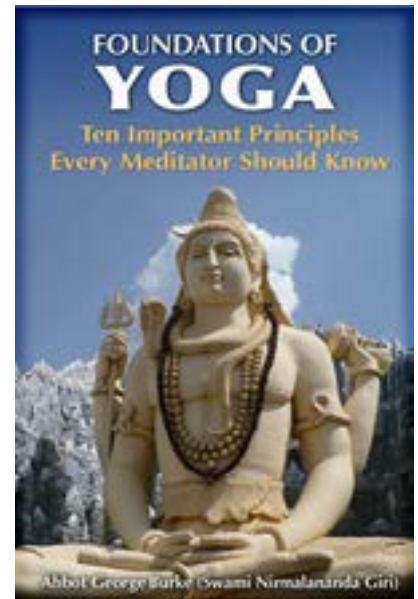
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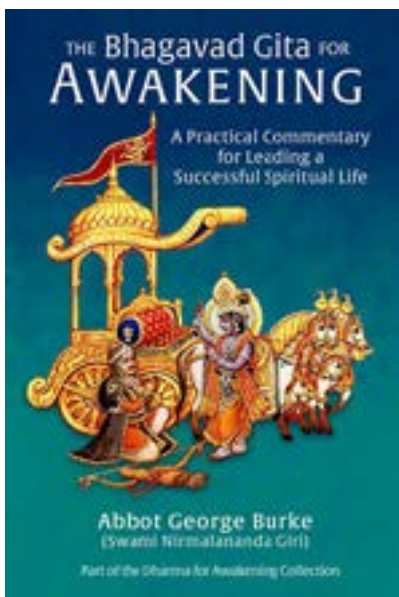
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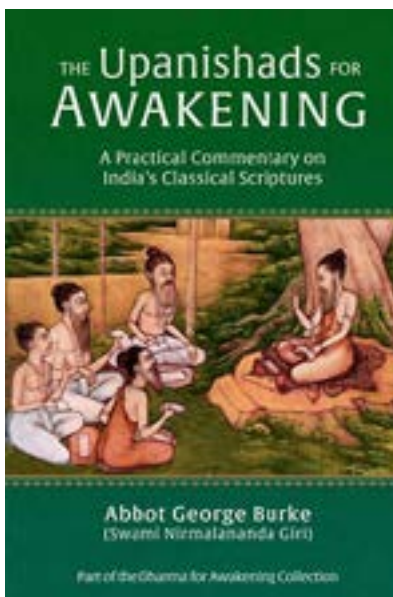
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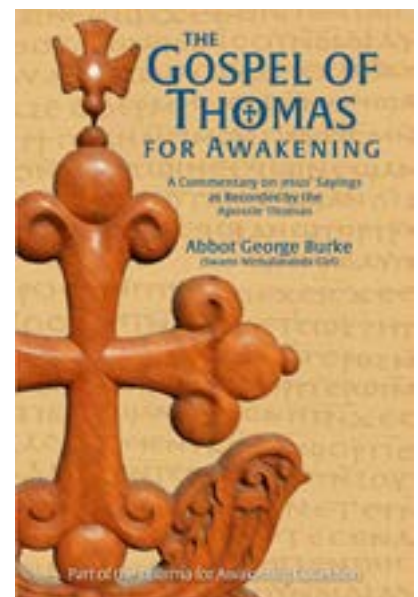
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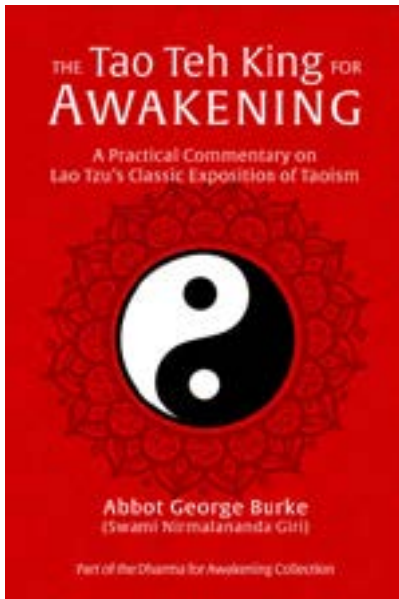
