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THE  
WORLD'S ETERNAL RELIGION

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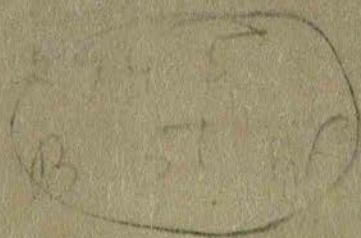
THE SRI BHARAT DHARMA MAHAMANDAL,

BENARES, (INDIA.)



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Printed by K. D. SETH, at the Newul Kishore Press,  
Lucknow.

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## INTRODUCTION.

सङ्गच्छध्वं संवदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

देवा आगं यथा पूर्वं संजानाना उपासते ॥

In course of listening to the discourses on the essence and characteristics of the Sanatan Dharma in her own palace Bharat-Dharma-Lakshmi Maharani Surath Kumari Devi, Baroness of Khairigarh, (Oudh) one day most reverentially submitted to Sri Guru Dev that it was very deplorable that such catholic and universally beneficent features of the Sanatan Dharma should remain a sealed book to the world at large up-to-date. True, there are books treating of Sanatan Dharma, but they are so vast in number, and multifarious in nature that it is not possible for the Sanscritists of the day, to gather together and present to the world, in a lucid suitable form, the most precious secrets of this great catholic religion. English Education now-a-days has opened the eyes of our people and taught them to think for themselves. They are slow to accept anything, far less, to make it a guiding principle of life, unless they are thoroughly convinced of its soundness. So it is highly necessary that there should be treatises in English giving clear expositions of our *Shastras* on Sanatan Dharma. The attempts that have hitherto been made in this direction, have not produced the desired effect. She therefore requested Sri Guru Dev, very earnestly to remove this crying need by the publication of such a book in English as containing in outlines the different phases of the Sanatan Dharma, may be regarded as an invaluable key to the Shastric treatises on that religion, both for scholars among the Hindus as well as for those of foreign religions who wish to study comparative religion and philosophy. In consideration of the reasonableness of the prayer, Sri Guru Dev was graciously pleased to ask the learned gentlemen of the Publishing Department of the Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal to write the book under his direction. The present treatise is an outcome of the efforts made in accordance.





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In the first three Chapters has been shown the universality of Dharma (religion), which is expected to prove useful to all. Sanatan Dharma is a natural and universal Dharma, and hence it has no particular dogmas of its own. The careful reading of these three Chapters will amply bear it out. The fourth Chapter contains an exposition of the Karmic law. This may be termed the fundamental law of nature. Chapters five to eleven contain an exposition of *worship* in all its phases together with means of direct help to worship. These are expected to be of benefit to all the creeds in the world. Though everything in these Chapters might not be of use to all, still there are many things in them that may be serviceable to all kinds of faiths. Most important informations regarding *knowledge* of self have been given in Chapters twelve to sixteen. Based as these Chapters mainly are on the seven systems of Vedic philosophy and truths of knowledge underlying the Vedas nevertheless every religion in the world can gather from them useful informations concerning theology, creation and spirituality. The special features of the *Dharma* of the Hindus that inspite of many vicissitudes have preserved up-to-date its originality and saved itself from total disappearance in the fathomless abyss of Time—the fate that has overtaken many historic and pre-historic faiths in the world—have been described in the Chapters from the seventeenth to the twenty-third. In the Chapter twenty-fourth, the last Chapter of the book, attempts have been made to reconcile all religions from the standpoint of *Hindu religion*, and also to show as clearly as possible, how all the existing religions in the world may unite at a point to realise fully the Fatherhood of God, Brotherhood of man and spirituality underlying every faith.

Many important subjects have been put, as it were, in a nut-shell into this little volume, so that it would be no exaggeration to call it a key to the Hindu religion. Necessarily, therefore, many Sanskrit words have been used in this book, as coining of appropriate words was found very difficult. A glossary of these words has been added at the end of the





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book, as it was not found convenient to add explanatory notes at the end of these words in their proper place. This may, if necessary, be the foundation of a dictionary in future for the benefit of the scholars who will study the Hindu religion and philosophy through the medium of the English language.

It accidentally so happened that the great European war came to an end when this book was in preparation. We give next the War Memorial proposal that was published at the time on behalf of Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, the All-India representative Association of the Orthodox Hindus.

When the book was under preparation as well as the proposal for a "Hall of All Religions" was put before the public by the Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, Sri Guru Dev was pleased to declare that the book was published as a spiritual contribution to the Hall of all Religions and that the blessings of the Divine Almighty Father of all would surely descend upon the whole world, if all the faiths thereof sang His glories having kept this spirit of universality always in view.

Our hearty thanks are due to the above mentioned Maharani of Khairigarh for the very meritorious and noble-minded act on her part in bearing the entire cost of printing and publishing this book.

As desired by Sri Guru Dev, every member of the "Hall of All Religions," would get a copy of this book free of all costs, and likewise every respectable library in all the world be presented with a copy of this book. We shall consider our labour amply rewarded should this book be able to contribute, however meagrely it may be, towards the advance of the true spirit of religion among the seekers of truth in the world.

MAHAMANDAL BUILDINGS,  
BENARES, INDIA.  
*The 26th January, 1920.*

DAYANAND,  
(Swami.)





# SUGGESTION FOR A WORTHY WAR MEMORIAL

BY

**SRI BHARAT DHARMA MAHAMANDAL.**

The Right Hon'ble Mr. Asquith expressed the pious hope at the historic meeting of Parliament in connection with the Armistice that War may become an anachronism in future. In this he echoed the universal wish. Every one is thinking of plans at this moment for making the coming peace permanent on earth. Anything that should tend towards lessening the chance of falling out between men—whatever might be the source of dissension—was worthy of attention as a means towards the desired end. The steady elimination of *every* element of strife should be the aim of our united efforts.

Religion is no longer the ruling factor in human affairs it once was. Nevertheless as a motive force of thought and action it is second to none even in the West, while in the East its predominance is maintained to this day. To us Hindus, for example, Religion is still all in all. There is hardly any fear now of nations flying at each other's throat for the sake of Religion. Yet it cannot be denied that sectarian bigotry and religious fanaticism are still things to be reckoned with, not only in the case of Orientals but also of Occidentals. It is significant in view of our context that the cleavage in regard to Home Rule in Ireland has followed the line of division in the population according to religious persuasion. Broadly speaking, the difference in the salient national characteristics of Prussia and Austria, the inhabitants of both countries being mainly of the same ethnic stock, is due chiefly to religious causes. One still hears of Jew-baiting here and there in Europe. The Turkish Empire affords a vivid illustration of ceaseless discord between jarring sects and creeds. in our own country, in spite of the ingrained spirit of tolerance of Hindus and Mussalmans alike and the unifying effect of British Rule, painful instances of sectarian bickerings





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w and again are not wanting. In short, it is sure every one will admit that though Religion has ceased to be the principal cause of conflict in the world, it is one of the potent sources of ill-feeling affecting vast populations of almost every grade of intellect.

The primary purpose of religion however, is (to repeat a mere truism) to promote the spirit of harmony and brotherliness in mankind by making all races and classes of men realise that they are the children of the Almighty God Who is Father of all. It is simply ignorance of the basic tenets and creeds of each other's faith (which are common to all Religions and schools of Theology) which is responsible for keeping alive the smouldering fire of religious animosity that had raged so fiercely everywhere in pre-modern times.

It is obvious, therefore, that we should seek some means of gradually eradicating the root-cause of surviving religious differences as one of the most effective ways of discharging the duty that lies on every one of us of helping towards insuring the establishment of uninterrupted reign of peace and good-will henceforth on earth. In thinking of measures for making War impossible, we must consider all important causes of discord. We cannot therefore leave out of count the influence of Religion, it being at all events second to none in importance.

Our humble suggestion in view of the above is to set up in Benares a *Hall of All Religions*. We need not dilate upon the indisputable appropriateness of Benares the recognised *Vidyapitha* and foremost religious centre of India for the location of such a parliament of all sects and creeds. And we need not also explain why the project is peculiarly suited to the genius, needs and conditions of India, as it is the primary living centre of religions and philosophies in the whole world. We give below in the barest outline the essential features of the proposal which would be a fitting memorial of the War, in that it would be helpful in diffusing the feeling of brotherliness among the followers of different faiths.





First, we would have a Hall to serve as an Academy for the study of comparative religion and philosophy and as a meeting place for Hindus (including Sikhs), Mussalmans, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Jews, etc. Of course, the recognised denominations coming under the common name of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jains, etc., would have equal title to the Hall. The various schools of Dissent such as Brahmos and Arya Samajists among Hindus, and non-conformists of other persuasions, will of course be equally welcome.

Second, a Library (either accommodated in the Hall or in a separate building according to the means and space available) containing the Holy Books of, and other religious and philosophical works pertaining to all creeds and sects.

Third, places of worship for followers of the various creeds and sects, for example, Hindu and Sikh temples, Islamic musjids, Christian churches, Jain mandirs, Buddhistic vihara or pagoda, Jewish synagogue and so forth.

Fourth, homes for Priests, Ministers, Teachers, etc., of the various creeds and sects to be located in their respective places of worship.

Fifth, rooms for the accommodation of the students of Comparative Religion and Philosophy. (The incomparable facilities to be offered by such an institution for the direct study of different creeds and philosophies connected therewith, will draw students and enquirers from all parts of the civilised world.)

At first sight the notion may appear as rather Utopian, but it should not be forgotten that the most practical people in the world, the Americans, gave partial effect to the idea in their Parliament of Religions which was held in the most important city in America—Chicago.

### Hopes of Co-operation.

Just after the peace was declared in Europe, His Highness the Maharaja of Durbhanga, the General President





of Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, published a proposal in the Press embodying this noble suggestion for a suitable memorial of the War. It would be encouraging to note that the proposal has elicited expressions of cordial sympathy and support from distinguished quarters. Offers of material help have also been received. In fact, there can be no two opinions among believers as to the appropriateness and usefulness of the scheme as a world memorial of the war, it can be made an accomplished fact if every sympathiser would work for the realization of the idea in his own community. We have much pleasure to reproduce below a few valuable opinions of the leaders of some of the creeds and religious faiths.

The Rev. Russel Payne, M. A. (Oxon) the well-known scholar writes from Khargpur :—

“ I write to say that I have for several years been very keenly interested in such a scheme for a central institution for the study of Religions as is suggested in the Maharaja of Durbhanga's article in to-day's *Englishman*.

