

the All-pervading, who embraced both *sat* and *asat*.¹ He could be apprehended only by knowledge; but those who were fully devoted to him reached the highest end of union with him. With Nārāyana's permission Nārada starts to find him out; and on ascending by his yoga-power to the summit of Mēru, he sees towards the north a Milk-white Ocean, in which is a large White Island. It is the home of the sinless, whose strange bodies need no food;² they are devoted to the Supreme Spirit with their whole minds, and they enter that Eternal God of a thousand rays, and are seen shining like the moon.³ Rapt into ecstasy, Nārada stands with upraised arms and bursts into a hymn of praise to the God of Gods, the Manifest and the Unmanifest, *Sat* and *Asat*, Creator and Destroyer, Infinite, Immortal, Mahā-Purusha.

Moved by these praises, Nārāyana appears in his universal form, transcending the Three Strands, the Twenty-fifth above the twenty-four *tattvas*,⁴ the Supreme Soul, known by the name of Vāsudeva.⁵ Fourfold in form,⁶ he is the sole Cause and Effect. Brahman is his creation, born to him as a son.⁷ Rudra, generated from his anger, springs from his forehead. In the great renewal, when the earth is submerged beneath the waters, he is the mighty Boar who lifts her out for the sake of all creatures; and the whole series of Descents down to Krishna and the promised Kalki is his work.⁸ This long Upanishad, in harmony with the Four Vedas and the Sāṅkhya-Yoga, constituted the Pāñcharātra Scriptures recited by Nārāyana himself.⁹ Transmitted through Nārada, the Sun, and the great Rishis, it supplied the foundation of the Religion of Devotion. Its principle was Renunciation, in contrast with the Religion of Action,¹⁰ and this begot the question why the Deity should have

¹ Cp. *ante*, p. 258¹.

² xii. 336, 9.

³ xii. 337, 26, 27; 339, 1.

⁴ Cp. *ante*, p. 207.

⁵ xii. 340, 25.

⁶ Cp. *ante*, Lect. IV., p. 221².

⁷ xii. 340, 59, 60. But in ver. 72 he is born from the navel of the fourth form, Aniruddha. Later, in 349, 13 ff., Brahman has seven births in different ages, starting from Nārāyana's mind, and issuing from his mouth.

⁸ xii. 340, 100.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁰ xii. 341, 2. On *nivṛtti* and *pravṛtti*, cp. *ante*, p. 160. As the essence of the Sacrifice Vishṇu is still worshipped under the name of *Yajña* (sacrifice) *Nārāyana*. Cp. T. A. Gopinātha Rāo, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (1914), vol. i. p. 75.

instituted the ritual of sacrifices and created gods to receive the offerings. The answer is given by the Bhagavat in the character of Vishnu, in whose honour a great sacrifice is performed; the two types of religion were established with the artistic purpose "to give variety to the universe."¹ But behind this diversity the greater deities pass into each other. Rudra, though born of Aniruddha's anger, yet has Nārāyana for his soul, and is in his turn the soul of Bhagavat, who worships him.² And Bhagavat-Nārāyana-Vishnu goes on to declare, "He who knows him (Rudra) knows myself, and he who knows myself knows him. He who follows him follows me."³ Rudra and Nārāyana are one essence in twofold form. "Vishnu never bows his head to any god save his own Self. It is therefore that I worship Rudra."⁴ "I am the habitation of all creatures, and therefore am I called Vāsudeva."⁵ . . . "I am he whom all creatures wish to attain to at the end."⁶ It is a singular illustration of the incongruous elements which are gathered up into these theological complexes that Rudra and Nara-Nārāyana at the hermitage of Badarī become involved in a violent quarrel. The whole world was plunged in anxiety. The luminaries of heaven lost their brightness, and the Vedas no longer shone with inward light in the minds of the pure of soul. The earth shook, and Brahman himself dropped from his seat. But as he pleaded with the irate Rudra, the angry god relinquished his wrath, and the Lord of the world, under the name of Hari, repeated once more the formula of union, "He who knows thee knows me! He who follows thee follows me! There is no difference between us."⁷ To this height Brahman never rises. He may be born of the "grace" or cheerfulness⁸ of Hari (Nārāyana-Vishnu) as Rudra is from his anger; he may enter the visible scene through Hari's will, or issue from his eyes, his speech, his ears; he may even proceed from his nose, or emerge from an egg, or rise out of a lotus on his navel; at each fresh creation he is born anew

¹ xii. 341, 93.

² xii. 342, 17, 21, 23. Cp. the Çiva Bhāgavatas, *ante*, p. 227.

³ Cp. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, *ante*, p. 248.

⁴ xii. 342, 26, 29.

⁵ A play on the word *adhivāsa*, "abode" or "settlement."

⁶ xii. 342, 42.

⁷ xii. 343, 105-130.

⁸ xii. 342, 12; 348, 40; *prāsada-ja*.

as a son from the Self-create who has no origin.¹ He is still, indeed, the Grandsire and Creator of the world, but his subordination can hardly be more strongly emphasised. He may have created the Four Vedas, but it is the Supreme God Hari who is their depository;² he is the source from which Vedas and Sāṅkhya-Yoga philosophies and Pāñcharātra Scriptures derive the teachings which make them all into one whole.³ But are they, after all, uniform in practice? do they not teach different duties? When Nārāyana, to give interest and variety to the world, bade Brahman create diverse kinds of beings, wise and stupid, the puzzled deity pleaded that he had not the requisite wisdom. So the Supreme Lord thought of Intelligence, who immediately appeared before him, and at his order promptly entered Brahman. But when the earth became loaded with creatures whose pride and power threatened to oppress even the gods, Nārāyana perceived that he must come to her help in bearing her burden by punishing the wicked and supporting the righteous. And so the long series of Descents began, and all religions, by whomsoever founded, proclaimed but one sole object of adoration, the Supreme Soul, Nārāyana.⁴ What, then, was the special character of the Pāñcharātra discipline which he promulgated himself?

The religion of Renunciation might be pursued along two paths. Both these required the conquest of all selfish desire, the surrender of all merit, the suppression of all claim to the "fruit" of good works. One way led through knowledge; it demanded strenuous training under a preceptor; its intellectual instrument was the Sāṅkhya teaching, or its ally the Yoga. The other appealed to the emotions, and called for reverence, piety, devotion, love. The field of knowledge was practically limited to conscious experience and its interpretation. The world of sense was no object of either scientific or religious interest. It was there for the philosophic devotee only to be conquered and abandoned. Consecrated tradition might people it with beings of every rank and character; but the truly wise sought only to realise the unity that lay behind them and played through them. This generated no curiosity about

¹ xii. 348, 39-43.

² xii. 348, 28, 78.

³ xii. 349, 82.

⁴ xii. 350, 1, 18, 32, 67

details. The intellectual passion of inquiry was unawakened. The slow processes of observation, the collection of facts, the organisation of experience, had no significance for those who could rise at once above every difference to the identification of God as universal Cause and equally universal Effect.¹ The sole aim of the path of Knowledge was the complete apprehension of the difference between Purusha and Prakriti, spirit and matter, and the deliverance of the soul from the last hold which even the most rarefied and subtle organism might retain upon it. Natural religion, as taught for example by the great Prophet of the Captivity (in *Isaiah* xl. ff.), hardly finds an echo in the pantheistic speculation of the Nārāyaṇīya.

If the path of Knowledge did not lead to investigation of the divine Wisdom, but insisted on the sole contemplation of the universe as a Whole, the equal manifestation of an all-pervading Spirit, the path of Devotion certainly sought to realise a more personal and intimate communion with the Source and Goal of all. On the one hand, it was true that life was cast into certain fixed forms under the irrevocable Law of the Deed. But on the other hand, the doctrine of grace seemed to imply that the rigid limits of ethical consequence might be overpassed by the divine benevolence. The beauty of Nature, which filled the heart and prompted the song of the Hebrew Psalmist, is never named as a ground for the adoring love of Hindu piety. But the picture of the Most High voluntarily addressing himself to share earth's burden, to punish the wicked and protect the good, to establish righteousness and promulgate a way of deliverance from ignorance and suffering and sin, made a deep impression. The tale of the "Descents" of Vishnu-Nārāyaṇa-Vāsudeva through age after age, repeated again and again, and finally embodied in the story of Krishna, kept the idea of the service of man as it was exhibited in Buddhism before the mind of the believer, and awoke a responsive affection which might rise into an ecstasy of adoration.

¹ xii. 340, 38, 45; 349, 60. Cp. the illustrations in 352, 17 ff. A favourite figure of the divine indwelling in man, uncontaminated by material contact, compares it to a drop of water on a lotus leaf which retains its purity unspoiled; xii. 241, 18.

The fanciful picture of the White Island and its strange inhabitants is too full of incongruities to have any real religious significance.¹ So abstract is the conception of Nārāyana as Supreme Spirit that not even Brahman himself, though sprung from the primeval lotus, had ever seen him. Only to Nārada was the vision granted.² But the awakened souls housed in grotesque bodies, needing no food and destitute of senses, yet with heads like umbrellas, sixty-eight teeth, and many tongues,³ are said to enter into the Eternal God of a thousand rays;⁴ they are endued with true knowledge; they are entirely devoted; they are always engaged in praise or adoration, and the Great God condescends to sport with them.⁵ These phantasies are only levities of imagination. More impressive is the scheme of gradual approach to the Supreme Reality along the way of Knowledge. Its inner meaning is indeed veiled; the psychological values of the successive stages are unknown. The path of the stainless who are free of all attachment either through virtue or sin, leads first (as in ancient Upanishad teaching) to the sun, the door into the higher life. There the earthly bodies are consumed, and they enter through Nārāyana into the form of Aniruddha.⁶ Aniruddha is identified with consciousness;⁷ and there they are changed to mind alone. Passing on through Pradyumna (in what capacity, or with what modification, we are not told), they reach Samkarshana, otherwise called *Jiva* or "individual soul." At this elevation they are set free from all contact with the Three Strands, and enter the Supreme Soul who transcends them. He is Vāsudeva, the *Kshetra-jñā*, the "Field-knower,"⁸ not in the limited sense of the Sāṅkhyan Twenty-fifth *Tattva*, but on the scale of the whole world; for he is the possessor of the universe. Such is the eternal reward of concentration of mind, restraint of sense, and whole-souled devotion. For the *ekāntins*,⁹ however, whose minds are fixed

¹ On identifications with Christian communities see below, Note to Lect. VIII., p. 523.

² xii. 345, 1.

³ xii. 336, 9-11.

⁴ xii. 337, 27.

⁵ xii. 344, 52. This is the issue of a real affection on the part of Deity for his worshippers, *ibid.*, 53.

⁶ xii. 345, 13-15. Cp. Note to Lect. IV., p. 221.

⁷ xii. 341, 28.

⁸ xii. 345, 16-18; 340, 39.

⁹ "One-enders."

on but one object in unceasing worship, the highest end is at once open. They need not tread the toilsome ascent through the three lower forms of Nārāyana to the exalted Fourth in Vāsudeva-Hari.¹ Let them only follow the *dharma* instituted by the Most High Lord himself in the Krita age, and embodied in the Bhagavat's own Song to Arjuna, and they will reach the goal without delay. True, such devotion is rare. Were the world full of such persons, injuring none, possessed of the knowledge of the soul, and delighting in the welfare of all creatures, the age of primeval virtue would have begun.² The threat that hatred of Nārāyana will doom the hater's ancestors to fall into hell, the plaintive appeal, "How can Vishnu be hated? he is the soul of all beings; in hating him you would hate your own Self"³—imply that it was not always easy to awaken *bhakti* towards the Invisible Purusha. The difficulty was readily traced to the unfortunate proportions in which the Three Strands were blended in any individual constitution. The fortunate possessor of *Sattva*, goodness, was assured of ultimate deliverance through Nārāyana, whose gracious look upon his soul awoke him to the apprehension of the Unseen Reality. Here is a hint of the religious experience which in the elder teaching ascribed the perception of the Universal Self to an act of spiritual election.⁴ No one could awaken himself, and natures mingled with *Rajas* and *Tamas*, and consequently entangled in *Prakriti*, never drew on them the favouring gaze of Hari. The Grandsire Brahman might indeed befriend them, and they might betake themselves to the religion of Action; but only by complete renunciation, the cessation of all acts with selfish aim, could the pure Spirit be reached whose mysterious being was summed up in the three sacred letters A U M.⁵ In those who have conquered doubt he dwells eternally; they likewise enter into him, and thus mutually inherent they are at peace for ever.⁶

¹ xii. 349, 1-4.² *Ibid.*, 62 f.³ xii. 347, 6 f.⁴ *Kaṭha Up.*, i. 2, 23. *SBE*, xv. 11; *Mund. Up.*, iii. 2, 3; *ibid.*, xv. 40.⁵ *Mbh.*, xii. 349, 68-81. On the ancient significance of this symbol, cp. *Tait. Up.*, i. 8; *SBE*, xv. p. 50; Keith in Hastings' *ERE*, ix. 490.⁶ xii. 350, 70 f.; 352, 12.

VI

In this singular medley of divine figures each of the three, Brahman, Vishnu-Krishna, and Çiva, is in turn presented as supreme. The exaltation of either, of course, involves the subordination of the others. When Vishnu-Krishna is described as Soul of the universe, the Eternal and Infinite Energy which rules the world, he is straightway identified with a group of figures headed by Brahman, and including the Sun, Dharma, the Ordainer, Yama, Rudra, Time, etc.,¹ where Brahman and Rudra are plainly at an inferior level. Brahman, in fact, is produced by Vishnu, according to a favourite epithet, out of a lotus which sprang from Vishnu's navel, as he reposed on the primeval waters.² In the Vishnu-Vāsudeva complex Aniruddha, the fourth form of the Deity, gives birth to him in the same way; and similarly Krishna (Govinda), as he floats upon the ocean, creates Consciousness from which the lotus issues and Brahman comes forth.³ That Brahman should do homage to his august sire Vāsudeva and seek refuge in him,⁴ was thus appropriate in the mingling of religions. When, in similar fashion, he worships Vishnu's solemn horse-head manifestation, the Deity entrusts to him the conduct of the world, as the great Ordainer of creation, and promises that in crises of difficulty he will come to his aid.⁵ Yudhishtira extols Krishna as the great sea, Brahman, the sacred refuge, universal cause alike of the creation and the dissolution of the world;⁶ and Vishnu's promise is fulfilled by Krishna's birth from Vāsudeva and Devakī for the protection of Brahman upon earth.⁷ Çiva, too, was Vishnu's offspring; for when the demons Madhu and Kaitabha were bent on slaying Brahman,⁸ Vishnu's anger sent forth the three-eyed Çambhu from his forehead to the rescue.

