

13. No broad-browed calf with wide-set ears is ever in his homestead born, within whose kingdom is detained, through want of sense, a Brahman's dame.

14. No steward, golden-necklaced, goes before the meat trays of the man within whose kingdom is detained through want of sense, a Brahman's dame.

16. No lily grows with oval bulbs, no lotus pool is in his fields, in whose dominion is detained, through senseless love, a Brahman's dame.

17. The men whose task it is to milk drain not brindled cow for him, in whose dominion is detained, through senseless love, a Brahman's dame.

18. His milch-cow doth not profit one, his draught-ox masters not the yoke, wherever, severed from his wife, a Brahman spends the mournful night.

A few words in explanation of the hymn will not be uncalled for before handling the other Vedic hymns.

Though Griffith has succeeded in making a correct and faithful translation of the hymn, he made no attempt to find out a connected meaning of the whole hymn and disposed of it by saying that it is partly obscure.

Muir attempted to explain the hymn on the supposition that Brahman married the widows of Rajanyas and Vaisyas and even formed unions with their wives while they were alive. Evidently this supposition is inconsistent with the meaning of the word 'Brahmajaye,' Brahman's wife. Neither can a Rajanya's or Vaisya's wife be a Brahman's wife, nor a Brahman's wife the wife of the former. Also the word Brahmachari, bachelor, finds no explanation on this supposition.

On the authority of Kausika Sutra which Sayana has quoted at the heading of each of the hymns quoted here, he says that when a cow is seized (goharage), this

hymn as well as the other hymns quoted here are to be recited and rites of sorcery performed. It follows therefore that Brahmajaya, Brahmagavi and Vasa are synonymous words and mean a Brahman's wife. From verse 33 of the fourth hymn of the twelfth book, where the cow is said to be the mother of a Rajanya, it is clear that the offspring of the priest and his special consort is a prince. As Sayana attributes the authorship of some of these hymns to Parasurama⁵⁷ and as the offspring of a Brahman of a chosen family and his queen consort is a bachelor king in the land of Parasurama, the States of Travancore and Cochin, it is not unreasonable to take the word Brahmachari, mentioned in verse 5 of the above hymn, to be the offspring of the couple, Brahman and Brahmajaya. The Kshatriyas and Vaisyas seem to have protested against this exclusive privilege of the priests to beget princes and prevented them from marrying or approaching the so-called Brahmajayas who, it appears, formed a set, class, or family, of women under the protection of the State, as in Travancore and Cochin. The statement, made in verse 9 of the above hymn that neither Rajanya nor a Vaisya can be a husband of the Brahmajaya, is evidently a rejoinder of the Brahmins to the protest of the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas. Both Muir and the authors of the Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Puranas in which the story of the terrible wars for the sake of a cow is narrated appear to have found the inappropriateness of these threats, imprecations, and curses with the occasional or frequent attempts of the Kshatriyas to rob the Brahmins of their quadrupeds. Hence Muir seems to have taken

⁵⁷ I remember to have come across this statement at the heading of one of these hymns in the German edition of the Atharvaveda. It does not appear in the Bombay edition.

the word 'go,' cow, in an extended sense of property, while the authors of the Puranas attributed supernatural powers to these animals. I think that both these attempts to explain the obscure Vedic hymns are wrong, for there is no reason to believe that though there were occasional or frequent family feuds or wars between Visvamisra and Vasishtha, between Kartaviryarjuna and Parasurama, and between a few other Kshatriyas and Brahmans, sometimes for the sake of a cow and other times for specified reasons, life and property were not so insecure among the invading Vedic Indians as to suppose that the Kshatriyas were cattle-lifters and were in the habit of robbing the Brahmans of their movable and immovable property. I think that if the interpretation I have suggested were to be accepted, none of these inconsistencies and improbabilities would crop up, and a satisfactory explanation of a hitherto inexplicable custom, prevalent in Travancore and Cochin, would be forthcoming. I do not think that the legal world is quite satisfied with the matter-of-fact explanation of the peculiar Malabar custom of inheriting the property through the female line only among the Kshatriyas, while in the rest of India it is through the male line among all classes of people.

Also in this connection Muir observes regarding the practice of remarriage of women and of intermarriage among the four classes: "That the remarriage of women was customary among the Hindus of those days is also shown by A. V., IX. 5, 27, quoted in my paper on Yama, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1865, p. 299. This latter supposition (the supposition of Brahmans taking possession of the wives of Rajanyas or Vaisyas while they were alive) derives a certain support from the emphasis with which the two verses in question (*Atharvaveda*, V. 17, 8, 9), assert that the Brahman was the only true husband.