May I say that I am most anxious to take an active part in the promotion of such a scheme as that suggested and would give up all my time to it. I am a graduate of Oxford in Theology, and am a priest in the Church of England, but my studies and inspirations have carried me far beyond the restrictions of any particular creed.

I assure you such a project has always been one of the chief ideals of my life and study.”

COL. EDWARD THOMAS NOONAN, a member of the World's Fair Committee of the State Senate of Illinois, U. S. and President of the Promethean Philosophical Society, writes :

“ Permit me to say that with keen interest I read your letter in *The Japan Times and Mail* in February 26th last, in which you suggest that there be established a permanent Hall of All Religions in Benares for the purpose of making war impossible by eradicating the religious conflict among man-





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kind.....I have shown that I am heartily in accord with your suggestions, and will be glad to co-operate as far as possible.....

I will write to the Ecclesiastical authorities and politicians of the U. S. to urge the Peace Conference to create such a Parliament of All Religions as tending to promote a permanent peace in the family of nations."

Anagarika Dharmapal, General Secretary, Maha Bodhi Society, writes from Calcutta:—

"The Maha Bodhi Society wish to convey their sentiments of appreciation and concurrence with the exalted idea of building a Hall of All Religions as suggested by the Maharaja of Durbhanga in his letter to the Press.....The Maha Bodhi Society gladly offer their services in the good cause and wish the Maharaja every success."

### **The Unique Trust.**

By the grace of the Almighty Father of all, the leaders of the movement have secured a substantial help in the form of a Trust to give practical shape to the above-mentioned movement.

The Unique Trust is created over Rs 2,65,000—at the instance of the philanthropic, pious and high-minded Bharat-dharma Lakshmi Rani Surath Kumari Devi Saheba, O. B. E. of Khairigarh (Kheri, Oudh). "The enlightened Rani Sahiba has further contributed another Rs. 50,000 and promised to contribute a total sum of six lacs of rupees at her convenience towards this Trust. The Trust provides free gift of land to all the principal faiths of the world and records the following among its aims and objects.

The clause runs thus:—

"To make free gifts of lands close to the said Shrine for the different principal faiths of the world to construct their





places of worship, and a Hall of All Religions with a library attached thereto for the following purposes and under the following conditions :—

“The great war that has brought untold miseries on Europe and has made the whole world shudder in pain and fear was the inevitable result of the ascendancy of Materialism. Materialism, looking as it does, only to worldly power and gain gives free play to the brute in man, develops his original savage and lawless propensities. This materialistic tendency towards license,—the callous disregard of all spiritual and moral laws for the sake of self-gratification and self-aggrandisement can be checked and corrected only by Dharmik principles and spirituality. In a society, as in a government, the working of Materialism drags humanity downwards leading to the chaos of barbarism, and ultimate extinction of the whole civilised race. Dharma, faith in God and the Daivi Jagat (Occult world) and spirituality in general, serve as a balancing force which prevents such downfall. To make the civilised race lasting on the earth, therefore, the effective means should be to promote the culture of the above Dharma, etc., in perfect harmony with all the faiths of the world. It is Sanatan Dharma of the Hindus that can inculcate such teachings and preserve the harmony of all faiths. It is the religion of all religions, a philosophical truth, a spiritual science and a fundamental law of nature. It is the only religion in the world which can aspire to inculcate the principles of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. It can therefore claim the right of being called the father of all religions.

The great Maharshi Yajnavalka says that a Dharma which stands in the way of other Dharmas is not a real Dharma, but is a pseudo Dharma; that which is not contradictory to the Dharma of other sects is the real Dharma. The Sanskrit proverb “Jnanivimananyaya” also testifies to the same truth. The explanation of this proverb is that just as the ups and downs, hills, dales, plains, valleys, seas, oceans and rivers, the tall and the stunted, appear to the man walking on the





heart's surface, but that all such irregularities and jarring elements merge into one flat level in the eye of an observer up in the sky travelling in an air boat, so the insignificant negligible differences in various religions vanish with the man who has attained the knowledge of self and thus transcended the plane of dualism. To put into bold relief this catholic principle of Sanatan Dharma, and to create a centre for the fulfilment of these great objects of the civilised world at this psychological moment, the above free gift of land shall be made to the different faiths of the world for establishing their respective places of worship and erecting a Hall and a library as an academy for the study of Comparative Religions and philosophies under the following conditions :—

- (a) That no follower of any sect or creed shall be allowed to discuss any matter casting reflections on any religion, sect or order within the precincts of the said Hall, or temples and places of worship, or within the boundaries of any property forming part of the subject of the Mahamaya Trust. Every such follower shall be at liberty to support his views without running down those of others.
- (b) That the situation of the temples and places of worship of different sects and creeds on the land to be acquired out of this Trust, shall be selected and assigned by the Trustees according to their discretion and no sect or creed shall have any right to question their authority, in this matter.
- (c) That any person shall have a right to contribute towards, or pay in full, the expenses for construction of any temple or place of worship for any sect or creed or for any other building of like nature to be built in the manner and on the site selected by the Trustees and that the administration of the internal affairs of the temple, or temples or places of worship of any particular sect or creed shall rest in the hands of a com-





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mittee to be formed of the followers of that particular branch of religion and no outsider shall have any right to interfere with the same.

- (d) That nothing shall be allowed to be practised or performed within the precincts of the said temples, places of worship, Hall etc. and inside the limit of any land forming or to form part of the subject matter of this Trust, (though sanctioned by the principles of religion and morals of any particular sect or creed) which would hurt the moral and religious susceptibilities of others, and that all such sects and creeds must recognise and maintain the principles of toleration of the common faith of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. In case of a breach of this condition and a difference of opinion, the Trustees of this Trust shall have full power to deal with the matter as they think fit and their decision shall be final.
- (e) That the teachers and preachers of any religion residing in the place of worship of that particular religion, as well as teachers and preachers of any other religion, shall, subject to the sanction of the Trustees, have free use of the library and the Hall for delivering lectures, but the upkeep and the management of these two institutions shall rest in the hands of a special committee to be appointed by the Trustee of the Mahamaya Trust.
- (f) In all temples and places of worship, a prayer for the welfare of the Emperor and the Empire according to the respective form of the different religions shall be recited on a special day or days selected by the Trustees for the purpose.
- (g) That the great Hall of All Religions, which will be established for the reconciliation of all religions





in the world, shall be exclusively used as a place of meeting in which only religion, philosophy and allied subjects of learning shall be discussed by persons of all sects and creeds. It shall be the duty of the committee of management to exert its level best for bringing about a harmony of all religions, universal brotherhood and permanent peace of the world. The said committee shall form an Advisory Council consisting of the most distinguished servants and scholars from all parts of the world, whose duty will be to help the committee with sound advice in regard to the fulfilment of the true objects of civilisation mentioned above."

The Trust further records that "All monies relating to the Trust shall be known as the *Mahamaya Trust* and all investments thereof shall be made in the Government securities or in any other reliable Bank in the name of the *Mahamaya Trust* through one or both the Trustees. If the Trustees are assured of the permanency of the income and think it advisable, they may invest the funds of the Trust in landed property.

All monies that will be contributed by the said Rani Saheba during her life-time for this Trust shall be designated as the *Mahamaya Trust Fund*, and the Trustees shall have power to accept any property moveable or immoveable from any person if given towards fulfilment of the aforesaid objects of the Trust or for any of them. In the latter case a special arrangement may be made for carrying out the said objects, according to the desire and in the name of the giver provided that all such monies shall form part of the *Mahamaya Trust Fund*.

That the administration of the affairs in connection with the Hall of *All Religions* shall rest in the hands of a committee consisting of the Trustees of this Trust and of the following:—

- (a) The General President of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal.



- (b) The General Secretary of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal.
- (c) The Secretary of the Upadeshak Mahavidyalaya.
- (d) The Secretary of the Arya Mahila Mahavidyalaya.
- (e) A representative of the local Municipal Board.
- (f) A representative of the Benares Hindu University.
- (g) Besides the above members any person who will pay at least Rs. 25,000 towards the establishment, construction or maintenance of any buildings, temples, places of worship, Hall or other institutions as aforesaid shall be entitled to be a member of the said committee."

### Hindu portion of the Hall of All Religions.

The pious Rani Saheba of Khairigarh in her unique Trust (which is created on the auspicious day of the peace celebrations, dated the 14th December 1919) not only provides for gift of land to all the faiths of the world for establishing their places of worship and hall etc., but also takes full charge of a portion of the Hindu side of the institution. The Trust records as follows regarding the Hindu temple which it provides.

"(1) To build temple at Benares for Brahmayi Devi (Goddess).

(2) To make necessary arrangements for the permanent Puja and Seva of the said divine Almighty Mother.

(3) To maintain permanently an *anna satra* (free Kitchen) attached to the said temple for the learned and selfless Sannyasis and educated pious Brahmins who wish to devote their lives to the services of the Sanatan Dharma.

(4) To maintain a permanent *Sadavrat* attached to the said Shrine for free distribution of gram and water to the poor and the needy.





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(5) To perform an *Annual Ceremony* in the name of the said Goddess in connection with the said Shrine with the following compulsory rites and functions:—

- (a) Special Puja, Utsav and charities.
- (b) Performance of a Vaidik or Smart Yajna.
- (c) Performance of free Yajnopavit ceremony (investiture with the sacred thread) of helpless boys belonging to the three regenerate Varnas i. e., Brahmin Kshattriya and Vaishya.
- (d) The holding of Sabha for presenting gifts to the Brahmins for the encouragement of Vedic and Sanskrit learning in general."

Apart from the above Trust we have secured promises for other parts of the Hindu section, e. g. other temples and the tank in the middle of the Shrine.

### **An Appeal.**

We doubt not that if the design be in accordance with the wish of the Almighty Father, He will move the hearts of wealthy persons of all creeds and nationality to help their mite to carry out the work.

Apart from the Hindu section for which the above given help and other promises have already been secured, the following are the present requirements of the institution for which funds are necessary to be subscribed by the leaders of the different faiths.

1. A Hall for meetings.
2. A building for Library.
3. Books of different faiths for the Library.



(The Bharat Dharma Mahamandal will supply books of the Hindu Section.)

4. A Church for worship of the Christians.
5. A Musjid for worship of the Mohamedans.
6. A Buddhist Temple.
7. A Jain Temple.
8. A place of Zoroastrian worship.
9. Lodging Houses for professors.
10. Boarding for scholars.