Çiva must no less be the source of being for the other two. If he is equated with the Eternal Brahman, he is also his creator. He calls into existence the primeval egg, and thus

¹ iii. 12, 9 ff., 20.

² Thus, iii. 12, 37; 203, 14; 271, 43; xii. 348, 43 (his seventh birth); xiii. 158, 9.

³ vi. 65, 49, 71; xii. 207, 10 ff.

⁴ vi. 65, 47.

⁵ xii. 341, 88.

⁶ xii. 44, 15 f.; xiii. 158, 35.

⁷ xii. 48, 28.

⁸ Cp. *ante*, Lect. III., p. 137.

presides over Brahman's birth.¹ Or he produced Brahman from his right side for the creation of the world, and Vishnu from his left for its preservation ;² in the Apocalypse of Çiva in the same poem,³ however, the Grandsire is only placed on his left side. His name Hara is explained by a reference to a mysterious act of destruction involving Brahman, Indra, Varuna, and others ;⁴ and he is even said to have cut off one of Brahman's heads.⁵ Brahman worships Çiva as he worshipped Vishnu.⁶ When Indra failed to capture the three cities of the Asuras in the sky, he led the gods to Çiva to entreat him to undertake the conquest and overthrow their oppression. A wondrous car is wrought for the Great God, with the sun and moon for wheels, the Vedas for steeds ; the Mandāra mountains are made into his bow, and Vishnu into his arrows ; while Brahman himself becomes the charioteer.⁷ Nārāyana, likewise, submits himself to Çiva, and entreats him to keep evil thoughts from entering his heart,⁸ a significant indication of religious dependence.

Vishnu and Çiva, thus alternately supreme, as we have seen, might be regarded not only as equal but as practically identical. Older than either as the exalted symbol of the divine Unity was Brahman, "Father of all that are and are to be." As these figures were brought into closer relations with each other, two opposite tendencies operated in religious thought. Imagination conceived them as definite personalities robed in a rich vesture of mythology.⁹ Philosophy, not less imaginative, but hungering after unity, tended to throw them all back into the sphere of the infinite and eternal, where all distinctions vanished, the lines of separation disappeared, and differences were blended in the Absolute. The constitution of the universe itself, as

¹ xiii. 17, 8 ; 14, 196. Cp. Lect. III., *ante*, p. 146.

² xiii. 14, 343.

³ xiii. 14, 272.

⁴ Hara being interpreted as "destroyer," vii. 203, 133.

⁵ xiii. 14, 309.

⁶ vii. 203, 95.

⁷ The story is told twice in vii. 203, 64, and viii. 34 ; cp. xiii. 160, 30.

⁸ vii. 202, 78.

⁹ Worship also emphasised their separateness. From the examination of the names of donors in the inscriptions at the Sānci Stūpa in the third and second centuries B.C., Buhler found evidence in support of the view that the Vishnu and Çiva cults were older than Buddhism and Jainism (*Epigr. Indica*, ii. p. 95).

Aristotle observed, following the Pythagoreans, comprises the number three.¹ Space and time alike suggest it. Each person is himself a centre with right and left, with front and rear, the sky above him and the earth below. Moment by moment the future flows through the present into the past; from unseen beginnings life marches through middle age to death. Babylonian cosmology distributed the universe between the gods Anu, Bel, and Ea, ruling the sky, the earth, and the great deep. Homer assigned the heavens to Zeus, the earth and sea to Poseidon, and the realm below to Hades. Zeus, like Brahman, might become the symbol of the unity of nature, but the clear atmosphere of Greece never permitted the blending of the departmental sovereigns into one essence.² The Homeric oath invoked Zeus, Gē, and Helios (heaven, earth, and sun); at Athens a triad of Zeus, Apollo, and Demeter served the same purpose. To avert evil men prayed to Athena, Artemis, and Apollo; or to Zeus, Athena, and Herakles. City-protectors were grouped in threes, like Zeus with Hera and Athena on either side, or Jupiter with Juno and Minerva on the Capitol at Rome. The triad might be based upon the family instead of the outward scene, like the Holy Three of Egyptian theology, Osiris, Isis, and Horus, or the Theban group of Ammon, Mut, and Chonsu. The Vedic poets viewed the world in its three zones of earth, air, and sky, traversed by Vishnu in his three famous steps, and placed them under the suzerainty of Agni, Indra, and Sūrya or Savitri. Buddhism had its "three jewels," the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṃgha; and the later evolution of the great Bodhisattvas led to the artistic representations of the Buddha in the centre, with Mañjuṣrī and Avalokiteṣvara or Vajrapāṇi upon either hand.³ Theories of emanation from a permanent and universal essence adapted themselves

¹ *De Cælo*, i. 2. Cp. Usener's three articles on "Dreiheit," in the *Rheinisches Museum* (1903); and Soderblom on "Holy Triads," *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the Hist. of Religions* (Oxford, 1908), ii. p. 391.

² The number three runs through the Hesiodic theogony, three Gorgons, three Fates, three Graces, etc., and passes into innumerable folk-tales of three sons and three daughters.

³ Cp. Lect. I., *ante*, p. 40; and on the doctrine of the Three Bodies, p. 94.

readily to the time-scheme of the evolution, the maintenance, and the dissolution of the world; and the poet of the *Mahābhārata* could accordingly declare—"There are three *avasthās* (states or conditions) of the Father-God (*Prajāpati*). In the form of *Brahmā* he creates; having a human body (*Vishnu-Krishna*) he protects; and in the form of *Rudra* he destroys."¹ But no definite use is made of this doctrine, and it remained for later writers to give it a name as the *Trimūrti*, "the Triple Form," or the *Trai-purusha*, "the Three Males" or persons.² It found striking expression, however, in literature and art. In the Epic of the War-god, entitled *Kumāra-Sambhava*, by the famous poet *Kālidāsa*, probably in the fifth century A.D.,³ the one Form of the Supreme Being is said to have been divided into three. For these the first place or the last was alike; *Vishnu* might be before *Hara*, or *Īva* before *Hari*; *Brahman* before either, or either before *Brahman*; ⁴ or, as Mr Griffith has versified the poet's lines:

"In those three Persons the one God was shown,
Each first in place, each last,—not one alone;
Of *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Īva*, each may be
First, second, third, among the Blessed Three."

The *Sāṅkhyan* philosophy at once provides a suggestive application of the sacred number: "Reverence to Thee in the Triple Form (*Trimūrti*), who before creation wast one complete *Ātman*, and afterwards didst undergo division into the Three Strands";⁵ or in the theological paraphrase of Mr Griffith:

"Glory to Thee! before the world was made
One single form thy majesty displayed;
Next Thou, to body forth the mystic Three,
Didst fill Three Persons! Glory, Lord, to Thee!"

When the art of sculpture, first developed in stone for the illustration of Buddhist stories,⁶ was applied to the deities of

¹ iii. 271, 47.

² Cp. *Epigraphia Indica*, iv. p. 59.

³ Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 325.

⁴ vii. 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 4.

⁶ The earliest extant stone monuments of India date from the days of *Asoka*. It is believed, however, that wooden temples and images preceded them. Cp. Havell, *The Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India* (1915), p. 40 ff., where it is argued that there were *Brahmā*, *Vishnu*, and *Īva*

Hinduism in the early centuries of the Christian era, the union of the Holy Three was represented by three heads upon one body. The most famous instance of this type is seen in the rock-cut temple at Elephanta, an island overlooking the harbour of Bombay. The majestic figure with its solemn calm, perhaps completed in the sixth century A.D., was long identified with the Trimūrti by the older archæologists.¹ As the temple is predominantly Çaivite, it has been more recently supposed to represent Çiva only.² But though Çiva, like Brahman and Vishnu, often bears the epithet "four-faced," the emblem of his outlook over the universe,³ he is nowhere described as "three-headed."⁴ Mr Havell now believes that the central head belongs to Vishnu, whose jewelled necklets symbolise the worlds and their elements. Çiva is recognised by the skull on his tiara and sacred foliage used in his ritual. The third head belongs in this interpretation to his consort Parvatī, associated here with her august spouse in the function of creation.⁵

Religious philosophy, in its perpetual pursuit of unity, was shrines of much older date. In *Mbh.*, vi. 113, 11, the images of the gods in the temple of the Kuru king are described as "laughing, trembling, dancing, and lamenting" while the battle rages. Images are apparently in view in the early law-books, e.g. *Āpastamba*, i. 11, 30, 20 and 22 (*SBE*, ii. p. 93), not later than the third century (Bühler, *ibid.*, p. xlii), and *Gautama*, ix. 45, (*ibid.*, p. 220), earlier still (p. xlii).

¹ And so by Havell in the *Ideals of Indian Art* (1911), p. 57, pl. v.

² Cp. Fergusson and Burgess, *Cave Temples of India* (1880), pp. 445, 468. "A class of sculpture very common at that age in India."

³ Cp. the Roman Janus *Quadrifrons*.

⁴ On a Celtic deity with this peculiarity, cp. M. Salomon Reinach, *Revue de l'Hist. des Rel.*, lvi. (1907), p. 57, or *Cultes, Mythes, et Religions*, iii. (1908), p. 160 ff. For similar representations of the Christian Trinity in medieval art, cp. Didron, *Iconographie*.

⁵ Havell, *op. cit.*, p. 163. Elsewhere, however, there are undoubted illustrations of the sacred Three in Çaiva and Vaishnava devotions. Mr T. A. Gopinatha Rao, in his *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, i. (1914), p. 45, presents one group in which Çiva stands in the centre with Vishnu and Brahmā proceeding from him, and a second where Vishnu takes Çiva's place, and Brahmā and Çiva issue on either side. This is known as *Ekapada-mūrti*. The votaries of either deity could not refrain from claiming superiority for their god over the other. Vishnu offers redemption to Çiva when he has killed a Brāhman, and Çiva, pleased with Vishnu's devotion, bestows on him the wondrous discus or *Chakra* (Rao).

confronted with the mythological demand for the acknowledgment of the mysterious power of fertility in Nature, and this took the form of providing each of the great gods with a *çakti*, an Energy, conceived as feminine.¹ All over the world Sky and Earth have been joined in wedded union, and to the brides of Vishnu and Çiva varied and important functions were assigned. Even Brahman must not go unespoused, and by his side stood Sarasvatī, goddess of learning, who might pass into the corresponding *çaktis* of the other members of the Triple Form.² She appears in a perplexing variety of relationships, for she is the daughter of Brahman, and is identified with the Vedic Rita, the ancient impersonation of cosmic law, of ritual, order, and of the moral rule in the heart of man.³ As the goddess of fluency or eloquence⁴ she lives in the tongue of Bhagavat (Vishnu), and no less condescends to dwell in man as the organ of speech, while Vishnu lives in his feet, Agni in his stomach, and Indra in his arms.⁵ It is she who instructs the ascetic Yājñavalkya in the ordinances of the Rishis of old, and at the command of the sun enters his person to inspire him. "Mother of the Vedas," she is closely akin to Sāvitrī, who is credited with the same dignity, daughter of the Sun and consort of Brahman,⁶ the scriptural mother of the initiated student on his second birth.⁷ Sāvitrī seems to hold a higher place in some parts of the Great Epic than Sarasvatī, for she is described as the "first of knowledges," and she dwells in the palace of Brahman, where Sarasvatī's name among the crowds that throng his halls is strangely wanting.⁸ Elsewhere, however, Sarasvatī is associated in worship with Brahman, Vishnu and Lakshmī, Çiva (who has

¹ The term appears in the *Çvet. Upanishad*, vi. 8, where Çiva's *çakti* is said to be revealed in the world "as manifold, as inherent, acting as force and knowledge," *SBE*, xv. p. 263.

² Rao, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 378.

³ *Mbh.*, xii. 343, 73.

⁴ She bears the same name as the "flowing" river Sarasvatī (*Hopkins Epic Myth.*, p. 53).

⁵ vi. 65, 61; xii. 239, 8.

⁶ iii. 110, 26; xiii. 146, 4 f. She is especially identified with the sacred Gāyatri verse, iii. 81, 5.

⁷ iii. 100, 34; *Manu*, ii. 148, 170: *SBE*, xxv. pp. 57, 61.

⁸ xiv. 44, 5; ii. 11, 34; cp. *ante*, p. 154.

here no consort), and other powers; and Draupadī invokes her with Lakshmi and Umā and other divine forms in benediction.¹

Lakshmi (who is apparently identical with Çrī), goddess of prosperity, happiness, and beauty, was once the giver of cattle, food, and drink.² She, too, was a daughter of Brahman, sister of the august Creator and Disposer who were his sons.³ Another story told how she rose out of the churning of the ocean on a lotus-seat, so beautiful that the Dānavas strove with the Devas for the possession of her.⁴ And yet a third origin was provided in a lotus that sprang from Vishnu's forehead.⁵ For one poet she is the wife of Dharma;⁶ for another she is consort of Krishna (Vishnu)⁷ or Nārāyaṇa.⁸ The cloud-horses are her mind-born sons,⁹ and she may be identified as Mahā-Devī ("Great Goddess") with the bountiful Earth.¹⁰ Her union with Vishnu raises her to the loftiest divine rank. She dwells in sun and moon, and in the flock of stars in the clear sky. Wherever there is radiance or beauty, might or purity, she is to be found; and no less in the humble and law-abiding, the sinless and friendly to all creatures. White-robed and resplendent as the sun, she is the sovereign of the world, a support in danger, the impersonation of wisdom and understanding, the final peace which is the loftiest object of human endeavour.¹¹

Third in the Triad is Umā, the "Mountain Goddess" as she came to be called in later times, Pārvatī, daughter of Himavat, the "Snow-clad." She, too, had a long history, for in ancient time she could tell Indra who Brahman was.¹² Like her spouse Çiva she unites opposite and incongruous qualities. She has

¹ xiii. 31, 6; ii. 37, 33.

² *Taittir. Up.*, i. 4: *SBE*, xv. p. 47.

³ Dhātṛi and Vidhātṛi, i. 66, 51 f. But in the *Çatap. Brāhmaṇa*, xi. 4, 3, 1, *SBE*, xlv. p. 62, she is the daughter of Prajāpati. Her beauty exposes her to the jealousy of the gods, who take it away together with her food, her royal power and universal dominion, which are then all restored by sacrifice—one of the numerous myths with ritual application.

⁴ i. 18, 35, 45; v. 102, 11 f.

⁵ xii. 59, 131-2.

⁶ i. 66, 14; xii. 59, 132.

⁷ i. 61, 44.

⁸ i. 201, 6.

⁹ i. 66, 52.

¹⁰ xiii. 62, 6.