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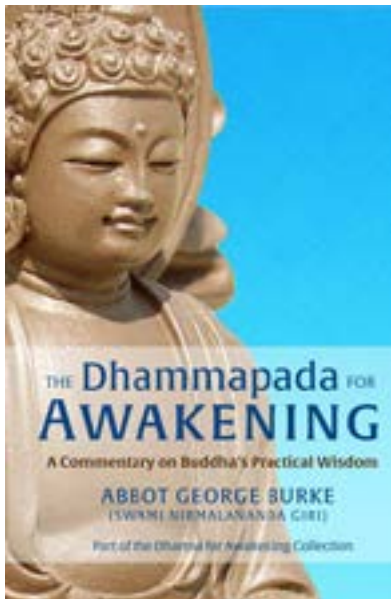
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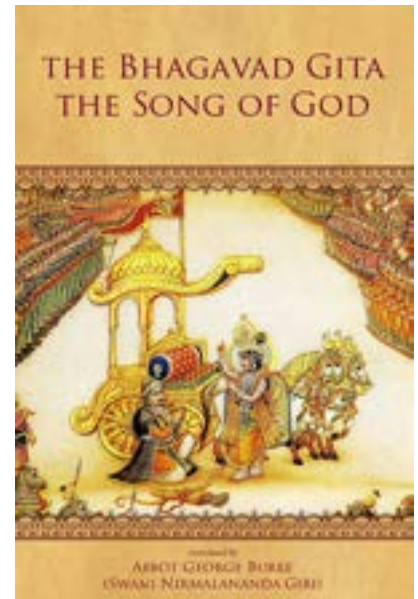
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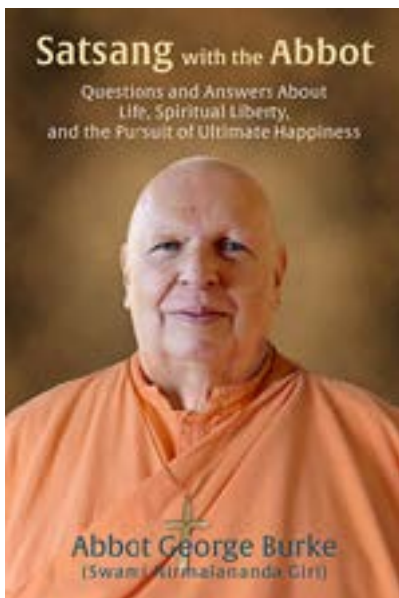
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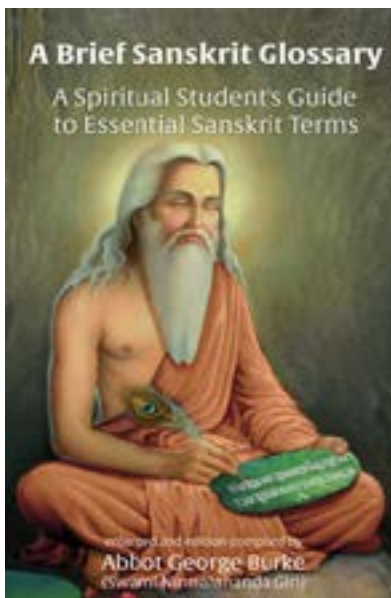
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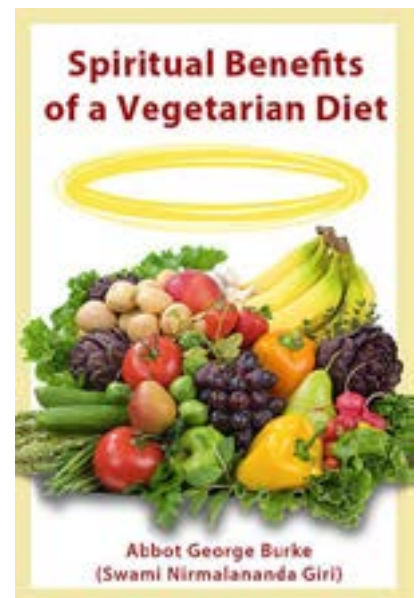