The above Hall, Library and places of worship of different faiths attached to this institution will be a direct help for the study of comparative religion and philosophy; and will be more of the nature of a research institute in this religious university than academies or schools of different faiths for imparting religious teachings and temples for performance of their religious ceremonies in general.

That the movement has the divine support is evident from the fact that since the creation of the above Trust, we have received the following encouraging letter from the Reverend Russel Payne, M. A., of Khargpur re: the Christian section of the work.

*( Copy of the letter. )*

"I am very anxious that the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ shall establish and endow a strong Theological College, and Church in connection with the Memorial but before taking any actual steps for the realisation of this object, I am consulting my spiritual Head in India—the most Reverend the Lord Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan in India, Burma and Ceylon, and will let you know the result as soon as I possibly can."





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Hopes of co-operation of this nature have been received from the leaders of Buddhism and Jainism also.

The promoters are now perfectly confident that the leaders of other sects and creeds will soon come forward and take up the works of their respective sections.

GENERAL SECRETARY,  
SRI BHARAT DHARMA MAHAMANDAL,  
*Head Office, Benares, India.*



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## ERRATA.

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Page.	Line.	Incorrect.			Correct.
9	3	is	...	...	in
14	27	commands	...	...	commands,
23	19	will lead	...	...	it will lead
"	20	many	...	...	may
"	25 & 26	different to	...	...	different from
27	19	enters	...	...	he enters
36	24	says the Vedas	...	...	say the Vedas
41	21	inescapable	...	...	unescapable
44	30	in the well-known &c.	...	...	the well-known &c.
47	6	principal	...	...	principle
55	22	upanshu	...	...	upanshu
58	29	to be sat upon	...	...	to be seated upon
59	13	Pithha	...	...	Pitha
61	26	19	...	...	18
62	23	aim and end	...	...	end and aim
64	3	practice	...	...	practise
64	10	Vaya	...	...	VAYU
66	14	in	...	...	is
71	16	finer and higher	...	...	fine and high
72	25	in	...	...	is
75	31	seer	...	...	sees
78	22	raciocination	...	...	ratiocination
79	5	adopt	...	...	adept
83	7	Sanchit stored or acquired).	...	...	Sanchit (stored or acquired)
84	27	Tatwa Jnana	...	...	Tatwa Jnana,
"	29	existence	...	...	existence,
90	17	Avaktya	...	...	Avyakta



Page.	Line.	Incorrect.			Correct.
91	Footnote	election	...	...	electron
100	6	takes it	...	...	take its
101	8	into	...	...	in
"	31	sanads	...	...	sayings
103	8	obedient	...	..	obedience
105	29	aty	...	...	stay
107	5	needed	...	...	are needed
"	15	concept or object	...	...	concept or object,
108	3	shant	...	...	shānta
115	19	each have	...	...	have each
116	12	togethe	...	...	together
"	23	Vishnu	...	...	Vishnu's
118	7	ours.) just	...	...	ours), just
119	16	Jimatmā	...	...	Jivātma
120	11	stages	...	...	stage
"	23	state	...	...	state.
129	28	party	...	...	part
135	20	insects	...	...	instincts
"	20	aggressive ;	...	...	aggressive,
"	32	stages	...	...	stage
148	25	Yoga Sūtas	...	...	Yoga Sūtras
151	19	egoism)	...	...	egoism
154	4	परमं	...	...	परमं
156	9	into which	...	...	from which
"	14	omniscient	...	...	omniscient
160	5	courses	...	...	coarsest
"	30	श्लोकादन	...	...	श्लोकार्थेन



Page.	Line.	Incorrect.			Correct.
164	25	man, ene	...	...	Man—one
166	6	superior to the ordinary mortal mother	...	...	superior to that of the ordinary &c.
"	"	Varnavyavastha.			Varnavyavastha—
168	23	The disposal &c.	...	...	the disposal &c.
171	9	viscissitudes	...	...	viciassitudes
177	15	the both	...	...	both
"	16	being	..	...	is
178	29	word	...	...	words
181	29	persuade	...	...	dissuade
184	18	Rishis. While	...	...	Rishis, while
186	6	on			from
191	2	are	...	...	art
"	13	are	...	...	art
195	6	destroy	...	...	destroyest
"	7	protect	...	...	protectest
196	9	has	...	...	hast
19	1	Thyself Thou	...	...	Thou Thyself
"	2	"	...	...	"
202	29	in everyday	...	...	everyday
204	19	Unasana	...	...	Upāsana
212	1	of the three each forms	...	...	of each of the three forms
213	1	coveyed	...	...	conveyed
215	2	it	...	...	its
222	21	stande situated	...	...	is situated
224	17	on	...	...	in



## THE WRITER'S APOLOGY.

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The reader's particular indulgence is requested in respect of the language of this book, because it is a foreigner's first attempt to elucidate a sublime subject from the Indian spiritual point of view ; also because foreign words in some cases fail to convey the sense intended in expressing Hindoo philosophical ideas and substitutes have to be fashioned as occasion requires.

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श्रीविश्वनाथो जयति ।

# The World's Eternal Religion.

## FOREWORD.

### I.

ATTEMPTS have hitherto been made to present in English the character of India's time-honoured 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 dispraise India's religion to the advantage of a favoured 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 in the superficies only.

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 haphazard; 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





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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 *Purāṇas*, *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 worth while to observe that India did not, nay, in view of the truth, could not, care to record a history in the modern sense; which means narrations limited to particular periods and geographical tracts, to certain select great names and localities arranged in a chronological order, all intended to picture forth a past to vivify the present. India's wisdom transcended the wisdom of every other country's, and it had a vivid knowledge of the past, the present and the future. How could the Seers of old take account of petty details which are forgotten as soon as given, as by school boys on leaving school? Countless ages, countless places, countless personages have come and gone, and will come and go. The Seer adheres to the truth. "History but repeats itself"—this is what they have brought out in the Grand Epics. In the play of human character in its birth and development and ideals and consummation common to all ages in all conditions, the essence is there, the chaff is thrown off. India has always referred itself for light and guidance to such ideals of lofty character as Bhishma, Dharma, Rama,





Krishna, Vyâsa, 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 to-day, we may point to the antiquarian's vagaries in the location of the war of Lankâ,—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!

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 Bâuls of Bengal, for example, are followers of a religion, of which there is no history, on which there are no MSS., and for which there are no institutions to present their teaching about "the Man of my heart," of whom they sing and for whom they yearn. Religious thoughts, practices and traditions yet continue as esoteric, operating within their own consecrated limits, pursuing their purpose and fulfilling their end and aim.





We who have access to a large mass of such teachings intend to present them in due course, either in original or modified forms in a series of volumes in Sanskrit, accompanied by translations into Hindi and other Indian vernaculars, as well as into English. 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 had yet to pass three more Stages to be a perfectly evolved human being.\* He then becomes a fit candidate for further progress and evolves into absolute perfection by a gradation leading from the physical to the spiritual life, eliminating at each successive stage some persistent encumbrances, and finally gaining Freedom, which, in other words, is Self-realization as to being 'One without a second.' The problem is grand and sublime, almost awful 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 he

\* Cf. the four stages in the growth of consciousness as given in "Cosmic Consciousness, p. 13.





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 3 grades—the *Adhama* (lowest), the *Madhyama* (middle) and the *Uttama* (highest). In the first he is liable to fall back in evolution by a misuse of his free will, which he develops as a special characteristic in his human being. In the *Madhyama* grade he grows a little discriminative and has experience of the *Pitri-Loka* and *Naraka*, becoming liable to repeated births and deaths. The last grade fits him for *Swarga* and return to mortal life for further growth. From this last grade he has to pass up through the next seven stages, the former seven being those of Ignorance and the latter seven those of Knowledge. These *Seven Stages of Knowledge* are named according to the progress of the Soul, as follows: *Jnândâ*, *Sânyâsda*, *Yogadâ*, *Lilonmukti*, *Satpadâ*, *Anandpadâ* and *Parâtparâ*. 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 number was limited to six only to match the heterodox six schools current in Sankarâcharya's time, the seventh *Darshana* (*Daivî Mimâmsâ*) being outside the pale of polemics, lies sequestered in esoteric knowledge. We shall be giving it to the public in due course.

It can be seen from this sort of treatment that the Indian religion, i. e., the Everlasting Vaidic Dharma, which

\* See *Dhish Gâdâ*.





we mean by the title of Bhārata Dharma, is a scientific religion, and as science bars no enquirer against its tests, so the Bhārata 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!”\*

## DHARMA.

### UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

#### II.

*Derivative meaning of Dharma.*—The word Dharma is derived from the root Dhri (धृ, to hold) 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 *Nārāyan-Upanishat*, Dharma being a source of support to all, and a remover of sins ‡

\* उदारचरितानान्तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ।—महामारत ।

† धात्वाद्धर्ममित्याहुर्धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।

यत् स्याद्धारणसंयुक्तं स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

‡ धर्मो विश्वस्य जगतः प्रतिष्ठा, लोके धर्मिष्ठं प्रजा उपसर्पन्ति धर्मैश्च पापमपनुदति, धर्मं सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं, तस्माद्धर्मं परमं वदन्ति ।





A far wider meaning is then given to the word Dharma. That *Shakti* (or Divine Power, or Divine Law or Divine Will) is Dharma, which pervades the whole universe, and regulates its harmonious action, being the cause of the birth of the universe, its preservation, and its final dissolution or absorption into the Supreme.

*Dharma as Divine Law.*—The Divine Will or Law thus manifesting itself is similarly pronounced 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.

\* या विभर्ति जगत्सर्वमाश्वरेच्छा ह्यलौकिकी ।

सैव धर्मो हि सुभगे ! नेह कश्चन संशयः ॥—पुराणसंहिता ।

† योग्यताऽवच्छिन्ना धर्मिणः शक्तिरेव धर्मः ।





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 *yonis* or narrow gates of rebirth, till at last it takes its birth as man. It is Dharma or Divine Law which has taken the Jiva, most undeveloped and almost insentient in the beginning, to the stage of man, the fully conscious and developed being. And Dharma will take him in course of time yet higher. †

All Jivas follow this strict course of evolution from the earliest conceivable material condition to the highest ordinary evolute in the form of the self-conscious and reflecting human

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\* Read the "First Words" of Dr Bucke's "Cosmic Consciousness" in this connection.