¹¹ *Vishṇu Smṛiti*, xcix.: *SBE*, vii. pp. 297-301.

¹² *Talavakāra (Kena) Up.*, iii. 11 f.: *SBE*, i. p. 151.

her savage side as she dwells (under the name of Durgā) on the Vindhya mountains, fond of wine and meat and animal sacrifice;¹ she is Mahā-Nidrā, "Great Sleep," and even "Great Death";² she is the destroyer of the demon Mahisha, and rejoices in his blood;³ but when Çiva weeps for a dead boy the urgency of her pity secures his restoration to life.⁴ Her dwelling may be on the mountain-top, but she is "four-faced" like the male members of the Triad,⁵ and is named by the august titles Mahā-Devī and Maheçvari, "Great Goddess" or *Devī*, as if she alone possessed real Deity. She is the knowledge of Brahman among all knowledges, and is identified with Sarasvatī and Savitrī; she is the mother of the Vedas and the essence of all Revelation.⁶ The process of identification carries her into the Vishnu cycle; in a strange confusion she is born in the family of the cowherd Nanda, in the womb of Yaçoda, the foster-mother of Krishna, with whom she is promptly declared identical.⁷ So she ranges through the universe wherever she wills. The storm-tossed and troubled look to her for refuge; she delivers her worshippers from danger and breaks the bonds of ignorance; the exiled prince entreats her rescue: "Be Truth to us who are seeking after Truth."⁸

The next great literary deposit of mythological religion, the Purānas, carries this tendency a little further. Hinduism, it has been sometimes said, has no Scriptures; the Veda and its adjuncts belong to the older Brahmanism. Such dicta must not be pressed too closely. The philosophy of the Vedānta, with Brahman for its centre, which is one of the most characteristic products of Hinduism, rests on the Upanishads; and the cultus of the two great sectarian deities Vishnu and Çiva is supported by a group of works known as Purānas. The name means simply "old" as opposed to "new"; it was an abbreviation of *purāṇam ākhyānam*, an "ancient story." It occurs

¹ *Mbh.*, iv. 6, 18.

² Hopkins, *Ep. Mythol.*, p. 224.

³ iv. 6, 16; vi. 23, 8.

⁴ xii. 153, 112.

⁵ iv. 6, 8.

⁶ vi. 23, 9-12.

⁷ Hence "very dear to Nārāyaṇa," iv. 6, 1 f., 7.

⁸ iv. 6, 26. In xiii. 140-146 there is a long scene on the Himālaya, where Mahādeva and Umā respectively discourse on the duties of men and women.

again and again in the ritual Brāhmanas, the philosophical Upanishads, and the early Buddhists texts, often joined with the word *itihāsa*, the designation of the Epic tales when these were still oral and had not acquired definite literary form. There are traces of actual compositions under this title in early collections of household law. Not only must a Brāhman be skilled in "legends and Purāna";¹ Āpastamba (possibly as early as 400 B.C.) quotes one by name, the Bhaviṣhyat Purāna, no longer extant under that title.² The minister of Chandragupta, Kautilya, soon after 300 B.C., in an interesting list of sacred literature, adds *Itihāsa Veda* to the usual Three Vedas (and the Atharva), and includes Purāna among its six divisions.³ Manu prescribes that at the Śrāddhas or sacrifices in honour of the dead, the guests should be edified by recitations from the Scriptures, legends, tales, and Purānas.⁴ In the Great Epic the term denotes ancient legendary lore both narrative and didactic, stories of the gods, and genealogies of sages. A verse, perhaps interpolated (xviii. 6, 95), reckons them as eighteen, and this number was known to the Mohammedan scholar Alberuni, who resided in India A.D. 1017-1030. In their present form they are doubtless later than the Mahābhārata, which indeed calls itself a Purāna, and has much in common with them.⁵ The Bhagavat himself condescends to recite a Purāna about creation.⁶ Numerous legends and didactic pieces belong both to the Purānas and the Epics, and the paradoxical statement of Winternitz that the Purānas are older than the Epic, and the Epic is older than the Purānas, can find ample justification. They both rest on older materials, and are derived from sources earlier than either.

Five great themes are expounded in these voluminous treatises. A "complete" Purāna opens with (1) the Primary Creation or cosmogony of the universe, followed by (2) the doctrine of World-Ages, or secondary creations succeeding the

¹ *Gautama*, viii. 6. *SBE*, ii. p. 212.

² *SBE*, ii. p. 158; cp. pp. xxviii and xliii.

³ Kautilya, *Artha-Śāstra*, tr. R. Shama Sastri (Bangalore, 1915), p. 7.

⁴ iii. 232: *SBE*, xxv. 118.

⁵ Cp. Winternitz, *Gesch. der Indisch. Literatur*, i. (1908), p. 443.

⁶ *Mbh.*, xii. 343, 2.

destructions. Next came (3) genealogies of gods and sages, and the reigns (4) of the several Manus in the corresponding world-periods. The histories of the great royal dynasties claiming descent from sun and moon (5) bring the Purāṇa to a close. Subsidiary topics are interwoven, such as the ceremonies of worship, the duties of different castes, or descriptions of the *ācramas* or stages in the life of the Twice-born. There are accounts of important festivals, praises of holy places, and disquisitions on the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies.¹ But these were no priestly products in the higher sacerdotal sense. Their style is not that of the ritual Brāhmanas with their theories of sacrifice, or the Upanishads with their philosophical debates, or the law-books with their legal prescriptions. The Purāṇas issued from the circles of the *Sūtas* or bards, the court-singers who celebrated the fame of kings belonging to the great solar and lunar races. How and when these chanters ceased, we do not know. Their rhapsodies seem to have passed into the keeping of the guardians of famous shrines or places of pilgrimage, who naturally glorified the deities whom they served and the sanctuaries where they were maintained. Vishnu and Śiva with their consorts are the chief objects of their devotion. Many of the old Vedic gods have disappeared; Varuna, Indra, Agni (to whom an entire Purāṇa is dedicated), Sūrya (the sun), still survive. Taken as a whole, this copious literature cannot be dated in its present forms before the close of the Great Epic. While some of their materials may be even centuries older than our era, the extant compositions belong to a later age. Whether they can be placed as early as A.D. 500,² or must be referred to a subsequent age such as the eighth or ninth,³ may be left uncertain. It deserves notice that their philosophical speculation is still in line with that of the Great Epic, and is for the most part unaffected by the Vedānta as it was shaped by Ćaṅkara (A.D. 800). The Bhāgavata Purāṇa, which many scholars recognise as the youngest of the group (and the most influential in India at the present day), is sometimes assigned to the thirteenth

¹ Cp. Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 300 f.; Winternitz, *op. cit.*, p. 444.

² So Mr F. E. Pargiter, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (1904), p. xiv, with "room for subsequent additions." Cp. his important article in *ERE*.

³ So Prof. Eggeling, *Encycl. Brit.*, xxiv. p. 170.

century,¹ and the Sāṅkhya teaching still supplies its intellectual foundation with the infusion of some Vedāntist ideas.²

Thus in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa (xlv) the unborn and undecaying Brahman assumes the triple form of the lotus-sprung Brahmā, the source of all creation, Vishnu its protector, and the dread Rudra its destroyer; from the Unmanifested come Puruṣa, Prakṛiti (or Pradhāna), the Three Strands, the Great, and the evolution duly proceeds on the familiar Sāṅkhyan scheme.³ The Kūrma (Tortoise) Purāṇa is conceived in the interest of Īśvara. When Brahmā and Vishnu meet, their equal rank is exemplified in the wonder that each enters the other's person and beholds the three worlds with all their contents in him. On Īśvara's appearance he is declared to be the sole and universal Spirit, Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, of one undivided essence, source of Brahmā and Vishnu who have their being in him.⁴ The Vishnu Purāṇa, on the other hand, identifies Vishnu with the imperishable Brahman. *He* is God and Spirit, who with the Three Strands is the cause of the world's origin and maintenance and dissolution. As Hari, lord of all, he assumes the energy of *Rajas*, and becomes Brahmā; by *Sattva* in the person of Vishnu he upholds the world which Brahmā has produced; and in the awful form of Rudra (Īśvara) enveloped in *Tamas* he dissolves the universe into its elemental Prakṛiti.⁵ Various were the art-forms by which these relationships were indicated. The three-headed figures have been

¹ Macdonell, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 302; Grierson, Hastings' *ERE*, ii. p. 542.

² The Purāṇas were in their turn probably followed by the works known as *Tantras* (from a root *tan*, to stretch, and so the threads of the warp extended in a loom). The term was applied especially to the books of the Īkṛtas, or worshippers of the Īkṛti of some god, especially of the consort of Īśvara in one of her many forms as Devī, Pārvatī, etc. They are very numerous, and owing to the mingling of magical (and sometimes immoral) elements they have been little studied by Western scholars. Under the name of Arthur Avalon a series of texts and translations is now in course of publication.

³ *Ante*, p. 204. Compare the curious story in xvi-xvii of the consent of Brahman, Vishnu, and Īśvara to take birth in the lady Anusūā, as a boon for her pious devotion to her husband.

⁴ Vans Kennedy, *Researches into the Nature and Affinity of Ancient and Hindu Mythol.* (1831), p. 207.

⁵ *Vishnu Purāṇa*, tr. Wilson, i. pp. 3, 41.

already named. Sometimes the union of Çiva and Vishnu was indicated in statues of which one half represented Hara and the other Hari. Or Hara, Hari, and the Grandsire might be wrought into one figure with four faces; or with no human form the Holy Three might be symbolised by their emblems, the swan for Brahmā, the *garuda* or kite for Vishnu, and the bull for Çiva.¹ The pre-eminence of Vishnu might secure for Nārâyana the central place, with Lakshmī by his side, while Brahmā and Çiva stood in front in the attitude of devout worship. If Vishnu lay upon his *yoga*-couch, wrapt in meditation upon the Serpent of the deep, Ananta, Çiva must take his place on the north wall of the shrine, and Brahmā correspondingly upon the south.²

The worshippers of the three Çaktis of the Trimūrti followed a similar line in first identifying them all,³ and then exalting one of them into the realm of the Unmanifest as the source of the triple Energies. In the Great Epic Umā-Pārvatī-Durgā was much more in evidence than either Sarasvatī or Lakshmī. She is already Devī, "the Goddess," and Çiva's feat of arms in slaying the demon Mahisha was afterwards transferred to her. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa raises her into universal sovereignty.⁴ She is the Eternal One, by whom the worlds were made, and Brahmā extols her as their creator, preserver, and destroyer. The Holy Three assumed their bodies at her command, and she was Lakshmī-Sarasvatī-Durgā all in one. Sublimely transcendent, she yet condescended in the form of Intelligence to dwell in the heart of every creature. Mother of the universe, she was the helper of the distressed, the deliverer from terror and danger, and the prayer ran: "May thy bell guard us, even us, like children from sins."⁵ The "Tantara of the Great

¹ Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, i. pp. 254 f., 271.

² Cp. Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 258, 262, 86 f., 91. On the conventions regulating all these details, see pp. 46, 295.

³ Rao, *op. cit.*, i. 377.

⁴ In the *Devī-Māhātmya*, cantos lxxxi-xciii.

⁵ xci. 25. In the *Kalikā Purāṇa* Devī is exhibited as the terrible goddess demanding human sacrifice. For the victim, however, a glorious destiny hereafter is assured. He is mystically identified with Çiva; the guardian deities of the ten Quarters, Brahmā himself and all the other deities, assemble in him; worship is offered to him, and "Be he ever so great a sinner, he becomes pure from sin." The ghastly description of the

Liberation" (*Mahā-Nirvāna Tantra*) presents the ultimate unity sometimes as "He," sometimes as "She." As Çiva discourses of the One who is the supreme Reality (Truth), eternal Intelligence and Bliss (the influence of the Vedānta is already at work), he recognises Brahmā as the manifestation of his creative energy, and adds, "By his will Vishnu protects and I destroy."¹ To him the worshipper addresses himself in his evening hymn as the Everlasting Refuge of all, and in devout meditation is united with him.² But the "eternal feminine" would have its way. The Para-Brahman (the Most High) is identified with the Devī, who is designated the "Primordial Supreme Çakti."³ "Thou art all power," says Çiva; "it is by thy power that We (the Trinity) are powerful (*çaktāh*) in the acts of creation, preservation, and destruction." The Kubjikā Tantra carries the process one step further: "Not Brahmā, Vishnu, Rudra create, maintain, or destroy; but Brahmī, Vaishnavī, Rudrānī. Their husbands are but as dead bodies."⁴ It was a natural result of such conceptions that a husband might impart the sacred words of adoration to his wife; men and women of all castes, including even the lowest *chandāla*, might belong to the same circle of worship, and eat and drink together from the same food.⁵

Popular devotion did not, however, reach so high, and was unequally distributed over the members of the Triad. Village custom did not leave them unrecognised. In the Çilpa-Çāstras, dealing with the rules of arts and crafts,⁶ eight different types

slaughter (in which numerous animals were included) might well gain for the chapter the title "sanguinary" (*Rudhīrādhyāya*). See *Asiatic Researches*, vol. v. p. 380, tr. W. C. Blaquiére.

¹ Tr. Avalon, p. 20 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 33. *Brahma-sāmyya* was thus no distant attainment, and need not involve any personal "extinction."

³ *Ādyā-Paramā-Çakti*, p. 60; cp. p. xxviii f. Cp. Rao, *op. cit.*, p. 342; according to the *Supra-bhaddgama*, Durgā came out of Ādi-Çakti.

⁴ Quoted by Avalon, p. xxiv.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 44, lxxviii.

⁶ Cp. Ram Raz, *Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus* (1834). The most important of the documents which he collected was entitled the *Mānasāra Çāstra*. Its date is unknown; but it refers with toleration to the worship of Jains and Buddhists. The treatises point out distinct sites to be set apart for erecting their temples in villages and towns, and prescribe rules for the construction of images, pp. 9, 46.

of villages and towns are described. The general plan of the larger villages was rectangular. One main street (*rājapatha*, "King Street") ran from east to west; a second ("Broad Street") crossed it from south to north.¹ In the middle was a temple, if the village was *sarvato-bhadra*, "in every respect happy," to one of the Holy Three.² In other centres there was a Brahmā shrine in the form of a square cell, with an entrance on each side facing the four cardinal points. Different rules were laid down for the admission of a Vishnu image or a Śiva-linga, according to the ritual of their consecration. The pious villager had his own tutelary deity, the object of his personal trust; the family was under the protection of the household powers, and the village had also its local guardians. Brahmā himself still held—even now holds—a place of honour in the cultus, though but few temples are dedicated to his name.³ The principal festival in every temple is said still to bear his name, *Brahmotsava* ("Brahma-festival"). He is revered as the guardian of the sacrifice at marriages, funerals, and many other ceremonies, and the Brāhman who represents him is provided with a seat, betel nut, flowers, sandal, and cloths. Oracles are still vouchsafed by him, and the prayer goes up, "We have been remiss in thy worship, spare us; graciously remove all evil from us; give us health for our body; increase our wealth in the house and on the field."⁴

When Buddhism had been carried into Ceylon by the great mission of Asoka's son Mahendra,⁵ the way was formally opened

¹ Cp. Havell, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India* (1915), p. 10.