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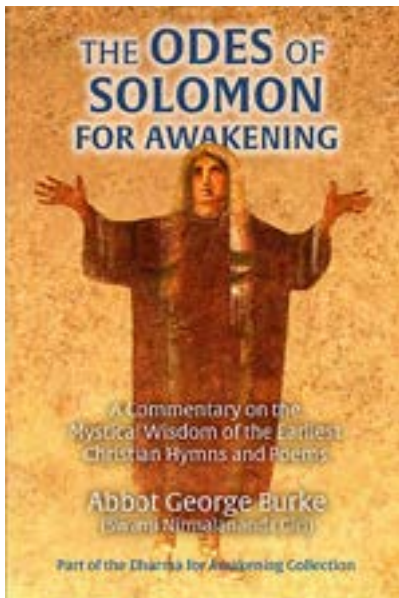
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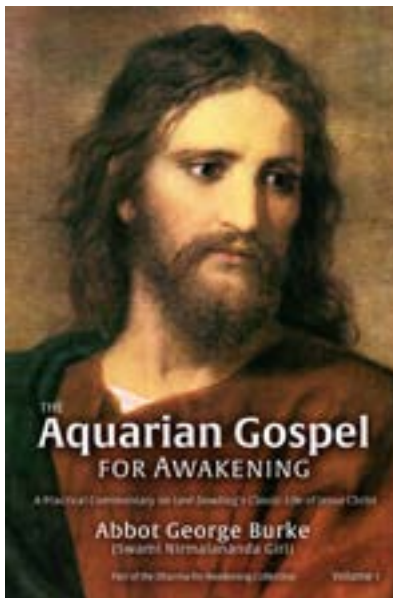
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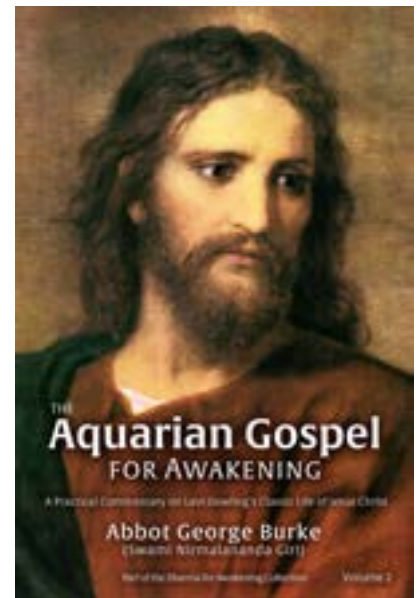
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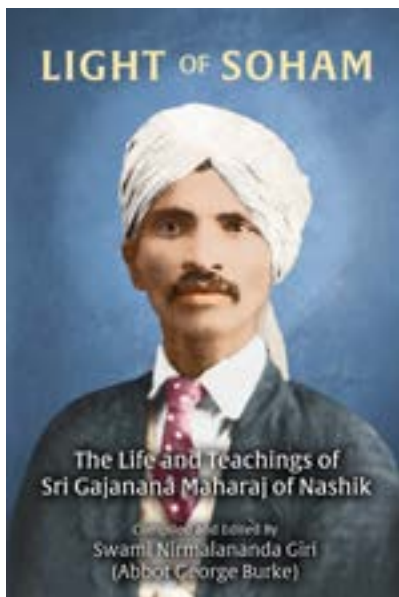
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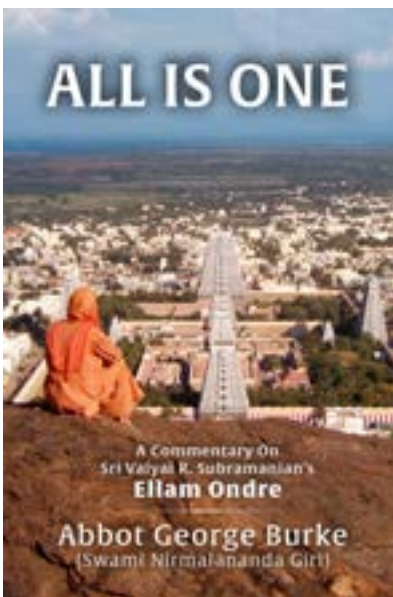