† Cf. Bucke's "Cosmic Consciousness," p. 19. where the author proves and agrees with the principles of the Hindu theory of E-





being. The stages are these, leading from the gross to the intelligent being. Taking life as beginning to manifest itself is the vegetable kingdom, each evolved living being develops characteristics corresponding to its constituent elements. In vegetable life, there is preponderance of "gross" food (*anna*), which in the set language of the Rishis is *Annamaya Kosha*, or food-sheath. Next comes the germ life (*Swedaja Srishti*), where the *Annamaya Kosha* is partially subordinated to the *Prāṇa-maya 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 *Jarāyuja Srishti*, or the sac-born beings, where the *Vijnānamaya Kosha*, or the sheath of intelligence, plays the prominent part. The ultimate form of the sac-born beings is man, the fully developed Jiva, in whom is brought into play the *Anandamaya Kosha*, or the sheath of joy. It is at this stage of evolution that the feeling of joy distinctly manifests itself in the peculiar act of laughing never observed in any previous stage. Students of logic will be reminded of the convenient definition of man: "Man is a laughing animal."

It is Dharma that keeps up this rising chain of evolution, from which there is no escape.\* Who can resist this all-powerful Divine Dharma? Knowing the Law, we can but work with it, we can help it to work smoothly, and it is sure to take us to our Destination. Going against the Law, we hinder our evolution. Dharma itself teaches us how to work smoothly and harmoniously, with it, so as to ensure our progressive evolution.

All Jivas, other than man, are completely under the power of *Prakriti* (Nature), and follow her laws automatically. These Jivas are lovingly nurtured and brought up by her, as by a fond mother. Like dutiful children they too while in the

\* उन्नतिं निखिला जीवा धर्मैव क्रमादिह ।

चिदधानाः सावधाना लभन्तेऽन्ते परं पद्म ॥

—पुराणसंहिता ।





lower stages of evolution, obey her commands instinctively in all actions, *e. g.*, in eating and drinking, in sleep, incoition, 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, *vis.*, *Sattwa* (or goodness, light, happiness, purity, etc.); *Rajas*, (or activity), and *Tamas* (evil, darkness, ignorance, inactivity).<sup>\*</sup> Those actions that suppress the principles of Tamas and Rajas, and promote the growth of the principle of Sattwa, are Dharma.<sup>†</sup>

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.

<sup>\*</sup> The nature of these *Gunas* has been explained further on.

<sup>†</sup> सखवृद्धिकरो योऽत्र पुरुषार्थोऽस्ति केवलः ।

धर्मशीले ! तमेवाहुर्धर्म केचिन्महर्षयः ॥

—पुराणसंहिता ।





In man, *Rajas* manifests itself as *Rāga* (or attachment) and *Tamas* as *Dwēsha* (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 *pāpa*.\*

Those actions of man, whether of mind, body or speech, which increase knowledge that leads to the discrimination of *dharma* and *adharma*, have been called *Dharma* in the Vedas.

*The Dharma of the Hindus.*—The Hindu *Dharma* is Nature's inexorable Universal Law. As this law is all-pervading, so everyone, every nation on the face of the earth, abides by the Hindu *Dharma* consciously or unconsciously. All religions of the world come under this *Dharma*.

We hear the names of various faiths passing under the name of *Dharmas*, such as Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Muhammadanism, etc. But India's Eternal *Dharma* is called **THE DHARMA**, and includes all these faiths: It is the Universal *Dharma*.

Although in modern times, various fancy names have been given to this Eternal *Dharma*, yet in the sacred scriptures, no other name for it is anywhere found, but that of "*the Dharma*". Indeed, "*the Dharma*" is the only name proper for it, by reason of the universality, liberality, peaceful tolerance and an all-embracing purview as of Omnipotent God Himself, which characterise it.

\* मानुषेषु महाराज ! धर्माधर्मौ प्रवर्त्ततः ।

न तथाऽन्येषु भूतेषु मनुष्यरहितेष्विह ॥

—महाभारत ।





*The three Gunas.*—Dharma or Divine Law, also called *Shakti*, has been considered in our Shastras in three aspects as already pointed out, *viz.*, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. These three pervade the whole creation. The preponderance of Sattwa in man makes him pure, good, contemplative. Rajas makes him active. This principle preponderates in Western nations. Tamas gives rise to bad thoughts and evil passions.

It ought to be the aim of every man to increase the Sattwa guna in him. For this guna positively helps the natural evolution of the Jiva towards his Goal, while others hinder it. The growth of Sattwa in man makes him selfless, and self-denying, pure and holy, just and merciful. It gives him peace and bliss. So his path to the Goal gradually becomes straight and easier. Therefore actions that help the growth of this guna is Dharma.

Tamas fosters ignorance, selfishness, inactivity, vanity, greed, and all base lusts and low passions in man. Thus his bonds are increased, he is tied down to the vile earth, and his evolution is checked. Therefore everything that increases this guna is bad, is Adharma.

Thus, according to the Hindu Shastras, all actions of man, whether mental or physical, come under Dharma (*punya*) and Adharma (*pāpa*). 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 *Sadâcânâra*, 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 Sanâtana 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 Kanâda, 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 three-fold combination of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. The equilibrium of these three principles is *Prakriti* (Nature, or primordial matter). The soul is independent of the *Prakriti* and consequently of the three principles in it. The Soul's goal is to free itself from the experiences of the operation of the three principles, † which in ignorance it continues to attribute to itself.

This end is called in our scriptures by various names, e.g., *Nisreyasa*, *Moksha*, *Mukti*, *Apavarga*, *Siyujjya*, *Nirvâna*, all meaning the same thing.

This then is the Blissful Goal of man. Each being on earth is consciously or unconsciously labouring 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.

\* यतोऽभ्युदयनिश्चयसंनिधिः स धर्मः ।—Kanada Sutra I/2

† निश्चैश्वर्या भवान्न ।—Bhagwad Gita.





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, *dharmā*, or duty; morality, virtue or *punya*. And if not, it is bad, *adharma*, immoral, or *pāpa*.

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:

- (a) The Path of *Dān*, or charity;
- (b) The Path of *Tapas*, or austerities; and
- (c) 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 (*Jñāna 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.

"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."†

\* See section III.

† This and the following quotations in this Section are from Max Muller.





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 *Sāṅkhya* 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 *Vedānta* Philosophy.

According to Max Muller: Religion is a subjective faculty for the apprehension of the infinite.

John Stuart Mill's conception of religion is this. He says: "The essence of religion is the strong and earnest direction of the actions and desires towards an ideal object recognized as of the highest excellence and is rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire."

This is our *Bhakti Yoga* or the "Path of Love" — the attainment of the Supreme.

Professor Seely's view of religion is also 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 shortcomings of all. The Sanâtana Dharma is the oldest religion and the father of every other, living or dead. It stands unrivalled in the depth and splendour of its magnificent philosophy.

*Utility of Dharma.*—The aim of religion as already mentioned is to secure *Abhyudaya* (or material and spiritual prosperity) and *Nisreyasa* (or perfect, eternal Bliss). For the humble human being in his humblest original condition, an advance through body and intellect is necessary, so that with a perfect bodily organism, he can reach the Goal without any obstacle. The Hindu teaching prescribes four objects in the growth of human life: two of them apply to the material body, and the other two are for the spiritual Goal. The first are: gain (*Artha*) and desire (*Kâma*), and the last are: righteousness (*Dharma*) and freedom (*Moksha*.) The reader will note what a sublime view is here taken of the utility of Dharma. It is a universal benignness intended for the advancement of the whole of humanity through the material, and along the spiritual, path to Freedom and Bliss, the Goal of all the previous struggle through innumerable stages of growth. Other religions, as we have seen, but faintly help the aspirant. But in Hinduism as defined and described above, there is no vagueness. It is a vivid, living, and concrete guidance to aspirants of all classes and in all conditions of time, place, and circumstances.





## DHARMANGA.

## CLASSIFICATION OF DHARMA.

## III.

In the previous chapter we have dealt with the universal character of Dharma. In this chapter we propose to deal with Dharma as applies to all human beings. The Rishis of old made four divisions of Dharma,\* *vis.*,

- (1) *Sâdhârana Dharma*;
- (2) *Vishesha Dharma*;
- (3) *Asâdhârana Dharma*, and
- (4) *Apaddharma*,

or

- (1) General or universal Dharma.
- (2) Particular Dharma,
- (3) Extraordinary Dharma, and
- (4) Dharma under emergency

Of these, the *Sâdhârana 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 *Sâdhârana Dharma*. For example, there is a special dharma for *Sanyâsis* and a special one for householders. Obviously, what is special *dharma* for the *Sanyasi* cannot be dharma for the householder. To give an instance: Marrying and accepting gold are dharma for the householder, but *adharma* for the *Sanyâsi*. Similarly, there is special dharma for women, and for the king, and for his subjects, and so on.

*Asâdharana Dharma*.—The *Asâdhârana* or Extraordinary dharma || is suited to a particular individual, and may even

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\* See *Shambhu Gita*.

† The philosophy of Dharma as described in this chapter is to be found in the *Karma Mimamsa* of Bharadvâja.

‡ Such Dharma is described in the *Smirtis* in particular, and in other *Shastras* in general.

|| Instances of this kind of Dharma are found scattered in the *Dharma Shastras* and the *Purânas*.





be 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.

To give an instance. The test of chastity of women is to be a faithful wife of one man. In the case of Draupadi,\* we find that she is held up as a model of chastity, notwithstanding the fact that she had five husbands. What happened in her case is this: When Draupadi had to act as the wife of, say, Yudhishtira, she regarded Yudhishtira alone as her husband, the thought of her having other husbands never even for once entering her mind then, in fact she then regarded Bhima and the others as her sons. And so her dharma is not violated. To abide by dharma under such unusual conditions requires very high yogic powers, which highly developed people alone like Draupadi possess.

Vishwāmitra's attainment of Bráhma hood, and Nandi's elevation to the position of a Devatâ are two more examples of this kind of dharma.

*Apaddharma.*—The last is âpaddharma 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 the kind of Dharma is supplied by the Upanishads. A Bráhma na, almost dying of starvation, accepted and ate the leavings of the food of a *Chândala*. 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

\* The joint wife of the five Pandava brothers.

† A special chapter is devoted to this class of Dharma in the Mahabharata, and instances are found in other works also.





I. *Dān*, or *Charity*.—This may be divided into three kinds. They are—

(a) *Abhaya Dān*, or giving hope of salvation and protection from fear (in which is included the giving of *Dikshā* or initiation);

(b) *Brahma Dān*, or giving means of learning and imparting education;

(c) *Artha Dān*, or giving money (in which is included the giving of food, clothes, land, etc.)