² Ram Raz, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

³ The statement so often repeated, that all India contains but one, seems to have been first made by Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829), i. p. 773. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, "The Indian Empire," i. (1907), p. 420, only recognises four. Gustav Oppert, *On the Original Inhabitants of India* (1893), quotes a popular proverb to the effect that a homeless man says, "I have no house like Brahmā," p. 288; but he names several instances in different parts of India. A stone found at Tewar (6 miles west of Jabalpur, Central Prov.), dated A.D. 1177, bears the inscription, "Let us adore him who is knowledge and bliss, the Supreme Brahman, . . . the God of gods, the parent of the world," *Epigraphia Indica*, ii. (1894), p. 19.

⁴ Oppert, pp. 288, 299.

⁵ Or, according to another tradition, his younger brother.

for far-reaching religious movements. By what steps the culture of the ancient Aryan immigrants was gradually spread from North to South can no longer be traced in detail; but it completely captured the Dravidian peoples. Yuan Chwang, on his long travels as far as Conjeveram (or a little further to Negapatam¹), found Deva temples everywhere established, and Buddhist and Jain monasteries stood side by side. The Brāhmans had probably occupied sacred caves before the followers of Mahāvīra and Gotama;² but the cults of Vishnu and Śiva only emerge into inscriptional distinctness in the early centuries of our era. Down to the end of the fourth century names compounded with Śiva are on the whole more frequent in the South; those which contain Vishnu are much rarer; while Brahmā appears only in the North, and even there but seldom.³ About A.D. 400 two reservoirs and a house were dedicated to Vishnu under the title Bhagavat at Tusam, in the Hissar district of the Punjab.⁴ A little later, 484-5, a column was erected at Eran, in the Central Provinces, on which he was celebrated as "the cause of the continuance, production, and destruction of the universe"; and in the same locality a statue of the Deity in his boar form presented him as "the Pillar of the great house of the Three Worlds"; while in a temple built by the Gupta king Chakrapālita, 457-8, he was designated the "Conqueror of distress," who "became human by the exercise of his own free-will."⁵ At Allahabad Śiva was described about 350, as the poets of the Great Epic had sung, with matted hair, bearing the Ganges on his head, in his character of "Lord of the animals" (Paçupati).⁶ The fiery wrath which consumed Kāma, god of love, when he intruded on the Great Yogin's meditation, is commemorated at Mandasor (in the West Mālwa division of Central India), 473-4.⁷ He is *paramēçvara*, "Supreme God" (447); he is *bhava-srij*, "creator of existence,"

¹ Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, ii. p. 226.

² Buhler, *Epigraphia Indica*, ii. (1894), p. 322.

³ Luders, on "Early Brahmī Inscr.," appendix to *Epigr. Ind.*, x. (1909-10).

⁴ Fleet, *Corpus Inscr. Indic.*, iii. (1888), p. 270.

⁵ Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 90, 158, 61.

⁶ Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 1. But on this title see Lect. VI., p. 352.

⁷ Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

who has employed Brahman to effect the continuance, the destruction, and the renewal of all things, and thus brought him to *pīritva*, the "fatherhood" of the world.¹ So the stream of pious foundations begins to flow over the land. Victorious sovereigns, widowed queens, successful generals, wealthy Brāhmanas, provide endowments for the religious merit of their parents and themselves. There is no sectarian antagonism between the followers of the two great Deities. The same dynasty may promote either cult; the same king may bestow his favours on both.² A Brāhman trained in all the schools might boast, in dedicating a temple to Īiva (in the Central Provinces, 1167-8), that he "had crushed the conceit of the Chārvākas, drunk up the Buddhist ocean ("difficult-to-be restrained"), and been a god of death to the Jains."³ But the Buddhist Dantivarman, in making a grant to the Ārya-Saṅgha of Kāmpilya (Gujarat), for the provision of flowers, frankincense, lamps, and ointments, in the ninth century, did not disdain to invoke the protection of Vishnu and Īiva.⁴

The Gods of the 'Triad, sometimes with subordinate deities associated with them, appear in many variations of order, each one taking the lead in turn. Only rarely is Brahman commemorated as "the Supreme, the Cause of the production, stability, and destruction of the Three Worlds, the True, without end and without beginning, who consists of knowledge alone, One, the Abode of Immortality."⁵ The devotion to Viṣṇu called for the representations of his Descents as Boar and as Man-Lion in almost all the early temples; and in his form as Lord of Yoga his image was placed in a niche on the west of

¹ Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

² For instance, *Epigr. Ind.*, i. 211; vi. 320; viii. 316; xi. 305.

³ Kielhorn, *Epigr. Ind.*, i. p. 44.

⁴ Bhandarkar, *ibid.*, vi. (1900), p. 236.

⁵ Hultzsch, *South Indian Inscriptions*, II., pt. iii. (1895), p. 353; in the reign of the Pallava king, Nandivarman, on the Malabar and Coromandel coast. The inscription is not dated. The Pallava dynasty was destroyed by the Chola king Rājārāja towards the end of the tenth century. Attention may be called, also, to the great Brāhmā faces on towers of temples and city gateways in Cambodia, e.g. in the great temple of Bayon, consecrated about A.D. 900. Fergusson and Burgess, *Hist. of Indian and Eastern Archit.*, ii. (1910), pp. 392, 397, 401, 408 (Siam).

the central shrine in all old temples, sometimes with his consorts *Lakshmi* and *Bhūmi-Devī* (the Earth goddess) on his right and left, while *Çiva* was figured on the north wall, and *Brahmā* on the south.¹ Over these foundations brooded the shadow of the transitoriness of life, and the longing for tranquillity and peace. The wife of a general in *Rājputāna*, "seeing the vanity of fortune, youth and wealth, in order to cross the troubled sea of this worldly existence," built a temple to *Vishnu* (661) and erected a statue in his name as *Vāsudeva*.² The *Çaiva Buddha-rāja* in *Baroda* grants a village to a *Brāhman* (609-10) to provide for certain rites "as long as the sun, the moon, the sea, and the earth endure"; and exhorts future kings to maintain the gift, "bearing in mind that the world of living beings is unsteady, like a wave of the sea raised by a fierce wind, and wealth is liable to perish, while virtue endures for a long time."³ Devotion travelled to *Burma*, and a pious *Vaishnavite* quoted at *Pagan* in the thirteenth century a verse from a hymn by a *Vaishnava* saint named *Kulaçekkhara* before the eleventh: "I have no regard for merit, none for a heap of wealth, none at all for the enjoyment of lust. Whatever is to happen, let it happen, O God, in accordance with previous actions. This alone is to be prayed for, and highly valued by me—in every other birth let me possess unswerving devotion to thy lotus feet."⁴

Vishnu, of course, is frequently glorified as the upholder, destroyer, and (through *Brahman* on the lotus sprung from his navel) the creator of the world. Now it is on *Sāṅkhyan* lines, as in the *North-West Provinces* (953-4);⁵ or at a later date (1515) he is described as "known from the *Vedānta*, who, though his nature is knowledge, without end, and existence, yet, in order to perform the duties of *Maghavat* (*Indra*), wears an illusory body."⁶ Here is an interesting glimpse into theo-

¹ Rao, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 39, 41, 86.

² Kielhorn, *Epigr. Ind.*, iv. (1896), p. 29.

³ Kielhorn, *ibid.*, vi. (1900), p. 300. This was already a well-known verse; cp. ix. p. 299, from the *Nāsik* district, 595

⁴ Hultsch, *ibid.*, vii. (1902), p. 198. Such hymns seem to have been actively composed before 750 (*ibid.*, xi. p. 156).

⁵ Kielhorn, *ibid.*, i. p. 130.

⁶ Luders, *ibid.*, vi. p. 109.

logical theory: Vishnu is really all the other gods. Just as he is identical with Brahman and Īiva, so he condescends to manifest himself in beings which do not claim to be self-existent or without beginning. It involves some partial limitation of his own nature, some Docetic assumption of a temporary form.¹ Īaiva piety reached the same end in a different way. "Victorious is the Eternal Sthānu (the "Steadfast" or "Stable"), whose one body is formed by the coalescence of all the gods": so ran the dedication by King Kakusthavarman (500-550) on a great tank in Mysore adjoining a temple of Īiva.² Five centuries later, 1001-2, the Īaiva theologian could embrace not only the Vaishnavite, but even the Buddhist and the Jain: "Adoration to that Īarva who causes all [gods] to be comprehended in [his] one [person], he whom those acquainted with the Vedānta call Īiva, the desire of the mind, while people with true knowledge call him the One Supreme Brahman, the Indestructible, Ageless, Immortal; others, the verily Auspicious Buddha; others, again, the Spotless Vāmana (Vishnu), the Jina."³ On the material side he may be figured sharing a body with his consort Pārvati, or with Vishnu;⁴ or he may be presented as the eight-formed Lord of beings, constituted out of ether, sun, moon, fire, earth, the sacrificing priest, water, and air.⁵ Such statements, however, were confessedly inadequate to his glory. His true nature not even the Veda itself could reveal;⁶ mortals could only apprehend him as the Sole Architect for the construction of the universe;⁷ "cause of the production, existence, and destruction of the world, without māyā-power, yet possessed of it in many shapes, free from attributes [*gunas*, perhaps he Three Strands],

¹ Cp. the Buddha, *ante*, pp. 56, 97.

² Kielhorn, *ibid.*, viii. (1905), p. 33.

³ Kielhorn, *ibid.*, i. (1892), p. 150. Inscription at Khajuraho, Central India, A.D. 1001-2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, viii. p. 314, "the very embodiment of mercy"; *South Indian Inscr.*, II., iii. p. 386.

⁵ Kielhorn, *ibid.*, ii. (1894), p. 14. Cp. the invocation to Kālidāsa's famous play, *Āakuntalā*, perhaps "in the beginning of the fifth century A.D."; cp. Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature* (1900), p. 325.

⁶ Kielhorn, *ibid.*, iii. (1894), p. 78.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 129.

yet endowed with them, the Self-Existent and the Most High Lord.”¹

The development of architecture and sculpture which led to the erection of temples and statues was accompanied by various modifications of the ancient ritual. The protests of Jains and Buddhists against animal sacrifices led to their gradual abandonment by the higher castes. The path of “works” was still trodden, but in a different spirit; and the external forms were regarded as the means of an inward culture of the heart. Devotion poured itself forth in pious hymns; the repetition of the sacred name established a direct communion between the believer and his God; and while on the one hand the approach to the Deity by certain consecrated formulæ (*mantras*) was not devoid of the contamination of magic,² the nobler minds did not shrink from making high demands upon the concentrated attention of the worshipper. The *adhivāsana* ceremony, when the priest drew near to Hari (Vishnu), required him to discipline his person so that his material body and all objects of sense-perception should be mentally transformed into the spirit of universal nature, the *Mahat* or “Great,” which should in its turn be merged in the “absolute real” in man, the unchanging and perfect knowledge called *Vāsudeva*.³ This is the Indian equivalent of “worship in spirit,” conceived on the intellectual side. The modern Āiava followers of the great Vedāntist Ānandakara at Benares are said still to repeat a hymn on the “sacrifice of self” before breaking fast containing the following lines:—

“And of the sacrifice performed by the master who has understood these truths, the soul is the performer; the heart the seat of the sacrificial fire; sensual desires the ghee; anger the sacrificial lamb; contemplation the fire; the period of sacrifice as long as life shall last; whatsoever is drunk the Soma drink; and death the sacred bath that finishes the ceremony.”⁴

¹ A.D. 650-700. Hultsch, *ibid.*, x. p. 8. Cp. xi. (1911), p. 140, at Allahabad, 1047. Cp. other identifications with Brahman, at Benares, 1042 (Kielhorn, *ibid.*, ii. 305), or Rewah, 1175 (Kielhorn, *Indian Antiquary*, xvii. p. 228).

² Cp. the *Agni Purāṇa*, *passim*.

³ *Agni Purāṇa*, lix., ed. M. N. Dutt, 1903.

⁴ *Life and Times of Śrī Saṅkara*, by Krishnaswami Aiyar, quoted by Havell, *Benares, the Sacred City* (1905), p. 61.

The preparation of the image, the selection of the material of wood or stone, the details of its form, the ceremonies of its installation, were all regulated by elaborate conventions, like the choice of temple-sites and the erection of the fabric.¹ A rite of consecration brought the deity into his temporary abode, and there he dwelt like a monarch surrounded by the attendants of his royal state. Just as in Egypt, he received daily homage; he was bathed and robed; singers chanted his praise; flowers and food were spread before him; on great festivals he rode forth in his car to give his blessing in return for the acclamations of the crowd. Troops of ministrants of every rank were needed at the greater sanctuaries, and large foundations were further established for the maintenance of learning and the relief of the poor. Provision must be made for the maintenance of the building itself, perhaps for gilding its doors or for adding and gilding new domes. The statues must be covered with gold and adorned with jewels; the temple vessels must be golden too.² The costs of worship must be met; incense, lights, perfumes must be provided; the guild of the gardeners might be required to furnish two hundred white roses daily and two thousand fragrant oleander blossoms (1287, Gujarāt).³ Besides repairs to the fabric and the enrichment of the cultus, food and clothing must be supplied for student-ascetics and the teachers who lectured to them. The spectacle of an uninterrupted line of Śaiva saints "in whom austerities and majestic splendour dwelt harmoniously together" (rewarded by princely gifts of elephants and horses and splendid robes to the monasteries) drew forth from the court poet the admiring exclamation, "Happy are those rulers, O Lord, who with unswerving minds worship thee, and employ their wealth in works of piety."⁴ The widowed queen Vāsātā in the eighth or ninth century built a temple to Vishnu (in the Raipur district, Central Provinces),

¹ *Agni Purāna*, xliii ff. Cp. the *Śukra-Nīti-Sāra*, tr. B. K. Sārkar (Allahabad, 1913), chap. iv, iv. 147 ff. "The characteristic of an image is its power of helping forward contemplation and *Yoga*." "The images of the gods yield happiness to men; those of men yield grief."