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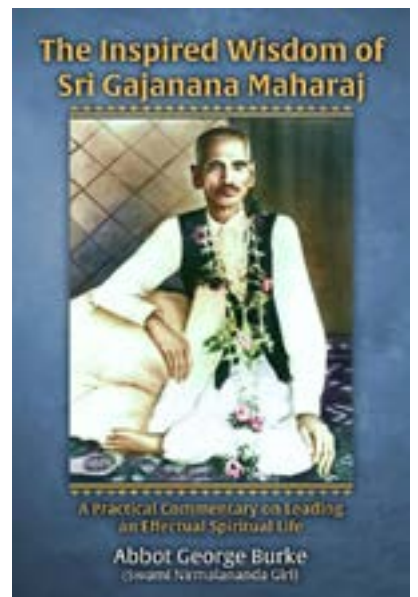
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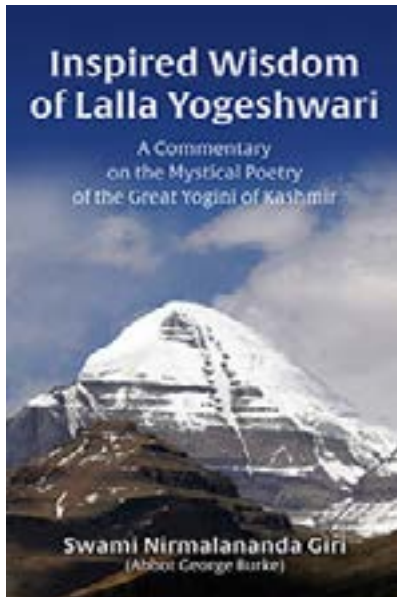


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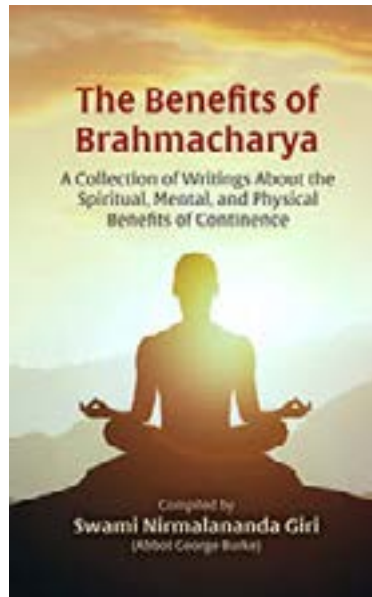


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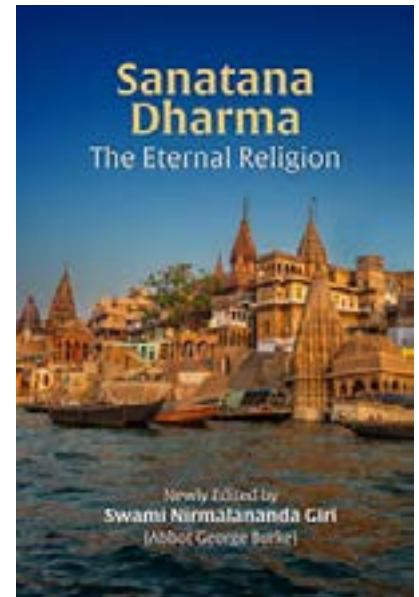




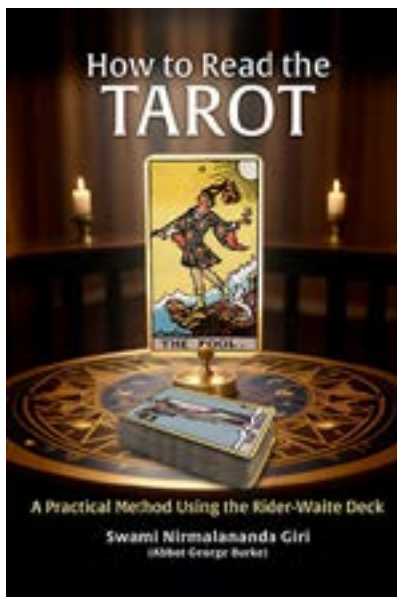
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