All these three sorts of *Dān* 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 *Dān Dharma*.

II. *Tapas*, or *Austerities*.—To bear with equanimity heat and cold, happiness and misery, and such like pairs of contraries, and to exercise perfect restraint with respect to one's thoughts, speech and deed are *Austerities*. They may be divided as follows :—

(a) *Shārīrik Tapas*, or *Bodily Austerities*.

(b) *Mānasic Tapas*, or *Mental Austerities*.

(c) *Vāchanic Tapas*, or *Austerities relating to Speech*.

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

III. *Yajna*, *Yág*, 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) *Upāsana Yajna* or *Worship*.

(c) *Jñāna Yajna* or *Knowledge*.

These three can be sub-divided as follows :

*Karma Yajna* [III (a)] falls under six heads :—

(1) *Nitya Karma*, or performance of regular daily duties, *i.e.*, the performance of which does not bring *punya* (merit), but the non-performance of which brings *pāpa* 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 pápa or sin.

(3) *Kámya Karma* or the observances in connection with some desired object. Under this head come the Karmanas 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) *Adhyátma 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 Devatás.

(6) *Adhibhúta Karma*, or acts and observances regarding other beings,—those acts that conduce to the welfare of and help third parties such as feasting Brahmanas, which help the Pitris.

Referring each of these to the three *gunas*, we get 18 classes of this branch of Dharma.

*Upāsana Yajna*, or *Worship* [III (b)] presents itself in innumerable varieties. The principal are as follows :

(1) The worship of the Brahman, the Formless One.

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

(3) The worship of the Brahman through Incarnations.

(4) The worship of the following three classes of Deities, viz., the *Devas*, the *Rishis* and the *Pitris*.

(5) The worship of the Dark Powers 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 Dhyāna* or grossly objective meditation.

(2) Through control of the body (*Hatha Yoga*). The meditation here aims at the Inner Light, and is called *Iyotir Dhyāna*.

(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 of the Real and the Unreal, or *Rāja Yoga*. The meditation of Raja Yoga is called the *Brahma Dhyāna*.\*

All the above nine, multiplied by the three *gunas*, give us 27 sorts of worship. A detailed account of worship is given later on in a separate Section.

*Jñāna Yajna* [III (c)]. The sacrifice in the form of Knowledge has principally the following three sub-heads:—

(1) *Shravana*, or attentively hearing the words of wisdom from one's Guru, or learning by oneself sacred lore from the *Shāstras*.

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

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

Each of these may again be sub-divided into three, if we consider the three *gunas*. Thus we get a nine-fold division of *Jñāna 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,—24 branches in all. If we take into

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\* The four kinds of practical Yoga are explained under separate Sections.





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 practised by an individual for his own good, it is called *Yajna*, and when it is practised for the good of the whole of creation, it is called a *Mahâyajna*. A further account of *Mahâyajna* will be given in a future Section.

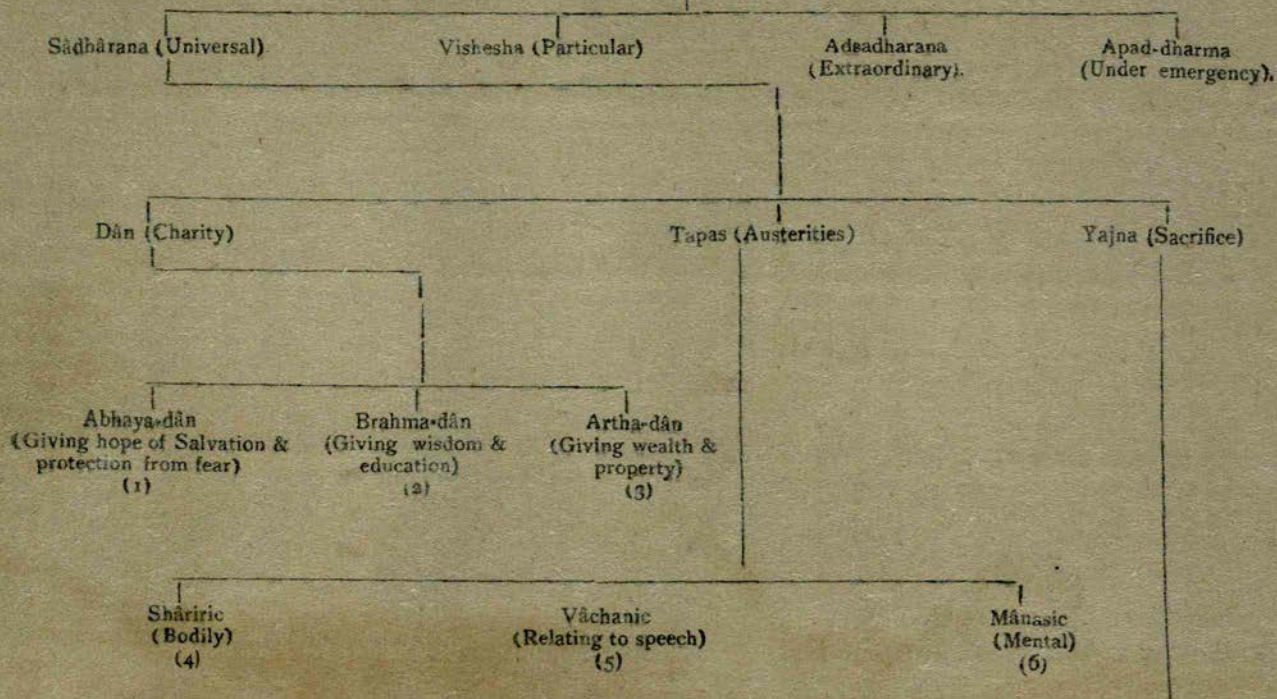
*Dharma for all Mankind.*—On a careful examination of the illustration No. 1, and the Chart of *Dharma*, we see how deep was the insight of our *Rishis* into *Dharma*, and how wonderfully comprehensive are the divisions given! No religion of the world, living or dead, can possibly go outside the Chart,—all 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, 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 the path of *Karma*, and a contemplative man 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. Sect-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 the *Sanâtana 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; the grossest fetishism and the highest absolutism, all have their place in the pale of *Sanâtana Dharma*. There is no creed in the world that does not depend on some aspect (*anga*) or other of *Sanâtana Dharma* for its existence. The chart is given overleaf.

*The Chart of Dharma.*

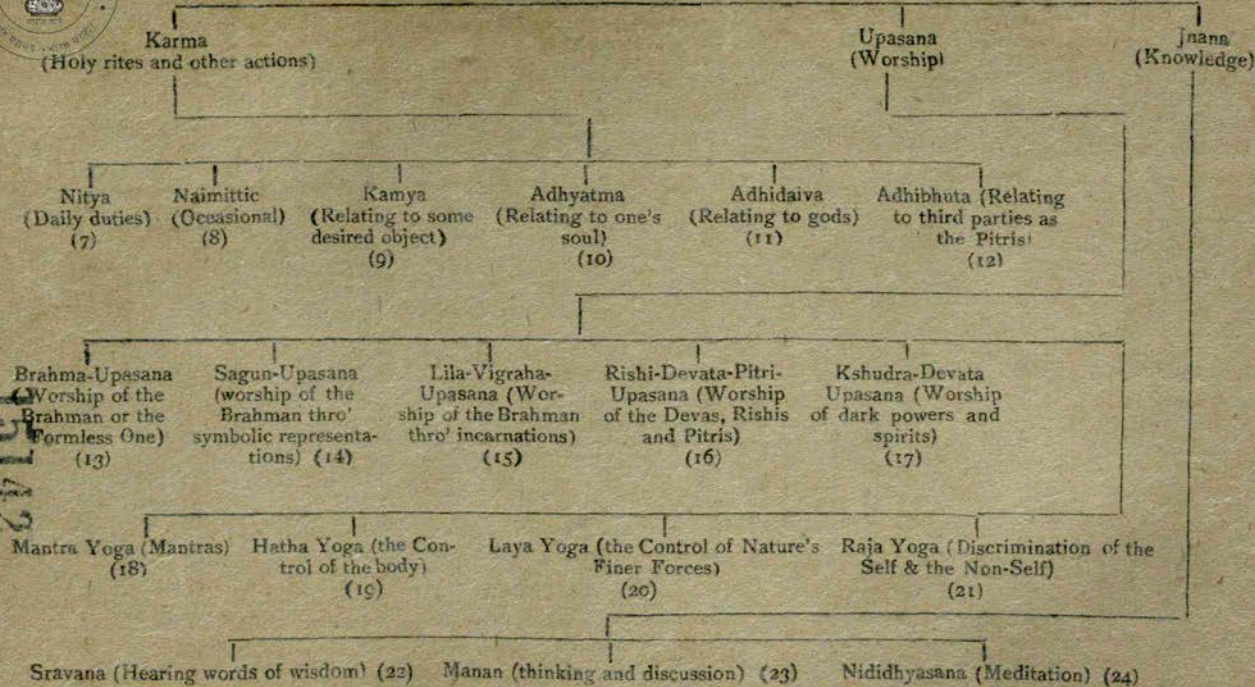
## DHARMA.







## YAJNA



NOTE.—The 24 divisions of Universal Dharma multiplied by the three gunas (Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas) give us 72 kinds of the same.



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 Shâstras, 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 (Knowledge), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Inertia)—these are the three *gunas* born of matter. O Great-armed One! these bind in the body the Indestructible Dweller in the body.\*

"Of these, Sattwa, luminous and innocuous on account of its purity, binds by the attachment to happiness and to wisdom, O Sinless One!

"Know, O son of Kunti, that Rajas, of the nature of passion, is the source of thirst and attachment. That binds the dweller in the body by the attachment to action.

"And know that Tamas, born of ignorance, deludes all embodied beings, and binds (them) by indiscrimination, idleness and sleep, O son of Bharata!

"Sattwa attaches (one) to happiness, Rajas to action, O Bhârata! But Tamas, having shrouded wisdom, attaches (one) to indiscrimination.

"Now, Sattwa prevails, having over-powered Rajas and Tamas, O Bhârata; (now) Rajas (prevails) having over-powered Sattwa and Tamas; and (now) Tamas (prevails), having over-powered Sattwa and Rajas.

"When the light of wisdom streams forth from all the gates of the body, then it should be known that Sattwa is increasing.