² *Epigr. Ind.*, vi. p. 231; iv. p. 51; iii. p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, iii. p. 268; ix. p. 340; i. p. 275.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv. pp. 53, 213; i. p. 268 (in the Central Provinces, about 1000).

and attached five villages to it for the maintenance of temple and almshouse, the support of the servants of the sanctuary, and of twelve Brāhmanas, four for each of the Three Vedas.¹ Vajra-hasta III. (Madras, 1061) granted a village to five hundred Brāhmanas who delighted in "the six acts of sacrificing, conducting sacrifices, studying, teaching, giving and receiving, and were well versed in the sacred lore."² Kings of unusual wealth and piety would ascend the *tulā-purusha*, like Govinda IV. (Gujarat, 930), in honour of the Holy Three. He weighed himself against gold, which was then distributed in large donations to Brāhmanas; and eight hundred villages were assigned for temple revenues, worship, feeding establishments, and clothing for ascetics.³ The great temple at Tanjore required a huge staff of servants, including "dancing masters, musicians, drummers, singers, accountants, parasol-bearers, lamplighters, watermen, potters, washermen, barbers, astrologers, a brazier, carpenters, a goldsmith, and others."⁴ Such endowments were not limited to temples. Svapneçvara, general of an Eastern Ganga king in Orissa, about 1200, not only provided a number of female attendants for Çiva, laid out a garden, built a tank and open hall, but added wells and tanks on roads and in towns, put lights in temples, erected cloisters for the study of the Vedas, and founded a "Brahma-city" for pious Brāhmanas.⁵

The appearance of dancers in the temple-lists and the provision for the performance of plays imply that the drama, in India as in Greece, was placed under the protection of religion. The first positive document attesting the existence of dramatic representations associates the new art with the legend of Krishna.⁶ But it fell especially under the patronage of Çiva. Had he not invented the style of dancing known as *Tāṇḍava*, and did not his consort Pārvatī give instruction in the *Lāsya*, modes of great importance in the chorus?⁷ Acted only on public or solemn occasions, a royal coronation, a religious

¹ *Epigr. Ind.*, xi. p. 185.

² *Ibid.*, ix. p. 96.

³ *Ibid.*, vii. p. 45.

⁴ *S. Indian Inscr.*, II., iii. p. 260.

⁵ *Epigr. Ind.*, vi. p. 199

⁶ Sylvain Lévi, *Le Théâtre Indien* (1890), p. 316.

⁷ Wilson, *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus*³ (1871), i. p. 19; Lévi, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

holiday, a temple festival, the play was often opened with an invocation for the protection of some deity. Thus in the *Vikrama and Urvāṣī*, ascribed to Kālidāsa, Śiva, "who is attainable by *yoga* and *bhakti*, the One Spirit (*puruṣa*) of the Vedānta, spread through all space, to whom alone the name of *Īṣvara* (God) is applicable," is entreated to bestow final felicity upon the audience.¹ The quaint philosophical morality play known as "The Rise of the Moon of Intellect"² opens with a parallel between the mirage of water on a sandy plain and the great illusion which treats the universe, constituted out of the five elements, ether, air, fire, water, earth, as real, and rises to adoration of the Stainless Being in heavenly blessedness, the radiant object of his own knowledge. It is the Great Yogin Śiva who pervades the world. Strangely are the two characters of the Ascetic and the Dancer blended in his figure. The dance of Śiva became a favourite subject of religious art, and was invested with strange mystical meanings.³ The poets of the Epic had represented the vicissitudes of the individual soul as the sport of the Most High.⁴ The changes of the universe were the giant game of Nature;⁵ the destinies of men were the pastime of Vishnu;⁶ and Śiva played with the world as his marble ball.⁷ Behind the severities of law, through all the ceaseless rhythm of creation, maintenance, and dissolution, the artist discerns something more than the impersonal Absolute of the philosopher. In the ecstasy of movement—unlike the violence with which at Elephanta and Ellora he tramples on the prostrate form of the demon Tripura—Śiva is caught up into a rapture of delight. The famous bronzes in the Madras Museum seek to express this combination of tireless

¹ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

² *Prabodha Chandrodaya*, tr. J. Taylor, 1812. A German translation (by Goldstucker) was issued at Königsberg in 1842. The play expounds the Vedānta as taught by Ṣaṅkara. See Lect. VI.

³ An interesting study of popular Ṣaivism among the Ṣaiva Ṣaktas in Bengal will be found in the *Folk Element in Hindu Culture*, by B. K. Sarkar, 1917.

⁴ *Mbh.*, xii. 309, 3, *kṛidāṛtham*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xii. 314, 15.

⁶ *Ibid.*, iii. 189, 54.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xiii. 17, 150.

energy and unstrained grace.¹ For such vision the world is no place of suffering, lamentation, and woe; nor is it a scene of irresponsible caprice; it needs no moral justification; it is the expression of that unstinted joy which Indian thought associated with infinite Reality and Intelligence.

¹ Cp. V. A. Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (1911), p. 250; Havell, *The Ideals of Indian Art* (1911), p. 79; A. K. Coomārasvāmi, *Siddhānta Dīpikā*, xiii. 1 (July 1912), "The Dance of Çiva."

LECTURE VI

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN ÇAIVISM

THE study of the philosophical movements of India is embarrassed by the same difficulties as the history of its literature. No fixed chronology marks the rise or the decline of its chief schools; their founders may be legendary figures like Kapila, and even if they can be attached with any confidence to particular personalities, the data of time and place may be quite uncertain. To transpose Plato or Wordsworth into preceding generations would render their teaching wholly unaccountable, but Çankara, the famous exponent of the philosophy of *Advaita* or "Non-duality," which so profoundly affected all the higher thought of India, has been variously placed by modern students between the sixth and the ninth centuries without encountering any obstacle from contemporary conditions. Two or three witnesses, however, may be cited who testify to the growing variety of speculation after the close of the Great Epic.

I

Four chief systems were recognised by the poets of the *Mahābhārata*. Oldest of all came the teachings of the Veda and the forest-sages concerning the Brahman and the Universal Self. Over against the idealism of Yājñavalkya rose the Sāṅkhyan dualism of Matter and Spirit, and the doctrine of the Three Strands. To this the practice of Yoga added the conception of Īçvara or God, the same cosmic ontology lending itself alike to atheism and theism. Two other types under the sovereignty of Vishnu (the Pāñcharātra) and Çiva (the Pāçupata) complete the meagre list.¹ But in the centuries before the

¹ *Mbh.*, xii. 350, 1, 63. Cp. *ante*, pp. 184, 220.

poem was closed speculation was actively advancing. The Buddhist schools of the Great Vehicle were engaged in vigorous debate; and the Jain Haribhadra (by birth a Brāhman), who died in A.D. 528, could reckon six systems, including the Buddhists and his own co-religionists, the Sāṅkhya, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and that of Jaimini.¹ Who Jaimini was, and when or where he lived, is unknown. But his name is attached to a body of teaching founded on the Veda, and designated *Mīmāṃsā*, "inquiry" or "investigation." It was concerned with the *Karma-kāṇḍa*, or "Work-section" of the ancient Veda, which was assumed to be eternal and constituted the rule of human duty. Here was no metaphysic, concerned with the relation of God to the world, or the nature and destiny of the soul. It dealt with the sacred text and the principles of its interpretation, with difficulties caused by apparent contradictions, with various elements of ritual, with sacrifices, offerings, and hymns, and the merits and rewards of their performance. These were expounded in the form of Sūtras,² condensed summaries which a teacher might expand in oral instruction, or a commentary explain in writing. This body of Vedic lore, attributed to Jaimini, acquired the name of *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* or "Prior Enquiry," in relation to the *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* or "Knowledge-section," based on the speculations of the Upanishads. To this Haribhadra makes no allusion. But a century later the poet Bāna, contemporary with Yuan Chwang at the court of King Harsha (A.D. 606-648), does not overlook it. Deep in the forest of the Vindhya dwelt a Buddhist mendicant named Divākara-mitra. The king, in search of his lost sister, whose husband has been slain by a neighbouring prince, makes his way through the glades to visit him. We have already seen how, in mocking vein, the poet pictures him in the midst of a concourse of followers from various provinces, and students of all the philosophies.³ Among them were followers of the

¹ Max Muller, *Six Systems*, p. 575.

² Cp. *ante*, p. 203. Sūtra, from *siv* (Latin *su-ere*), to "sew," denotes a thread or cord. Just as our "text" is the woven fabric of thoughts and words (from *texere*, to "weave"), so the threads of statement and proof were stretched out to form the basis of the whole philosophical web.

³ Cp. *Lect. II.*, p. 111.

Upanishads, not yet identified with the Vedānta.¹ Bāna makes no reference to Jaimini and the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā; nor does he mention any name in connection with the study of the Upanishads, the foundation of the "Knowledge-section" which ultimately acquired the title of *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā* or "Posterior Enquiry." What was the significance of this relation? Like the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, its successor was thrown into Sūtra-form; it was, moreover, attributed to a definite author, Bādarāyana, but nothing more is known of him than of Jaimini; and the literary and historical problem is made more perplexing by the fact that each is represented as quoting the other! Both appear for the first time by name in the commentaries of Çankara in the ninth century.² A brief conspectus of philosophies, under the title of *Sarva-Darśana-Siddhānta-Saṃgraha*, attached in chapter after chapter to Çankara himself (but, says Prof. Berriedale Keith, in agreement with Eggeling, "probably wrongly"), describes the Mīmāṃsā as the greatest of fourteen branches of Vedic knowledge.

"It consists of twenty chapters, and is divided into two parts in accordance with the subject-matter dealt with therein. The *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* deals with the subject of *karma* (or ritualistic works), and extends over twelve chapters.

The *sūtras* relating to this have been composed by Jaimini. The commentary is the work of Çabara. The *Mīmāṃsā-vārttika* is the work of Bhaṭṭa, as it has indeed been composed by the great teacher (Kumārila) Bhaṭṭa.

The *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā*, on the other hand, consists of eight chapters, and it is also divided into two parts under the heads dealing (respectively) with deities and with the wisdom (of true philosophy). Both these divisions of the *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā* have alike had their *sūtras* composed by Vyāsa."³

¹ *Harsha Carita*, tr. Cowell and Thomas (1897), p. 236.

² On Çankara's date, see below, p. 308. Çabara Svāmīn wrote a commentary on the Sūtras of Jaimini, and the famous Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, whom tradition associated with violent persecution of the Buddhists (about 700), added further annotations.

³ *The Sarva-Siddhānta-Saṃgraha*, tr. M. Rāṅgacārya, M.A., Madras (1901), i. 16 ff. Prof. Rāṅgacārya in his introduction supports the ascription to Çankara. *Siddhānta*, or "completed end," was a term applied to established doctrine, a philosophical or scientific scheme, and then came to designate works (especially of astronomy or mathematics) in which such principles were expounded. Vyāsa (the "arranger") was the traditional compiler of

The Sūtras of the Mimāmsā might thus be regarded as a literary complex, one part of which was designated "prior" and the other "posterior," somewhat after the fashion of the group of "Prophets" forming the second division of the Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, where the books following the Law from Joshua to Kings were reckoned as the "Prophetæ Priores," and those from Isaiah to Malachi (without Daniel) as the "Prophetæ Posteriores." But the division of the Mimāmsā may have reference to the stages in the life of the "Twice-born," when the householder of the three upper castes, after due performance of marital duty and the provision of offspring to continue the family line, retired into the forest for meditation, and quitted the path of "works" for that of "knowledge."¹ Prof. Deussen has suggested another analogy, in the sequence of the New Testament upon the Old, when life under the Law passes into life in Spirit.² The Sūtras then correspond broadly to treatises of Christian dogmatics, and have a distant resemblance to the books of "Sentences" which served as the foundation of theological teaching in the medieval schools of Europe. These were based on Scripture and the Fathers, and ran a parallel course in time with Indian production, leading off with those of Isidore of Seville (560-636). Most famous was the collection of Peter the Lombard, *Magister Sententiarum*, lecturer in the Cathedral School at Paris, whose work was compiled between 1145 and 1150, in four books dealing with God, the creature, the incarnation, redemption, the virtues, the seven sacraments, and the "last things." It gained immense popularity, and became the accredited text-book in almost every theological school. Numberless commentaries were devoted to its elucidation, no fewer than 180 being written in England.³ Indian

the Mahābhārata, and even of the Vedas themselves, and might be identified with Kṛishna. In the Bhagavad Gītā, xv. 15, Kṛishna claims to be the author of the Vedāntas (i.e. the Upanishads, so Tel'ang, Garbe, and others). Bādarāyana was then supposed to be another name for Vyāsa.

¹ At the present day "the Karma Kānda of the Vedas has almost disappeared from India." Cp. Swāmī Nivekānanda, *Lectures on Jñāna Yoga* (New York, 1902), p. 285.

² *System of the Vedānta*, tr. Johnston (1912), p. 20.

³ *Encycl. Brit.*,¹¹ xxi. p. 293. These were practically the lectures of the teachers in the monasteries.

fertility, which so far surpassed the West in Epic magnitude, was fortunately more restrained.

The Sūtras of Bādarāyana are founded on the Upanishads, and as these books stood last in the literary groups attached to the several Vedas, their teaching came to be known as "Veda-end" or *Vedānta*. They often bear the title *Vedānta-Sūtras*; or they are designated *Brahma-Sūtras*, as expositions of the doctrine of Brahman and the true divine knowledge. They are also termed *Çārīraka-Sūtras* (from *çārīra*, "body"), inasmuch as they deal with the embodiment of the Self, the unconditioned Supreme Brahman,¹ and hence with the whole system of teaching concerning God, the world, man and his destiny.² Expressed sometimes in only two or three words, they are inevitably elliptical, and much of the difficulty of their interpretation depends on the supply of suppressed terms, premisses, or links of reasoning. Bādarāyana is himself cited in nine passages as the holder of certain views, and seven other teachers are similarly named. The second section of the second chapter is occupied with the refutation of a group of six false systems, the Sāṅkhya and Vaiçeshika, the Buddhist and the Jain, the Pāñcharātra and Pāçupata (the order seems casual, for the two middle denominations, which rejected the authority of the Veda, are unexpectedly sandwiched between those which accepted it). But these criticisms supply no chronological clues, and the date of the Sūtras is still undetermined. Native scholars seek to throw them back as far as possible, and have even proposed the period from 500 to 200 B.C. The references to Buddhist schools of the Great Vehicle render such an ascription impossible, and point rather to the early centuries of our era, when the vigour of Buddhist speculation was enlisting the interest of Brāhman students, and the

¹ Rāmānuja, *Çrī-Bhāṣya*, i. 1, 13: *SBE*, xlviii. p. 230. On Rāmānuja's doctrine of the "body" of the Supreme Soul, see below, Lect. VII., p. 397.