"Greed, effort, undertaking actions, want of self-control, desire,—these are produced from the increase of Rajas, O best of the Bhâratas!

"Darkness, inertia, indiscrimination and delusion,—these are born of the increase of Tamas, O joy of the Kuru race!

\* Bhagawad Gita XIV, 5.





"If Sattwa prevails when the embodied being dies, then he goes to the pure worlds of those possessed of the highest knowledge.

"Dying in Rajas, (the being) is born amongst those attached to action; dying in Tamas, he is born in the womb of the senseless.

"Wise men say that the fruit of a Sattwic action is good and pure, but the fruit of Rajas is misery, and the fruit of Tamas, is ignorance.

"From Sattwa, Knowledge is born; and from Rajas greed; indiscrimination and delusion result from Tamas, and also ignorance.

"They go upwards to Heavenly Spheres that are established in Sattwa; the Rajasic dwell in the middle spheres; and the Tamasic, that are settled in the worst *guna* (Tamas), go downwards, *i.e.*, to inferior stages of evolution."

The Lord says: "When the seer sees no doer other than these *gunas*, and knows that which is higher than (and beyond) the *gunas*, enters into My existence.

"When the dweller in the body crosses over these three *gunas*, from which results the birth of bodies, then he, freed from the miseries of birth, death and old age, drinks the nectar of Immortality."

Now, we will deal with some of the important angas, divided into three sub-divisions, in accordance with the three *gunas*.

*Dān or Charity.*—The following quotations will clearly bring out the nature of each of the three kinds of Dān :—

"That gift given to one who would do nothing in return, believing that such a gift ought to be made, in a fit place and time, and to a worthy person,—that gift is called *Sāttwic* or pure.



"The gift which is given with the hope of receiving something in return, or, again, with the hope of reaping its fruits, or that which is given grudgingly,—such a gift is called *Rajasic*.

"That gift given at improper time and place, and to unworthy persons, disrespectfully and contemptuously,—such a gift is *Tamasic*."

*Tapas or Austerities*—"The three-fold austerities, performed by men with devotion to the Supreme Being, without desire for fruit, is said to be *Sâttwic* (pure). †

"The austerity which is practised with the object of gaining respect, honour and worldly gain, and for show, is said to be *Râjasic*, and is unstable and fleeting.

"That austerity which is done under wrong notions, or with self-torture, or with a view to harm another,—such is *Tamasic* tapas.

*Karma Yajna, or Actions*.—"That sacrifice which is offered by men without desire for fruit as enjoined by the rules, implanting this firmly in the mind *that it is a duty*,—such sacrifice is *Sattwic* (pure).

"That sacrifice offered with a view to reap fruits, and also for pomp,—O best of *Bhâratas*, know that to be *Râjasic*.

"The sacrifice contrary to rules, devoid of charity, *mantras* (mystic syllables of power), without gifts to the priests and devoid of faith, is said to be *Tamasic*. ‡

"*Sâttwic* (purest and best) *Karma* is that which is performed according to rules and without omission, by men having no desires, and cherishing no desire for the fruit of the action and not influenced by love or hatred. ||

"*Râjasic Karma* is that which is done with a view to obtain desired fruits, or that which is done with over-exertion from pride.

\* Bhagawad Gita, XVII, 20, 21, 22.

† Bhagawad Gita, XVII, 17, 18, 19.

‡ Bhagawad Gita XVII, 11, 12, 13.

|| Bhagawad Gita XVIII, 23, 24, 25.





"Tamasic Karma is that which is done without due regard to the aim of freeing oneself from bondage of life and death, destruction, or harming others, and to one's capacity for work, and which is done under the influence of ignorance.

"Freed from attachment, not egoistic, endowed with firmness and courage, unruffled by success or failure,—such a doer is called Sâttwic.

"Full of attachment, desirous of fruits of actions, covetous, harmful, impure, moved by joy and sorrow,—such a doer is Rajasic.

"One who not having any devotion to God, who is devoid of discrimination, or who is vain, or is a cheat, or malicious, indolent, sorrowful, or procrastinating,—such an actor is called Tamasic."\*

*Upāsana Yajna, or Worship.*—Says the Almighty Mahavishnu addressing the gods:—"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*.†

"The Bhakti of the afflicted is Tamasic; of the enquirers, Rajasic; of the persons seeking wordly and spiritual good is Sâttwic, each one is higher than the preceding.

"Faith is three-fold according to the nature of the embodied beings—Sâttwic, Rajasic and Tâmasic."

"O ye Brahmins, listen attentively to their marks. That Faith is Sâttwic, which has pure wisdom at its root.

"That faith which has at its root desires and questionings, is of another kind (Rajasik). The last (Tamasic) kind is that which has at its root tendencies not based on thought."‡

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

\* Bhagawad Gita XVII, 26, 27, 28.

† Vishnu Gita

‡ Sanyâsa Gita.



“Rajasic devotees are those who have desires, and worship the Rishis, the Pitris, the Devatās, and many divine Powers (*Sakti*).

“It is only the Sāttwic 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, realising 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 Rājasic worshipper according to the Smṛiti Śāstras.

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

The following quotations will clearly explain the nature of Jñāna Yajna :—

*Jñāna 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 Rājasic.

“That knowledge is Tāmasic, which, being petty, is wholly attached to some single purposeless pursuit, without keeping in view any definite goal.

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\* All the above quotations are from Vishnu Gita.





"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 Pārtha, is Sâttwic.\*"

"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 Râjasic.†"

"And, O Pārtha, 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 (*Kâma*) and gain (*Artha*), occasionally expecting the fruit,—that firmness, O Partha, is Râjasic." ¶

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

"The end of human existence (*Purushārtha*) has as its form the three together, viz., listening to the teachings of the Scriptures (*Śravaṇa*), thinking on them (*Manana*), and continued meditation on the same (*Nididhyāsana*), which, being at the root of renunciation, help us to know the Brahman; such exertion is called Sattwic. When all these three proceed

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\* Bhagawad Gita, XVIII, 39.

† Ibid, 31.

‡ Ibid, 32.

|| Ibid, 33.

¶ Ibid, 34.

§ Ibid, 35.



from renunciation as the root, and are devoted to explanation about Brahman, then it is Sâttwic.

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

"And that is called Tâmasic which has unbelief as its root."\*

By a study of the chart and the illustrative Tree of Dharma, one will be able to understand the relation of the above-mentioned 72 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.

The two birds in the illustration† represent *Pravritti* (desire) and *Nivritti* (renunciation). The *Pravritti* bird feeds itself on two unripe fruits representing material and spiritual prosperity. The other bird eats the ripe and luscious fruit of Moksha or Freedom.

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.

\* Vishnu Gita.

† See *Sakti Gita* where 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, viz., *Dan*, *Tapas* and *Yajna*. It has 72 branches in all." The Mother further says: "The innumerable leaves and flowers of the tree are the many sub-divisions of Dharma. This Tree of Dharma is the cause of all dharmas of the World." This quotation and the chart given in this chapter will help the readers in studying Illustration No. 1.



THE WORLDS' ETERNAL RELIGION



Illustration  
No 1.

**DHARMAKALPADRUMA (Tree of Dharma)**



## KARMA.

## LAW OF KARMA.

## IV.

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 *Sanskāra*. Karma and Sanskara are of two kinds, *vis.*, Pure and Impure. It has been established in the Karma Mimāṃsā 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 Sanskara 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 Mimāṃsā 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 Mimāṃsā of Bharadwaja. We summarise 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 eternities through Karma and it goes into annihilation through Karma. All life macrocosmic and microcosmic, from the minutest vegetation to the highest developed man, universal and individual, is a play of Karma. The divine power is Karma. In fact, God Divine is Himself subject to Karma. What is this Almighty Karma? How does it come into existence? How are individual souls able to attain Salvation conquering the power of that Karma?

The Vedas declare Karma to be the same as Brahman. In fact there is no difference between the Divine Power and

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\* This chapter has been summarised from the "Karma Mimāṃsā" of Bharadwaja and "Sakti Gita."





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 Manifest out of the Unmanifest is due to Karma as the cause. Karma gives manifest activity to Sattwa and Tamas, Dharma and Adharma being characterised by these principles, respectively, so that Karma is the secret of Dharma and Adharma.

Karma works in three ways. There is the *Sahaja Karma*, i. e., self-springing, spontaneous Karma. There is the *Aisha Karma*, i. e., 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 Karma (*Sahaja*) is the source of the appearance of the 14 worlds, of the creation as a whole, inclusive of moveable and immoveable beings, the *Brahmānda* (Solar system) containing an infinite variety of manifestations of the four kinds of *Bhutasanghās* (i. e., the fourfold stages of creation, *vis.*, *Udbhijja*, *Swedaja*, *Andaja* and *Jarāyuja*).

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 demonly power 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* (Karma Divine belonging to the occult world) however is yet unique in that it operates in helpful associations with either of these, i. e., the *Sahaja* or Spontaneous





Karma or the Jaiva or Individual Karma. Also the Incarnations of the Divine manifest that Karma. They appear in five manifestations as Adhyātmikā, Adhidaivikā, Adhibhautikā, severally or two together or three together, and such incarnations are again partial or full or Aveshavatâr—incarnations by possession. All these fall within the province of Aisha, the Karma belonging to the occult world. When the Daivi power is subordinated by the Asuri 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 *Sanskāra*, which may be rendered as the 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 Chijjadagranthi, the knot of Chit, life consciousness, with the inanimāte or unconscious. This is the source from which the appearance of the latent impulse, *Sanskāra*, takes place. The latent impulse is the root-cause of creation. *Sanskāra* or the latent impulse is of two kinds—the *Prākṛita*, "Original," and the *Aprākṛita*, "Non-Original." The *Prākṛita* (pure) is called "Natural" and the *Aprākṛita* (impure) is called "Forced." The former leads to Moksha, the latter (the forced impulse) leads to Bondage.

The *Prākṛita*, or natural impulse, gives three-fold purification. The original *Swabhāvik* (i.e., *Prākṛita*) impulse that leads to Mukti is manifested by sixteen divine phases, like halting stages on the way for acquiring fresh energy,—Vedic *Sanskār*. With the help of those sixteen phases the Aryan sages protected the purity of the Aryan classes by prescribing as many purificatory rites. The forced (*Aswabhāvik*) impulses keep individual souls in bondage, and infinite are the circumstances

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\* This subject of Incarnations has been dealt with in the Chapter on Worship.





bringing about that bondage. The Aswabhâvik impulses are in this way infinite in variety. When there is scope for the original impulse (Prâkritik Sanskara), it gives to men power and purity and freedom in the long run. This is the secret of the sixteen Vedic purificatory rites Sanskâras.

The divine power runs through these purificatory rites and conducts them towards itself by means of the same Sanskaras representing all those phases. The sixteen purificatory rites are: (1) Garbhâdhâna (conception); (2) Punsavan (insuring male progeny); (3) Simantonnayana (the parting of the mother's hair); (4) Jata Karma (the birth-rite); (5) Nâmakarana (name-giving); (6) Annaprâsana (the first meal); (7) Chura Karma (the crest); (8) Upanayana (the introduction to the teacher); (9) Brahmavrata (the vow of Brahman); (10) Vedavrata (the vow of Veda); (11) Samâvartana (the return home); (12) Udvâha (marriage); (13) Agnyâdhana (keeping the householder's fire); (14) Diksha (the initiation); (15) Mahâvrata (the great vow), and the last (16) Sanyâs (asceticism, renunciation).

Other Sanskaras (purificatory rites) that may be prescribed by the Veda or Smriti or Purana or Tantra are all included in these sixteen. The first 8 of these are Pravrittirodhak (the controllers of proclivity), the last 8 are Nivrittishoshak (the promoters of renunciation). Hence, says the Vedas, the ascetic, Sanyasi, is the Master of Atma-jnana (self-knowledge) and honoured even by the gods. In this way, the Prâkritik Sanskâra (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. The purity given by the purificatory rites helps the progress towards Mukti. By the purification gained by such rites 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 purificatory rites (individual impulse) 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 *Gunās* (cosmic principles). A vibration in it gives rise to Karma wherefore it is called *Sahaja* (spontaneous). The *Sanskāra* 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 Vedic purificatory rites, or by the help of one or more divisions of Dharma mentioned in the previous chapter, it will inevitably be an obstacle to the individual's attainment of Freedom. In the holy *Swabhāvik Prākṛitik Sanskāra* (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 the purificatory rites. It should be noted, however, that the 16 Vedic *Sanskāras* apply only to the followers of Vedas. The followers of other creeds could advance to Freedom with the help of *Ādhāraṇ Dharma* aforesaid in its natural course.

In the case of woman the Dharma of Chastity by itself is able to secure the purification resulting from purificatory rites. In man's case the due observance of the duties appertaining to *Varnāshram*\* (the castes and stages of life) contributes largely to the progressive attainment of that purification. Both these are *Swabhāvik* (natural) Dharmas for woman and man as stated. By the due performance of *Varnāshram Dharma*

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\* This subject has been dealt with in a separate chapter.




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and Sati Dharma (respectively), men and women attain material and spiritual advancement as well as Kaivalya. Both these give the three-fold purification, and work by virtue of the Prākṛitik Sanskāra (original impulse) leading the sexes respectively to the two goals mentioned.

Woman by standing firm in chastity identifies herself so completely with the husband that after long enjoying heavenly happiness she attains change of sex and becomes man. Man as already described going through the course of purification by the observance of Varna Dharma and Ashram Dharma (castes and the life's stages), controlling proclivity by the aforesaid first eight purificatory rites and advancing renunciation by virtue of the last eight, gains the everlasting bliss of Moksha. This is the highest spiritual secret.

Now as regards the phenomenal manifestation in creation the three-fold Karma operates in the following manner. The Prakṛiti\*—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 Prakṛiti, Avidya springs through the Tamas vibrations and Vidya through the Sattwa vibrations. Then as the effect of Avidya individual souls come into being, which are as God's own manifestations through the knotting up of the conscious (Chit) with the unconscious (Jada) in the inter-action of those intermingling vibrations, the individuals appearing like so many reflections of the moon in the waves of water, over-lapping, counteracting and mingling with one another into infinite mirrors. Thus an infinity of individual souls follows—beginningless and endless. Then the natural impulse (Swabhāvik Sanskāra, 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.

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\* Prakṛiti so to say is the power of Brahman. This subject as well as the subject of evolution and creation have been dealt with in separate Chapters.





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 (Aswabhâvik) 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, Pret, Pitri, Swarga and the Karma Bhumi—our world of death—evolve for the sake of the individual soul's Karma. So these fourteen worlds (7 above, 7 below) present their variety of Bhoga (enjoyment and suffering) to the Jiva.

Vidya, characterised 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 characterised 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 Jadâtmika (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 conduct the Prârabdha Karma (Karma undergoing fruition) of men. The individuals are responsible of course for their own Kriyaman (positive) actions.\* But the Devas acting under the Divine prompting incarnate themselves and help on the 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

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\* Prârabdha, Kriyaman and Sanchit Karma are the three branches of Jaiva Karma, which are dealt with in a separate Chapter.



knowledge know the course of Karma and reach the Divine presence.

The individuals have two courses before them, the Tâmasik (based on ignorance) and Sâttwika (based on knowledge) which are called Impure and Pure Karmas. The former proceeding from Adharma takes them to degradation, the other uniting with the upholding power of Dharma leading them to the 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 they reach the Supreme without any trouble.

With Karma are connected two powers—attraction and repulsion. Attraction having attachment as its cause, proceeds from Rajas. The other with aversion as its root cause comes from Tamas. All creation small and great proceeds from these two powers. The two-fold creation of opposites springs from them. Where there is a balance or equilibrium of these two, there springs the state of Joy 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. Going beyond the province of opposites free from attachment and hatred, freed from desire, those that devote themselves to Karma, go unfailingly to the happy goal of bliss. By the elimination of desire in the performance of one's action, the purity proceeding from the purificatory rites is attained. The action thus becomes pure and by the purity of action Avidya disappears; then by the help of Vidya the knot of the conscious and unconscious springing from ignorance is untied. By its disentanglement the individual becomes the Supreme Lord.

The stream of Karma being endless and beginningless pervading the Microcosm and Macrocosm, if the Jiva desire



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 Ektattwa (one-ness) 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 becomes then a fried grain and the Rakta-vija\* form of Karma then ceases. 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 re-action. Re-action is inevitable, inescapable. Its power to bring in its result is infallible. It follows that even though an individual become Mukta, the accumulations of Karma done before by him will never be null and void. Those accumulations of Karmic impulse, entering into the Chidakash of all creation go to assist the (Sahaja) Spontaneous 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

\* This is an allusion to an Asura 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 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 Nāstic (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.

### UPASANA.

#### WORSHIP IN ALL ITS PHASES.

##### V.

According to the Sanatan Dharma doctrine, the one Supreme Being or Self is to be conceived in three fundamental states or aspects, *viz.*, Brahman,\* Iswara and Virāt Purusha.

\*“यत्तद्ब्रह्म मनोवाचामगोचरमितीरितम् ।  
तत्सर्वकारणं विद्धि सर्वाध्यात्मिकमित्यपि ॥  
अनाद्यन्तमजं दिव्यमजरं ध्रुवमव्ययम् ।  
अप्रतर्क्यमविज्ञेयं ब्रह्माग्ने सम्प्रवर्त्तते ॥  
स्वेच्छामायाख्यया यत्तज्जगज्जन्मादिकारणम् ।  
ईश्वराख्यं तु तत्तत्त्वमधिदैवमिति स्मृतम् ॥  
सर्वज्ञः सद्गुरुर्नित्यो ह्यन्तर्यामी कृपानिधिः ।  
सर्वसद्गुणसारात्मा दोषशून्यः परः पुमान् ॥  
यत्कार्यब्रह्मविश्वस्य निधानं प्राकृतात्मकम् ।  
विराडाख्यं स्थूलतरमभिभूतं तदुच्यते ॥”





*The Highest State* is that of the Brahman\* which is ineffable, impersonal, transcending mind and speech, Karma-less, 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 the *Iswara* in which the Supreme Self is conceived as touching the plane of the personal consciousness, as becoming *Saguna* or invested with attributes, controlling the *Máyá*, 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 *Iswara*, the Supreme Lord.

*In the Third Aspect* *Ishwara* manifests in which He is known as the *Viráta 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 Trinity in the Vedas.*—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*, of the *Iswara* *Adhidaiva*, of the *Virát Purusha* *Adhibhuta*—corresponding to *Adhyatma*, *Adhidaiva* and *Adhibhuta* the *Vedas* are interpreted as containing special portions of their literature under the title of the *Jñān Kānda*, *Upāsana Kānda* and *Karma Kānda*, the three paths of spiritual advancement.

*Upāsana* is the effort to realise the proximity or presence of the Supreme Self, and consists of all those observances and practices, physical and mental, by which the candidate makes a steady advance in the realm of spirituality, so as ultimately

\*“ब्रह्मेशयोरैक्यं पार्थक्यन्तु प्रकृतिवैभवात्”

“स्वरूपेण तदध्यात्मरूपम्”

( इति दैवीमीमांसादर्शनम् )





to realise in himself the presence of the Supreme. Of all those things which conduce to spiritual progress, Upāsana is not only beneficial but vitally necessary to all classes and grades of people.