² Thus Çaṅkara lays it down that "it is the aim of the Çārīraka Çāstra to show that there is only one highest Lord (*paramēçvara*), ever unchanging, whose substance is cognition (*viññāna-dhātu*), and who by means of Nescience manifests himself in various ways, just as a thaumaturg appears in various shapes by means of his magical power (*māyā*)." i. 3, 19, tr. Thibaut, *SBE*, xxxiv. p. 190. The analogy of the juggler frequently recurs in Vedāntic literature.

principles of rival philosophies were being systematised. On these grounds Prof. Jacobi has provisionally placed them between A.D. 200 and 450.¹

II

The Vedānta is founded expressly upon the Veda, and in particular upon the Upanishads. But the doctrines of these ancient philosophical tracts were by no means uniform, and centuries of speculative activity had naturally developed different schools of interpretation. How early these began to divide upon formal issues it is impossible to ascertain. The growth of the leading types can no longer be traced, but it is certain that the two most distinguished commentators, Çankara and Rāmānuja, the representatives of monism and partial dualism respectively, had many predecessors,² while they in their turn started fresh developments. The teaching of Çankara acquired an immense influence, especially in Brahmanical circles, and powerfully influenced both medieval and modern thought. An active literature was generated by his writings, and a succession of disciples further elaborated his fundamental conceptions. A later writer, again of unknown date, Madhusudana Sarasvatī,³ after enthusiastically describing the Sūtras of Bādarāyana as the best of all text-books, and calling on all who wished for future release from the *samsāra* to reverence it, added, "And this, according to the interpretation of the venerable Çankara, this is the secret." The philosophy of Çankara expounded the principle known as *Advaita* or "non-duality"; and its explanation of the world around us and the soul within was summed up in one famous word, *Māyā*.

Like all terms which have played a great part in human thought, it had a long history.⁴ In the hymns of the Rig Veda it denotes, broadly speaking, the wondrous powers (often

¹ *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1911), p. 29. Deussen originally proposed about A.D. 600.

² For the names of writers before Rāmānuja holding views similar to his, cp. (Sir) R. G. Bhandarkar, *Report on the Search for Sanskrit MSS. in the Bombay Presidency*, 1883-84, p. 70; cp. p. 303⁷ and Lect. VII., p. 384.

³ Between A.D. 1300 and 1600. Deussen, *Gesch. der Phil.*, i. 3, 584, and i. 1, 58.

⁴ Cp. "Māyā," Hastings' *EEE*, viii. 503.

in the plural) of the gods. By it did the heavenly pair, Varuna and Mitra, send rain and guard their law. Agni and Soma and the divine architect Tvashtri employed it. But so also did the demons, and its aid enabled Indra in turn to overcome them. It was a kind of mysterious craft, leaning sometimes towards cunning and trick. Its wiles were unexpected; they were akin to magic; it was by their means, for instance, that Indra could appear in many forms.¹ So the word began to gather into itself a hint of stratagem or deception, and finally acquired the definite meaning of "illusion." Such seems to be its significance already in the later Çvetâçvatara Upanishad (i. 10), when it is said that by meditation on the One Lord and union with him a man becomes free from all *Māyā*. The illusion is that of clinging to the "perishable," the world of change, instead of to the "deathless," where the bonds of the body fall away and the alternations of birth and death are at an end. The philosophical poet seems to take a further step when he identifies Nature with *Māyā*; but the older character of magical power still lingered in the word, for if the outward scene is an illusion, it is the Great Lord who is *Māyin*, the Magician, that produces it.² The word is on the way to its later use, and it is not unimportant that it occurs in an Upanishad which for the first time employs the term Vedânta.³ Krishna, in the Lord's Song, declares that though he is without birth and unchanging, yet by his own *Māyā* he comes into being in the realm of Nature.⁴ True, the divine Magic of the Three Strands is hard to fathom,

¹ *Rig Veda*, vi. 47, 18; quoted in *Bṛhad. Upan.*, ii. 5, 19. So Athena might assume various disguises of her divinity.

² *Çvet. Upan.*, iv. 10. Max Muller, *SBE*, xv. p. 251 f., translates *māyā* as "art," and *māyin* as "the maker."

³ vi. 22.

⁴ *Bhag. Gīt.*, iv. 6, *ātma-māyā*, "self" or "own" *māyā*. So Indian tradition in the commentaries of Çankara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva (cp. Lect VII.), and many moderns. Hopkins, however (*The Great Epic*, p. 138), takes *ātma* in the sense of "soul"; "it is a psychic delusion, which causes the unborn God by means of Prakṛiti to appear to be born (not, be it noticed, which causes the not-soul to appear to be real)." When the Bhagavat appears to Nārada in his universal form, it is the effect of his *māyā*, where the term approaches the meaning of "illusion" in the visibility of the (truly) invisible God, but also carries with it the idea of the power by which the illusion was produced (*Mbh.*, xii. 340, 44).

but those who look to him as their refuge pass beyond it.¹ In life's whirligig it is the Magic of the Lord who dwells in the hearts of men which makes them spin their transitory course.² Such language tended to pass on the human side into the meaning of impermanence and unreality. The Buddhist poets caught hold of the term, and affirmed that all desires were unstable, they did not last, they were like *Māyā* or a mirage, unsteady as lightning or foam.³ In this illusion the whole fabric of experience was involved. The *Samskāras*, on which the powers of body and mind were built up, shared the same character and were swept into the universal Void.⁴

That Buddhists and Brāhmins should be affected by the same tendencies of speculation can occasion no surprise. They constantly met each other in debate; converts passed from one school into another; they used the same language, if they did not always employ the same terms with precisely the same meanings. When the distinction between absolute and relative truth propounded by the Mādhyamaka Buddhists,⁵ or the transcendental idealism of the Yogācāras,⁶ reappeared in different forms in the Vedānta, its opponents were not slow to charge the heirs of the Upanishads with being "concealed Buddhists." The Padma Purāṇa declared the Māyā doctrine to be only Buddhism in disguise; it had been proclaimed in the degenerate Kāli age by a Brāhman, but it was untrue; and Vijñāna Bhikshu, in commenting on the late Sāṅkhya Sūtras (about the fifteenth century), flings the Purāṇa verse at the followers of Śaṅkara, and contemptuously styles them "Pseudo-Vedāntists" or "Crypto-Buddhists."⁷ The Sūtras of Bādarāyana do not, indeed, show any such tendencies. The distinctive

¹ *Bhag. Gīt.*, vii. 14, *daivī guṇa-mayī māyā*.

² *Ibid.*, xviii. 61.

³ *Lalitā vistara*, ed. Lefmann (1902), p. 36, l. 24; cp. p. 176, l. 3. Poussin kindly communicates an earlier use of *māyā*, mirage, and foam, in *Sanjyutta Nikāya*, iii. 142.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 212, l. 18 f. Cp. *Lect. I.*, p. 22.

⁵ Cp. *Lect. II.*, p. 88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁷ *Sāṅkhya-Pravacana-Bhāṣya*, tr. Garbe (1889), p. xii. For an allusion by Yāmunāchārya, the teacher of one of Rāmānuja's teachers, cp. Poussin, *JEAS* (1910), p. 131 f.

term *Māyā* occurs but once, and then only in limited application to the dream-world (iii. 2, 3); the doctrine of the cosmic illusion is not yet formulated after the fashion of a later day. But in the verses attached by Gaudapāda to the Māndukya Upanishad it appears in full force. Tradition represents him as the teacher of Govinda, who in his turn instructed Çankara; he may be placed, accordingly, in the eighth century.¹ One cannot read his verses, says Prof. Poussin, "without being struck by the Buddhist character of the leading ideas and of the wording itself. The author seems to have used Buddhist works or sayings, and to have adjusted them to his Vedāntic design. As Gaudapāda was the spiritual grandfather of Çankara, this fact is not insignificant."²

The poem opens with a brief reference to current theories of the universe and its production.³ It is no display of God's power; it has not arisen out of his desire or will; it is not the work of Time, nor a divine entertainment, for what can he wish for who possesses all things? It is God's own being (*sva-bhāva*), as much his nature as the sunbeams of the sun.⁴ This might seem at first to ascribe reality to the creation, but the poet soon warns his readers against such an error. Only when the soul has awakened from the sleep of illusion, which is without beginning, does the Eternal, without a second, awake within it. Plurality is *māyā*; the real is alone the One.⁵ The limits of verse permit of little argument; they are better fitted for concise dogmatic statement. The poet deals with themes long familiar in the schools, and uses time-honoured language. Behind his scheme of thought is the authority of Scripture, but the texts of the Upanishads are rarely invoked, they are rather

¹ And in the far South. For Çankara, see below, p. 307, and for the remarkable development of Çaivism in the southern kingdoms, see p. 351 ff.

² For the justification of this view, cp. *JRAS* (1910), "Vedānta and Buddhism," p. 136 ff. The verses are 215 in number, in four chapters the last of which "bears a distinctly Buddhist tinge." Cp. *JRAS* (1908), p. 888 f.

³ See Dvivedi, *The Māndukyopaniṣad*, etc. (Bombay, 1894); Deussen, *Sechzig Upaniṣad's* (1897), p. 574. A brief exposition by a modern Vedāntist will be found in the *Doctrine of Māyā*, by Prabhu Dutt Shāstri (1911), p. 84 ff.

⁴ i. 6-9.

⁵ i. 14 ff.

assumed as the foundation. The ancient phrases of the identity of the individual soul (*jīva*) with the Universal Self (*ātman*) are never quoted; but it is the aim of the *Kārikās* to show the way to its realisation and depict its peace. For this end appeal is made to different forms of experience.

The second chapter, entitled *Vaitathya*, "untruth" or unreality, opens with a reference to the vain imaginations of a dream. The sleeper supposes himself to have visited distant places; he wakes, and finds himself where he lay down, and there has been no time for the soul to go forth and return. While it lasted the dream seemed true; the waking experience proved it false. "Those are no carriages or roads," said Scripture;¹ and Revelation thus supported the teaching of reason. But reason further affirmed that though the waking experience came through different organs, it was equally the product of imagination. No proof is offered of the unreality of the external world except through an appeal to the action of the *Ātman*. If both kinds of experience are false, who is it that produces them in our consciousness? The answer boldly affirms that the *Ātman* imagines himself by himself through his *Māyā*;² he is the real subject of all experience; this is the last word of the Vedānta. Immersed in the illusion, we mistake the scene around us for actuality, as a man in the dark might mistake a piece of rope for a snake or a strip of water. So the Self within is not known as all purity, all thought, and One without a Second; involved in the sphere of causality and good and evil, it is conceived in manifold ways as *Jīva* or *Prāṇa* in different schools. But every attempt to present it under empirical forms breaks down; there is no truth save in the Vedānta; the whole succession of worlds is false; there is no dissolution, no creation; none is bound, none seeks deliverance, none is released. This is all *Māyā*, with which God is himself deluded!³ What is the meaning of this riddle?

Only a partial answer is supplied. In order to establish the doctrine of "Non-duality" (*advaita*) in chapter iii., Gaudapāda seeks first to remove the belief in the separate existence of the individual soul. If the *Ātman* or Universal Self is likened to

¹ *Bṛihad. Upan.*, iv. 3, 10.

² ii. 12.

³ ii. 19 ff.

infinite space, the *jīva* is like the space in a jar. When the jar is broken, the space which it enclosed joins that from which it was temporarily severed. Even so does the *jīva* unite itself with the *Ātman*. Jars may differ in form and size, but the space within is always similar to that without; and the same is true of the *jīvas*. They are no *product* of the *Ātman* (as earrings out of gold, or bubbles from water, or branches of a tree, says the commentator); Scripture declares their identity, and any presentation of them as separate in the process of creation is only figurative. Truth lies in non-duality; if our apprehension of the world of names and forms were real, the Eternal would have become mortal. Such change is impossible, for nothing can ever become other than it is by its own nature (*prakṛiti*), a principle of sufficient importance to secure threefold repetition.¹ The successions of phenomena are thus one big illusion. "Being" can never "become"; nor can "non-being" (*asat*, the unreal) originate anything at all either in truth or even in illusion. The son of a barren woman (a stock Vedāntic conception, like the horns of a hare) is a meaningless phrase. Duality arises from the action of the mind, and common experience is not without hints of the *jīva's* power to transcend it. In deep sleep the mind's activity is laid to rest; the *Yoga*-discipline leads to its suppression. The consciousness of external objects ceases; all contact with the world of sense is broken; no more distraught by cares, the soul is at peace, steadfast and fearless in the light of thought.

The fourth group of verses bears the quaint name of "Quenching the Firebrand." It was a familiar game of little boys in the evening to whirl a burning stick swiftly through the air, and produce the impression of a circle of light.² The figure and its lesson are approached through an exposition of the contradictions involved in the conception of causality on the assumption of an eternal and all-inclusive *Ātman*. How could the immortal become mortal, or the immutable submit to change? If, as the rival philosophy of the Sāṅkhyas taught on

¹ iii. 21; iv. 7, 29.

² The *Alāta-chakra*, or "firebrand wheel," was already an image in *Maitrīy. Upan.*, vi. 24: *SBE*, xv. p. 322, but with a very different application.

the basis of an unborn Nature, cause and effect were inseparable and identical, either the effect must be as unoriginated as the cause, or the cause must be as impermanent as the effect. "One part of a hen," said Çankara, "cannot be cooked while the other is in the act of laying eggs."¹ The "man in the street" may indeed argue that subjective impressions must have an objective source; when fire burns and thorns prick, what is it that produces pain? But philosophy boldly meets the difficulty; fire and thorns belong to the field of appearance, and share its unreality. Where there is no change and nothing is ever the cause of anything else, experience vanishes in futility. Like the moving firebrand which produces a false impression of a line or circle of light, the world exists only in consciousness, and all things in it are only the motions of consciousness alone,² which generates the semblance of perceiver and perceived. What, then, of the whole moral life, with its doctrine of the inevitable "fruit" of good or evil? The Samsāra also belongs to the illusion. Abandon the notion of causality, and it fades out of sight in the eternal light of the Universal Self. We learn with surprise as the poem closes that souls are without beginning, originally untouched by darkness or stain, awakened (*buddha*) and free. But just as we inquire what involved them in illusion and started them on the illimitable series of births and deaths, or what guarantees their ultimate deliverance and their attainment of the final peace, the play is over, and the curtain falls.