Take for example, the case of Dān and Tapas. Both are duties prescribed for one's advance in spirituality. Both these must be of the Sattwic character to ensure that advance; both must be founded on the principle of worship. Dān or Charity must have faith as its background; faith is an essential characteristic of worship, so that Dān 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 Jñāna Yoga, worship is a predominant factor; when one performs Karmas and dedicates them wholly to the Godhood, believing in the tenet that God is all, such Karma leads to the spiritual goal. In the Jñāna Yoga, similarly, faith in the Divine guidance comes by worship ensuring the advance to the knowledge or realisation of the ultimate eternal Bliss. One proceeding to attain to this state of Bliss merely with an external endeavour cannot command ease for want of enlivening faith, and becoming lost in confusion, finds it very hard, if not impossible, to reach that goal, described as the Nirvikalpa Samadhi (the state in which the Trinity of the knower, knowledge and knowable merge into unity).\*

It should be noted that in the well-known Prasthāna-Traya of Vedānta, or the triad of starting stations, in philosophy is the Upanishats, the Bhagwat Gita and the Vedānta Sūtras. These are usually understood as leading to a common goal, that of the attainment of Jñāna, so as virtually to lead to the realisation of Brahman. But it can be shown that among

\* Clearly dealt with in the Chapter on Raj Yoga.





the three, the Upanishats have worship as their principal aim. This can be easily seen from following facts: The Gītā has been emphatically declared as enjoining and propounding the performance of Karma even on the part of the person possessed of Jñāna. The Vedānta Sūtras starting with the enquiry into Brahman ( अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा ) aim purely at elucidating the nature of and the attainment of Jñāna, so that both these two Prasthānas mainly having each a distinct aim, the Upanishats have for their aim worship only. Every student of the Upanishats will call to mind the first precept of the syllable ॐ (Om) which should be meditated on. This sort of worship of the sacred syllable is enjoined, because it is taken as the name of Brahman, as directly expressive of it. By worship of this syllable one comes to realise the goal of Nirvikalpa Samādhi.—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 Jñāna engenders pride, which defects of character are all to be considered as phases of madness—उन्माद (enebriation). Humility which characterises 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 huris 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 Dān 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

\*“तदङ्गत्रैविध्यं विभेदवत्” “यागस्त्रिधा काण्डत्रयत्वात्” “नित्यनैमित्तिककाम्यशेदात् त्रिविधं कर्म” “भावत्रयत्वाच्चिधा च” “बहुभेदे ज्ञानोपासने” “त्रिविधं तपः” “दानञ्च” ( इति महर्षिभरद्वाजसूत्राणि ) ।





observance. A spark of fire by the co-operation of time, place and other contributory helps, may blaze into a universal

“ तमेत वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसाऽनाशकेन ”  
( इति श्रुतिः ) “ यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ” ( इति गीतो-  
पनिषत् )

“अङ्गानि त्रीणि धर्मस्य दानं यज्ञस्तपस्तथा ।  
गीतान्येतानि कृष्णेन पावनानीति मुख्यतः ॥  
दानञ्चाऽपि त्रिधा प्रोक्तं विद्याऽर्थोऽभयदानतः ।  
तत्रापि गुणभेदेन नवधा दानमीर्यते ॥  
एवं तपस्त्रिधा ज्ञेयं कायिकं वाचिकं तथा ।  
मानसञ्चाथ गुणतः प्रत्येकं विविधं पुनः ॥  
यज्ञधर्मविभेदास्तु मुनिभिर्बहुवो मताः ।  
कर्मज्ञानोपासनाख्या भेदा मुख्यास्त्रयः स्मृताः ॥  
कर्मयज्ञस्य षड्भेदा नित्यं नैमित्तिकं तथा ।  
काम्यमाध्यात्मिकञ्चैवाऽधिदैवञ्चाधिभौतिकम् ॥  
सत्त्वादिगुणयोगेन भेदास्तत्राऽपि पूर्ववत् ।  
अतोऽष्टादशधा कर्म प्रत्येकं गुणयोगतः ॥  
तथैवोपासनायज्ञो मुनिभिर्बहुधा मतः ।  
परं मुख्यप्रभेदास्तूपासनापद्धतेरिमे ॥  
उपासना ब्रह्मणः प्राक् द्वितीया सगुणस्य च ।  
तृतीया स्मर्यते लीलाविग्रहोपासना बुधैः ॥  
उपान्त्या पितृदेवर्षिगणानामस्त्युपासना ।  
अन्तिमा क्षुद्रदेवानां प्रेतादीनां विधीयते ॥  
अन्येऽपि तस्याश्चत्वारो भेदाः साधनपद्धतैः ।  
तत्रादिमो मन्त्रयोगः स्थूलचिन्तनसाधनः ॥  
द्वितीयो हठयोगः स्याज्ज्योतिर्ध्यानानुचिन्तनः ।  
बिन्दुध्यानविधिश्चात्र लययोगस्तृतीयकः ॥  
राजयोगोऽन्तिमस्तत्र ब्रह्मध्यानं विधीयते ।  
भेदा नवानामप्येषां गुणतः सप्तविंशतिः ॥  
श्रवणं मननञ्चैव निदिध्यासनमेव च ।  
त्रिधैवं ज्ञानयज्ञोऽपि नवधौ स्यादगुणाश्रयात् ॥  
इत्यन्वशासुर्धर्मस्य मुख्यान् भेदानशेषतः ।  
चतुर्विंशतिसंख्याकान् मुनयस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

( इति स्मृतिः )



Pralaya 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 stationed 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 Life Principal.*—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 realise 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 initiated by the *Guru* in bhakti, perseveres in the practice and makes a steady advance. The next stage is called *Rāgatmika* characterised 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 ardour 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 realises 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

\* “साञ्जुरागरूपा” “स्नेहप्रेमश्रद्धातिरेकादलौकिकेश्वराञ्जुरागरूपा” (इति महर्षि-  
रङ्गिराः) “ओम् सा तस्मै परमप्रेमरूपा” (इति देवर्षिर्नारदः) “सा पराञ्जुराक्तेरीश्वरे”  
(इति महर्षिशशिबल्यः)





*Parâ bhakti*\*. Bhakti in one or other of these three aspects informs 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

The Sanatan 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 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, i.e., 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*), *Sattva* and *Tamas*, good and evil, pure and impure, which are the characteristics respectively of the Deva and the Asura hierarchies, allegorised in the story of the war between the Devas and the Asuras, highly coloured descriptions of which are to be met with in the Vedas and the Puranas, the well-known religious literature of Hinduism. The elementals (*bhûtas*) and the departed spirits (*pretas*) referred to above possess a natural affinity to

\* “स्वरूपद्योतकत्वात्पूर्णानन्ददा परा”

( इति दैवीमीमांसा )

† “सा निखिलसाधनयज्ञाधिकरणम्” ( इति दैवीमीमांसा ) “यथा समस्तलोकानां जीवनं सलिलं स्मृतम् । तथा समस्तसिद्धीनां जीवनं भक्तिरिष्यते ॥”

( इति स्मृतिः )

‡ “ऋषिदेवपितृणां भक्तिरभ्युदयप्रदा” ( इति दैवीमीमांसादर्शनम् )

# THE WORLD'S ETERNAL RELIGION

CSL

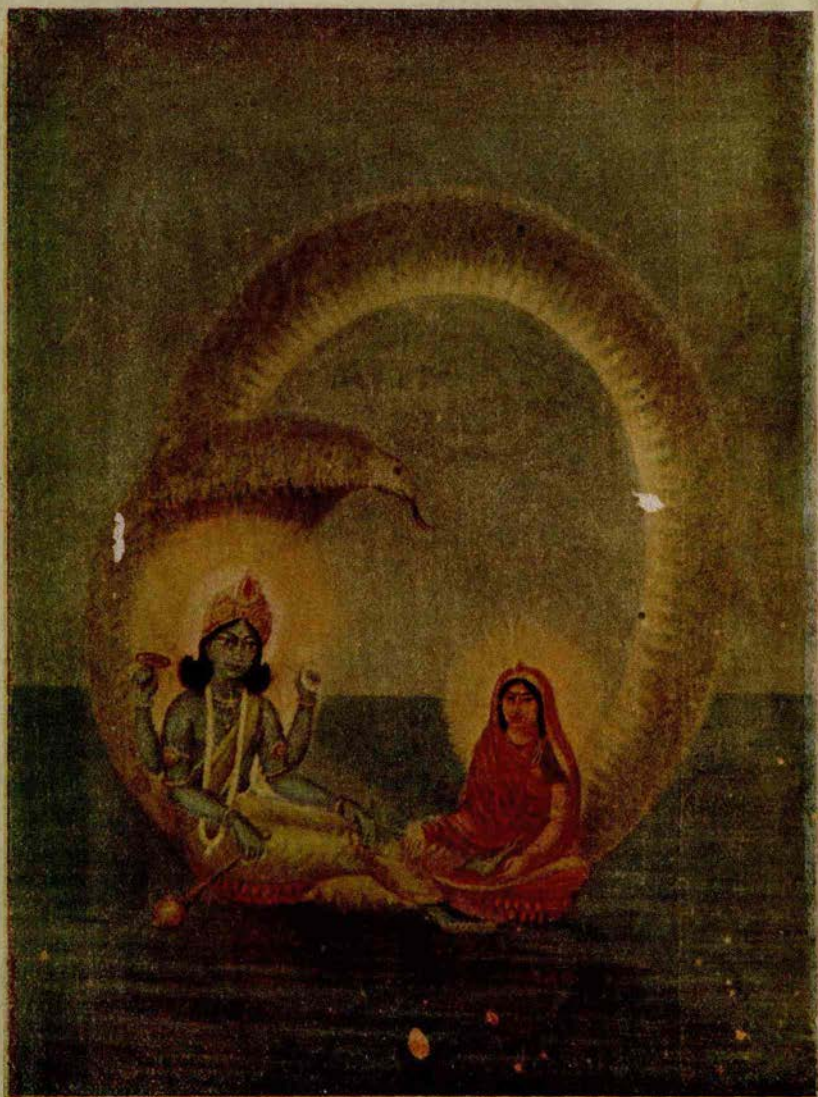


Illustration  
No 2.

THE MAHAVISHNU



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 *sattvic* or beneficent powers; their worship is of a vastly superior order and is helpful to the follower of the path of Jnana.

*Philosophy of Avatar, 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, *viz.*, animal and man.\* The Rishis have propounded the doctrine that the Lord of Universe exists in sixteen expanding *Kalās* or digits of manifestation; that one digit of His life manifests itself in the vegetable kingdom, up to 4 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 Avatāras 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, Sakti, Ganesh and Shiva is worship of the Saguna

\* This subject has been specially dealt with in the Chapter on evolution.

† “कलाभेदेन पूर्वाशक्तम्” (इति दैवीमीमांसादर्शनम्) “एते चांशकलाः पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम्” (इति स्मृतिः)

‡ The philosophy of Saguna Upasana or so-called image-worship is explained in a separate chapter.





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 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 (*mūrtis*) 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 (*dhyāna*) 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, etc.) who represent the different aspects pointing towards Brahman, are five in number. The origin of the five-fold worship lies in the five primary *tattvas* (elements) which enter into the constitution of man in varying proportions, so that in some there is a preponderance of Akāsha, in others of Vāyu, 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 realise the profound ideas that lie behind this five-fold system of *saguna* worship.

A beautifully suggestive illustration (Illustration No. 2) of it is supplied by the picture of Maha-Vishnu, 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 *tattvas* 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 realise the omnipresence of the Supreme Self; wherefore the picture shows Maha-Vishnu asleep on the serpent Ananta—the Infinite rolling itself in an uncreate state; the *Maya*, Sakti, as Nescience overpowers the *Jiva* (the organic life unit) but is