III

The verses of Gaudapāda are concerned only with the philosophy of religion; they are silent about its practice, and make no reference to either of the two great objects of popular devotion, Vishnu or Çiva; in the absence of any historical data, the poet cannot be connected with either. It is otherwise with the author of the famous commentary on Bādarāyana's Sūtras, the exponent of the monistic Vedānta, the Teacher Çankara. Uncertainty still hangs around the details of his career, and the first written record of his life, ascribed to the Teacher Mādhava in the fourteenth century, has naturally enveloped it

¹ Dvivedi, p. 98.

² iv. 47 ff.

in romance. He belonged to the Nambudri class of Brāhmins, and is commonly supposed to have been born at the village of Kaladi, in Malabar, on the south-west coast, though another tradition assigns him to Chidambara, on the south-east. Western scholarship has practically agreed to accept the year A.D. 788 as an approximate date for his birth, and 820 for his death.¹ Legend told how the gods called upon Çiva, on his mountain abode upon Kailāsa, to learn how he proposed to revive Hinduism. The Deity vouchsafed to appear in a vision of the night to the childless wife of a Brāhman named Çivaguru. They had long prayed for a son, and when the Deity offered the expectant mother the option of a number of children who would become dunces and ruffians, or an only son of short life but surpassing wisdom, she chose the latter, and the God condescended to become incarnate in Çankara.²

Of his education nothing is known; like other famous teachers, he was credited with an abnormal appetite for knowledge; and pious admiration for his learning ascribed to him the mastery of the Vedas with their dependent literature and the completion of his studies by the age of eight. South

¹ See the *Indian Antiquary*, June 1882 (vol. xi. p. 174), where Mr K. P. Pathak produced passages from a MS. hitherto unknown, ascribing his birth to 788. Wilson had already placed him at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries; cp. Tiele, *Outlines of the History of Religion*, p. 140, and on Tiele's probable source Telang, *Indian Antiquary*, xiii. p. 95. On the other hand, Prof. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Report on the Search for Sanskrit MSS. in the Bombay Presidency, 1882-83* (Bombay, 1884), proposed 680, or possibly earlier still, about the end of the sixth century (p. 15). This latter date was adopted by the Hon. K. T. Telang, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Soc.*, vol. xvii. (1889), pt. ii. p. 79. In the *Indian Antiquary*, Jan. 1887, vol. xvi. p. 41, Mr J. F. Fleet, arguing from Nepalese tradition, placed his career in the middle of the seventh century; while in the same journal for May, xvi. p. 160, Mr W. Logan produced evidence in favour of the first quarter of the ninth century, as above. The date of 788 for Çankara's birth is employed by Max Muller, Macdonell, Berriedale Keith, and other writers. Cp. *Journal of the Bombay Branch RAS*, xvii. pt. ii. p. 63; xviii. pp. 88, 147, 213; centenary vol., 1906, p. 51 f.; *Indian Antiquary*, xliv. (1915), p. 164.

² Cp. the popular sketch by C. N. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, M.A., *Sri Sankaracharya, his Life and Times*, Madras, 4th ed., p. 11 f.

Indian tradition made him a disciple of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa¹ of Behar, famous in legend as the persecutor of the Buddhists.¹ He early adopted the ascetic life, and wandered as a teacher from place to place, holding discussions with the members of different sects. As disciples gathered round him, he established four *mathas* or monasteries, one of which, at Çringēri in Mysore, still flourishes under a Preceptor who exerts considerable authority over the Çaivas of South India.² Numerous mendicant bodies of *Dandins* or "Staff-carriers" founded on his teaching reside in and around Benares,³ and their orders have naturally produced an abundant literature in defence and amplification of their master's philosophy. Çankara himself is said to have travelled as far as Kashmir, and he died at Kedarnata, in the Himālaya, according to received tradition, in 820, at the age of thirty-two.⁴

The literary form which Çankara employed for the presentation of his thought depended on the order of Bādarāyana's

¹ Pope, *Tiruvāçagam*, p. lxxv. Kumārila was an incarnation of Kārtikeya, son of Çiva. In consequence of his miraculous victory over his antagonists, Prince Sudhanwa issued the fatal order, "Let those who slay not be slain, the old men amongst the Buddhists and the babes, from the bridge of Rāma to the snowy mountains" (Malabar tradition): Wilson, *Essays on Sanskrit Literature*, iii. (1865), p. 194 f. Kumārila was said to have committed himself to the flames in the presence of Çankara. Cp. *ante*, p. 116.

² The Jagad Gurū, high-priest of the Smārta Brahmans (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, vol. xxiii. p. 105). Çankara and his predecessor Gaudapāda were both of them Çāktas according to tradition, though the Çākti doctrine plays little part in Çankara's philosophy (cp. his *Bhāṣya*, i. 3, 30: *SBE*, xxxiv. p. 214). Çākti worship is said to be the principal cult followed in the Advaita Maths under the presidency of his "pontifical successors" to-day (P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, 1909, p. 173).

³ Wilson, *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, i. (1861), p. 203; J. N. Bhaṭṭacharya, *Hindu Castes and Sects* (Calcutta, 1896), p. 380 f.

⁴ The date has been questioned on the ground of the copiousness of his writings, which include not only the famous *Bhāṣya* or commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras, but also expositions of various Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gītā, and other works; some of these, though traditionally ascribed to him, are almost certainly pseudonymous. Max Müller supposed the statement to mean that he died to the world by becoming a Muni (*India, What can it teach Us?* p. 360), but this view has not met with any general support.

Sūtras, and the student has consequently to work his way through many dislocations of argument and repetitions of statement. The commentary opens with homage to Vāsudeva, and the Supreme Soul is identified not with Çiva but with Vishnu.¹ What, then, was the foundation of the scheme which culminated in blending God, the soul, and the world in one indistinguishable unity of Absolute Being?

Like its rivals in the schools of philosophy, the Vedānta had its *pramānas*, its "measurements," its canons of evidence, its standards of authority.² Behind the authors of the Upanishads lay the Vedic hymns, already sacred; behind the framers of the Sūtras lay the Upanishads, sharing the same character of Revelation. The Chārvākas (materialists) and the Buddhists, of course, rejected their claims; the Sāṅkhyans misinterpreted their teaching and minimised their significance. As Çankara argues with his opponents, his position resembles that of a Scholastic philosopher in medieval Europe. Each believed that he had an infallible authority behind him with which the results of speculative inquiry must be harmonised. The Christian teacher might start from Aristotle, but he must end with Scripture and the Church. The Hindu might use the methods of reasoning as freely as the Greek, but he must bring their issue into accord with the Veda. The ordinary processes of knowledge were controlled by *pratyaksha* ("before the eyes"), i.e. direct perception, or by *anumāna*, inference. In the investigation into the nature of God and the origin of the world, *pratyaksha*, in the character of sense-perception, was obviously impossible, but it might be applied to the mystical intuition of the supreme Reality.³ Çankara, however, boldly transfers the two terms to the field of authoritative literature, interpreting them respectively as *Çruti*, "hearing" or revelation, and *Smṛiti*, "remembrance" or tradi-

¹ SBE, xxxiv. p. 239, in the valuable translation of Prof. Thibaut. The absence of any signs of devotion to Çiva led Mr Nehemiah Goreh, in his *Rational Refutation of the Hindu Philosophical Systems* (tr. Hall, Calcutta, 1862), to question the correctness of the received view that Çankara was a Çaiva, p. 212.

² Max Müller observes that the word survives in the Persian *Fermān* "an authoritative order" (*Six Systems*, p. 188).

³ Cp. Lect. III., p. 138.

tion.¹ The first term covered the Vedic *samhitās*, the Brāhmanas and the Upanishads;² the second included the Law-books, with "Manu" at their head, and might be stretched to embrace the Great Epic, the Mahābhārata, which was even sometimes designated a fifth Veda.³

The ultimate foundation for belief in anything beyond the sphere of the senses is laid again and again in the statements of Revelation. "Çruti is the only *pramāna* for the origin of our knowledge of supersensuous things."⁴ The comprehension of Brahman, consequently, can only be accomplished by ascertaining the meaning of the Vedānta texts;⁵ or, again, "that all-knowing all-powerful Brahman, the cause of the origin, subsistence, and dissolution of the world, is known from the Vedānta part of Scripture."⁶ With the fundamental doctrines of ontology and cosmology Çankara also ranges the principles of morality and the rules of conduct. "Our knowledge of right and wrong (*dharma* and *adharma*, duty and its contrary) depends entirely on the *çāstras*."⁷ It is wholly beyond the cognisance of the senses; and in the absence of binding rules of universal application as to time, place, and occasion—when the taking of life (for instance) is generally prohibited, but certain sacrifices require animal victims,—without Revelation how should we distinguish between obligation and sin? Here, then, is the central fact of religion, as expressed in a system of doctrine, a series of duties, and a scheme of life. Theology, philosophy, ethics, God and the world, the soul and its destiny, all depend upon the Veda. To establish its claim thus to disclose the whole secret of existence consequently became an urgent necessity. Of the literary origins of the ancient books later

¹ i. 3, 28; Thibaut, *SBE*, xxxiv. p. 203. Cp. Deussen, *Die Sūtra's des Vedānta* (1887), p. 171, a very helpful adjunct to Thibaut's valuable work.

² Practically, however, Çankara is concerned with the older Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā.

³ *Smṛiti* might be employed to assist the knowledge of the truth by argumentation and proof, but the Vedānta texts were the only true source (ii. 1, 3; *ibid.*, xxxiv. p. 298).

⁴ *Atiendryārtha-vijñāna*, ii. 3, 1; Thibaut, *SBE*, xxxviii. p. 4.

⁵ i. 1, 2; Thibaut, *SBE*, xxxiv. p. 17.

⁶ i. 1, 4; Thibaut, *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷ iii. 1, 25; Thibaut, *ibid.*, xxxviii. p. 131.

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ages knew nothing. The hymns of the Rig Veda were traditionally ascribed to certain authors or family groups; the sages of old were believed to have *seen* the poems in the heavenly world.¹ They were transmitted from generation to generation with pious care and exact memory. The priests might raise extravagant pretensions for their order in connection with the efficacy of sacrifice; they might describe themselves as "human gods"; but they never claimed any supernatural power to define the doctrine or interpret the language of Scripture. They could point to no hierarchy whose officers were endowed with any kind of collective inspiration, nor could they produce any historic evidence of miracle to guarantee the divine origin of Revelation. The proof of its authority had therefore to be drawn from its own contents.²

Dealing with supersensuous things, the Scriptures, belonged to the realm of the gods. A comprehensive list of literature from the Rig Veda down to Purāṇas, Sūtras, and commentaries, was declared to have been breathed forth by Brahman.³ Just as Hebrew tradition represented Yahweh as speaking to Moses "mouth to mouth,"⁴ and Homer told how Nestor recognised Athena when she had guided Telemachus and flew away as a sea-eagle,⁵ so did the *mantras* set forth the personality of the gods, and tradition affirmed that Vyāsa (the compiler of the Vedas) and others conversed with them face to face.⁶ True, this experience was no longer repeated, but to deny it would be to reject the incontestable variety of the world. We have no right to measure by our limitations the capacities of the Rishis who saw the sacred hymns. Issuing thus from Brahman, they shared his attribute of eternity. Textual support for this doctrine was found in an injunction in the Rig Veda (viii. 75, 6),⁷ "Send forth praises to this heaven-aspiring Agni with unceasing voice" (*vāchā nityayā*); but *nitya* might be stretched to denote

¹ Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, iii. p. 85.

² "Not even a dexterous person," said Sāyana (the famous commentator on the Rig Veda in the fourteenth century), "can stand on his own shoulder." Banerjea, *Dialogues on the Hindu Philosophy* (1861), p. 459.

³ *Bṛihad. Upan.*, ii. 4, 10 : *SBE*, xv. p. 111.

⁴ *Num.* xii. 8. ⁵ *Od.*, iii. 375.

⁶ i. 3, 33; Thibaut, xxxiv. p. 222.

⁷ Aufrecht's text² (1877); Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*,² iii. 69⁷⁰, gives viii. 64, 6.

the "everlasting," and on this epithet a subtle disquisition was supported to prove the eternity of sound and the consequent transcendental character of the Veda. This carried with it the attribute of inerrancy, at least in matters of the supersensible sphere. There thought was concerned not with individuals but with types or species, whose names—even those of Indra, the Maruts, and their like—denoted not single personalities any more than the term cow, but whole classes, the members of which might follow each other in continuous succession. The difficulties which this theory involved when applied to geographical detail such as allusions to particular rivers, need not be recounted. Under this principle language ceased to be a mere convention and acquired a divine character.¹ The Veda was thus invested with supreme validity. Its ultimate authorship lay with the omniscient Brahman. Hence all its parts were equally authoritative.²

Its interpretation, however, was not, like its origin, divinely guaranteed, and was exposed to numerous difficulties. False theories of the world, such as the Sāṅkhyan doctrine that it issued from non-intelligent matter, or that it was derived from atoms, or proceeded spontaneously from its own nature without a cause, required authority to overthrow them; but that authority did not exclude discussion. Texts must be studied and compared, and argument and inference must be allowed.³ Nor do these exhaust the means of knowledge. The final issue of inquiry into Brahman is *anubhava* or direct perception, elsewhere called *śāstra-dṛiṣṭi*, "Scripture-vision," intuition vouched for by Scripture.⁴ The necessity for the employment of reason became plain when it was frankly recognised that the complex Veda was not always consistent with itself. Its state-

¹ For Ṣaṅkara's view, cp. the long discussion in i. 3, 28 ff., Thibaut, xxxiv. p. 204 ff.

² *Pramāṇatvavivēṣhāt*, iii. 2, 15; Thibaut, xxxviii. p. 156. "The authoritativeness of the Veda with regard to the matters stated by it is independent and direct, just as the light of the sun is the direct means of our knowledge of form and colour," ii. 1, 1; *ibid.*, xxxiv. p. 295.

³ i. 1, 2; Thibaut, xxxiv. p. 17 f. Human understanding thus assists Revelation.

⁴ i. 1, 30; *ibid.*, p. 101. In the commentary on Gaudapāda's verses, iii. 27, Ṣaṅkara appeals to reason as confirming Scripture.

ments about such matters as the origin of the ether (a fifth element), or fire, or air, or the individual soul, were by no means uniform.¹ A long comparison of different passages shows that some speak of creation without specifying the order of succession; they may be interpreted so as to agree with those which do imply a definite sequence; the general assertion that everything springs from Brahman does not require that they should all be its immediate products, and all difficulty is thus removed.² There were other cases, however, where Scripture, though authoritative with regard to its own special subject-matter, might still be understood in a secondary sense on topics which were, so to speak, taken out of its grasp by other means of right knowledge. It is a distinction analogous to that still sometimes applied to Biblical statements of science or history which later evidence has disproved. But when all deductions are made, the case against the Sāṅkhyans appears to be triumphantly established, and Brahman remains alone and supreme as the cause of the world and of the soul.

But what was Brahman? The ancient answer was emphatic, "All this is Brahman."³ What was its meaning, what were its applications to human life and destiny, what was its value for religion? These were the questions to which Çankara sought solutions. The Vedānta in his hands offered a complete guide to the conduct and the knowledge which would liberate the soul from the perils and sufferings of continual rebirth. It was at once a metaphysical philosophy, a strenuous ethical discipline, a pantheistic religion, and an exalted mystical way.⁴ Its exposi-

¹ ii. 3, 1, Thibaut, xxxviii. p. 3.

² It is explained elsewhere, i. 4, 14 (xxxiv. p. 265), that such conflicting statements are of small moment, as human welfare is in no way dependent on them, and topics like the creation of the world are not the real object of Scripture teaching. Similarly, iii. 3, 17, "what the text really means to teach is that Brahma is the Self of everything"; xxxviii. p. 208.

³ *Chhândog. Up.*, iii. 14, 1 : SBE, i. p. 48.

⁴ Compare the Introduction of Prof. Thibaut, SBE, xxxiv., and Deussen, *System of the Vedānta*, tr. Johnston (Chicago, 1912), from the German (1883). A useful collection of quotations will be found in *The Vedānta of Çankara Expounded and Vindicated*, by Prof. Desai (Holkar Coll., Indore), part i., 1913. Popular lectures on *Jñāna Yoga*, by the Swāmi Vivekānanda (New York; no date).

tion was conditioned by the literary form of commentary upon Bādarāyana's Sūtras, to which Çankara's industry added commentaries on some of the older Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gītā. An abundant literature was thus started in which difficulties were discussed and new points of view were suggested. The later history of the Vedānta in the long succession of Çankara's disciples has yet to be written. It must be enough if the leading ideas of his own presentation can be briefly described.

IV

The introduction of the first Sūtra starts from the fundamental fact of consciousness, the recognition of a Subject (*vishayin*) and an Object (*vishaya*). "You" and "we"¹ stand opposite to each other, contrasted like light and darkness, and incapable of identification. In the subsequent investigation into the nature of Reality it is essential to remember that its starting-point is the practical validity of our ordinary experience. The Subject or Self is intelligence (*chit*); it has for its sphere the notion of the Ego; and the attributes of the two terms in the antithesis are entirely distinct, and neither ought to be superimposed upon the other. But just as the inexperienced imagine that the ether or space (*ākāṣa*) which is not an object of sensuous perception is dark blue, and superimpose the notion of colour on it, so the attributes of the body and its organs are constantly superimposed upon the Self. A man thinks of himself as stout or lean, as standing or walking, as deaf, one-eyed, or blind. The "internal organ" (*antaḥ-karāṇa*) or *Manas*² leads him to suppose himself the subject of desire, intention, doubt, determination, and similar modifications, while the Self is really only their witness. Under these conditions the Subject can, in fact, make itself its own Object, and knows itself to exist *aparokṣatvāt*, "by immediate presentation." There is no appeal to Scripture here. The Self is apprehended by direct

¹ *Yushmadāsmat* in the plural. Western philosophy talks of the Ego and the Non Ego.

² The two expressions are completely interchangeable for Çankara (Deussen, *System*, p. 330). Much of his psychology is common to the Sāṅkhya.

intuition. Nevertheless its true character is, after all, misapprehended. It seems to differ from the intelligence of animals only in degree, and belongs to the sphere of Ignorance (*avidyā*). In this Ignorance even the whole life of religious obligation founded upon the Veda is enveloped. The entire field of our practical existence, with its scheme of merit and guilt, its body of sacred law, its commands and prohibitions, its prospects of happiness and suffering, its worlds of the gods, its heavens and hells,—all are under its control. They all involve the notion that the body, its organs, its senses, and the vast variety of conditions surrounding it, can be in some way identified with the Self. They belong to it, they enter into its experience, they are associated with its memories, they beget its aims. To clear this ignorance away, to dissipate the false process of “I-making” (*ahamkāra*), the erroneous consciousness of being an individual, who acts and enjoys or suffers the fruits of his action—the root of all evil,—and lead the Self to the knowledge of its absolute unity with the Universal Self, is the object of the Vedānta. With this preface the first Sūtra is announced in four brief words, “Now, therefore, Brahman-inquiry.”

Before attempting to follow Çankara on this high quest, it may be well to ask what account he gave of our common experience, what was its nature, what value did it possess? The philosophy of the Vedānta is usually interpreted as a philosophy of Illusion. It may no less be read as a philosophy of Relative Reality; and the stress laid upon these alternative aspects will determine its character as a guide to conduct and a solution of the destiny of souls. To discover its significance for the ordinary householder, it may be well to summarise Çankara's treatment of some contemporary theories.

A thousand years and more of argument had left the Materialists still unconvinced. They could not deny the existence of consciousness, but they rejected the notion of a transmigrating Self. Consciousness was only a function of the body; a man's person was made up from the elements; true, neither singly nor in combination did earth and water and the rest exhibit any signs of mental activity; but just as certain ingredients duly proportioned and mixed produced intoxication, so the elements might be transformed in the physical organism

into feeling and thought.¹ But how, asked Çankara, can consciousness perceive the elements and their products if it is itself one of them? Is it not contradictory that anything should act upon itself? Fire cannot burn itself, and not even the best trained acrobat can mount on his own shoulders. If consciousness were a mere quality of the elements and their products, it could not make them objects of its own perception external to itself, any more than forms can make their own colours their objects. The body changes, but the Self is permanent; its recognition of itself as a conscious agent and its memory of the past would otherwise be impossible. Behind this argument lies an interpretation of the act of perception involving the idea of the actual externality of the object. But at this point the philosopher runs up against the idealist. How did he deal with the theory of *vijñāna*?²

The process of perception, said the Buddhist of this type, was purely internal. Its source, its object, and its resulting knowledge existed only in the mind (*buddhi*).³ Çankara alleges that the Buddhist denial of the existence of external things apart from consciousness was founded on the impossibility of such existence. Outward objects, if such be admitted, must either be infinitely small, or aggregates of the infinitely small, like posts or walls or jars. But the atom is beyond sight or cognition; and the aggregate—being neither different from it (because composed of numbers of it) nor identical with it (because then its constituents would all be outside perception)—can be nowhere but in the mind. And the same was true of universals which were neither identical with particulars nor different from them. No preconceived impossibilities, however, could be allowed to interfere with the operation of the means of right knowledge. Possibility was tested by experience; whatever was apprehended by perception or some other element of proof fell within its range. All the instruments of knowledge apprehend external objects in their several fields. To deny their reality outside consciousness is as absurd as for a hungry man to deny the satisfaction of his appetite after a

¹ iii. 3, 53; Thibaut, xxxviii. p. 269 f.

² Cp. *ante*, p. 93.

³ ii. 2, 28; xxxiv. p. 418 ff.

good meal. Even the Buddhists practically admitted their existence when they described them as "like something external." No one ever compared Vishnumitra to "the son of a barren woman," the stock illustration of the unreal or non-existent. The doctrine of the Void¹ is rejected with the same appeal to the immediate data of experience. A subject which perceives and an object which is perceived are given to us simultaneously by consciousness. The same act guarantees the actuality of both terms, and defines their relation as "here" and "there." The theory of universal "emptiness" is so plainly "contradicted by all means of right knowledge" that Çankara contemptuously dismisses it as requiring no special refutation.² And if it was pleaded that dreams took the same form of subject and object though nothing was really there, and the waking experience might possess the same character of purely internal activity, the answer was ready that the dream was negated by the waking consciousness, which was supported by general agreement, and would-be philosophers could not be allowed to deny the truth of what was directly evident.³

The relation of Çankara's teaching to the Sāṅkhya was more complex, and it has long been observed that his frequent criticisms and counter-arguments imply a grave estimate of its importance as the chief opponent of the Vedānta. Its doctrine of the Three Strands supplied a widely accepted interpretation of the material world;⁴ whether that was termed *Pradhāna* or *Prakṛiti* was not of much consequence on the physical side, provided the ultimate constituents were the same. The bodily organisation, and the physiological basis of the conscious life, were conceived in common terms. In the explanation of daily experience both schemes were frankly realist, and looked upon

¹ *Ante*, p. 86.

² ii. 2, 31; xxiv. p. 427.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 425. It is needless to pursue the same general line of refutation applied to the Buddhist doctrine of "momentary existence," which cut through the conception of causality and rendered memory inexplicable (ii. 2, 18 ff.). The appeal to Revelation in justification of the reality of space is somewhat unexpected, and the alternative argument that sound needs space for a location just as smell is posited in the earth makes no use of the direct apprehension of externality in perception which is reiterated so often elsewhere.

⁴ *Cp. ante*, p. 206.

earth and sky as actually where they appeared to be. But for the Sāṅkhyan the pageant of the universe was a process of unconscious evolution due to the disturbance of the equipoise of the Three Strands. The Vedāntist, on the other hand, argued that it was the work of a Divine Creator who guided and upheld the world which he had made, who punished the wicked and recompensed the just. The endless rhythm, embracing the entire scene from heaven to hell in never-ceasing cycles from origin to dissolution, was placed under the control of Īçvara, the Lord, or God. Here was a scheme of practical Theism opposed to the *nirīçvara* system of the Sāṅkhya. Much labour is bestowed on its establishment. It covered all orders of being involved in the *Samsāra*, and rested on the whole body of Revelation. It claimed, therefore, a special supernatural authority. The Sāṅkhyan teachers also paid their respects to its supremacy, and endeavoured to prove the harmony of their doctrines with the ancient Scriptures. Such efforts landed them in dangerous misinterpretations from Çankara's point of view, and passages thus wrested from their true meaning are copiously discussed. Apart from these details of exegesis, the general argument may be presented as follows.

All the philosophical systems rested upon a common view of the great world-rhythm. Vast periods of creation, maintenance, and dissolution, followed each other in endless succession. In the intervals of such cycles the universe relapsed into the primeval matter out of which the heavens and the earth had been constituted, and Nature held its Three Strands poised in equilibrium.¹ What, then, was the cause of a fresh evolution? What hand disturbed the balance of the forces which kept each other at rest? If the world as we know it has resulted from the activities of the Three Strands energising in unequal proportions, how were they released from mutual control, and severally enabled to gain predominance? Some cause was needed to give the initial impulse, and such a cause the Vedānta provided in the omnipresent Brahman. When the Sāṅkhyan argued that even if the Self were united with matter it could effect no change, for pure intelligence could set nothing in

¹ Cp. Thibaut, xxxiv. pp. 48, 353, 370.

motion, Çankara replied that what was itself unmoving might yet produce motion in others, as when a magnet, itself still, drew iron towards it. So Brahman, everywhere unmoving but all-powerful, might move the world. And if with another thrust the Sāṅkhya¹ argued that the unity of the omnipresent Brahman left no room for any motion at all, the Vedāntist escaped out of such a static universe by the back-door of Illusion.¹

Moreover, if Brahman was needed as the cause of the world to provide its power, he was no less demanded to secure its order. How could unintelligent Nature spontaneously produce effects which served the purposes of different ranks of conscious beings? Palaces and couches and pleasure-grounds were the result of intelligent labour for the attainment of pleasure or the avoidance of pain; and similarly the whole universe, inanimate and animate, was full of adaptations and arrangements which no inert matter could conceivably have brought about.² The Sāṅkhya might point to water which flowed along of its own accord for the welfare of mankind, or to the cow which unconsciously secreted milk for its young, and ask why Nature likewise might not minister of its own accord to the highest end of man. But Scripture plainly declared that water had its "Inner Ruler,"³ and the cow as an intelligent being makes her milk flow from love of her calf; and if analysis was pushed further back through the cow's digestion to the grass which she consumed, the chain of causation still implied adaptation, for grass would not issue in milk unless it was eaten by the right sort of animal, a cow and not a bull.⁴ By such slow steps was the argument from design evolved.

A graver difficulty, however, remained behind. In a world created by infinite intelligence, what was the meaning of birth and death, old age and disease, "and whatever may be the other meshes of the net of suffering"? How should an absolutely stainless Being involve itself in all the impurities of our bodies? Are we not compelled to recognise that "what is beneficial is

¹ Cp. Thibaut, xxxiv. ii. 2, 2, p. 367. On Māyā, see below.

² ii. 2, 1; xxxiv. p. 365.

³ *Bṛihad. Up.*, iii. 7, 4: *SBE*, xv. p. 132.

⁴ ii. 2, 3, and 5; xxxiv. pp. 369, 371.

not done," and is not the benevolence of God thereby impugned?¹ Nor is this all. Does not his omnipresence involve him inextricably in this universe of pain? Yet who would build himself a prison and voluntarily take up his abode in its confinement? Would not omnipotence, discovering what it had done, free itself from its entanglements and reabsorb the world into itself?²

The unequal distribution of happiness is indeed obvious. There are the gods in bliss, and the animals that devour each other; the law of death, had it no inner meaning, would be truly a law of cruelty, and God could not be defended from the charge of showing passion and malice like an ordinary man. He would not be the impartial administrator of welfare for all sentient creatures. But one word in the concentrated style of the commentary removes the difficulty, *sapekshatvāt*, "by having regard." What circumstances then, condition even God's activity? The answer is simple: the merit and demerit of antecedent beings. Under the influence of the rain-god Parjanya, rice, barley, and all sorts of plants spring from the ground according to the potencies hidden in their seeds. So is it in the world of souls whose lots are matched with the good or evil of their past deserts. — Perception, reasoning, are here of course of no avail; the argument is purely scriptural. The key to the inequalities of creation lies in the Law of the Deed. They are the expressions of the moral order of which God's will is the guardian and embodiment. Created beings have only themselves to thank for their ill plight. Like the Psalmist, who ascribed "mercy" to God because he "rendered to every man according to his work," so did the Vedāntist see in this inexorable impartiality the manifestation of God's essential goodness and purity.³ Yet from another point of view fresh difficulties arose. Did not Scripture declare that God was not only the giver of the fruits of good and evil, but actually the causal agent of right and wrong conduct?⁴ And in that case,

¹ ii. 1, 21; xxxiv. p. 343.

² *Ibid.*, p. 344.

³ *Śācchatvāditvarasvabhāva*, ii. 1, 34.

⁴ *Śācchatvāditvarasvabhāva*, iii. 2, 41; xxxviii. p. 183, quoting *Kaush. Up.*, iii. 8, "He makes him whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds do a good deed; and the same makes him whom he wishes to lead down from these worlds do a bad deed"; *SBE*, i. p. 299.