Whence, it may be asked, the necessity for this strong and repeated asseveration, if the Rajanya and Vaisya husbands were still alive, and prepared to claim the restoration of their wives ? The verses are, however, explicable without this supposition.

It is to be observed, however, that no mention is here made of Sudras as a class with which Brahmins intermarried. Sudras were not Aryas like the three upper classes. This distinction is recognised in the following verse of the Atharvaveda (XIX. 62, 1, ' Make me dear to gods.' From Manu (IX. 149-157 ; X. 7) it is clear that Brahmins intermarried with Sudra women, though the offspring of those marriages was degraded."

With this explanation of obscure words and phrases, let us turn our attention to the other Vedic hymns, having a wonderful cow for their subject matter :—

The hymn on Brahmagavi (A. V., XII. 5) runs as follows :—

1. ' Created⁵⁵ by toil and holy fervour, found by devotion, resting in right.
2. Invested with truth, surrounded with honour, compassed about with glory ;
3. Girt round with inherent power, fortified with faith, protected by consecration, installed at sacrifice, the world her resting place ;
4. Brahma her guide, the Brahman her lord and ruler ;
5. Of the Kshatriya who taketh to himself this Brahman's cow and oppresseth the Brahman ;

⁵⁵ The hymn, which is partly in prose, is a continuation of Hymn 4, inculcating, still more forcibly, the sin and danger of robbing a Brahman of his cow.

6. The glory, the heroism, and the favouring fortune depart ;

7. The energy and vigour, the power and might, the speech and mental strength, the glory and duty ;

8. Devotion and princely sway, kingship and people, brilliance and honour, and splendour and wealth ;

9. Long life and goodly form, and name and fame, inbreathing and expiration, and sight and hearing ;

10. Milk and flavour, and food and nourishment, and right and truth, and action and fulfilment, and children and cattle ;

11. All these blessings of Kshatriya depart from him when he oppresses the Brahman and taketh to himself the Brahman's cow.

12. Terrible is she, this Brahman's cow, and fearfully venomous, visibly witchcraft.

13. In her are all horrors and all deaths.

14. In her are all dreadful deeds, all slaughters of mankind.

15. This the Brahman's cow, being appropriated, holdeth bound in the fetter of death the oppressor of the Brahman, the blasphemer of the gods.

16. A hundred-killing bolt is she ; she slays the Brahman's injurer ;

17. Therefore the Brahman's cow is held inviolable by the wise.

18. Running is she a thunderbolt, when driven away she is Vaisvanara.

19. An arrow when she draweth up her hooves and Mahadeva when she looketh around.

20. Sharp as a razor when beholdeth, she thundereth when she belloweth.

21. Death is she when loweth, and a fierce god when she whisketh her tail.

*2. Utter-destruction, when she moveth her ears this way and that, consumption when she droppeth water.

23. A missile when milking, pain in the head when milked.

24. The taking away of strength when she approacheth, a hand-to-hand fighter when roughly touched.

25. Wounding like an arrow when she is fastened by her mouth, contention when she is beaten.

26. Fearfully venomous when falling, darkness when she hath fallen down.

27. Following him, the Brahman's cow extinguisheth the vital breath of the injurer of the Brahman.

28. Hostility when being cut to pieces: *Woe to children when the portions are distributed.

29. A destructive missile of gods when she is being seized; misfortune when carried away.

30. Misery while being additionally acquired, contumely and abuse while being put in the stall.

31. Poison when in agitation, fever when seasoned with condiments.

32. Sin while she is cooking, evil dream when she is cooked.

33. Uprooting when she is being turned round, destruction when she hath been turned round.

34. Discord by her smell, grief when she is being eviscerated; a serpent with poison in its fang when drawn.

35. Loss of power while sacrificially presented, humiliation when she hath been offered.

36. Wrathful Sarva while being carved, Simida⁵⁹ when cut up.

⁵⁹ Simida: apparently a female demon, or a disease attributed to her influence.

37. Poverty while she is being eaten, destruction when eaten.

38. The Brahman's cow when eaten cuts off the injurer of Brahmans both from this world and from the world yonder.

39. Her slaughter is the sin of witchcraft, her cutting up is a thunderbolt, her undigested grass is a secret spell.

40. Homelessness is she when denied her rights.

41. Having become flesh-eating Agni, the Brahman's cow entereth into and devoureth the oppressor of Brahmans.

42. She sunders all his members, joints and roots.

43. She cuts off relationship on the father's side and destroys maternal kinship.

44. The Brahman's cow not restored by a Kshatriya, ruins the marriages and all the kinsmen of the Brahman's oppressor.

45. She makes him houseless, homeless, childless : he is extinguished without posterity to succeed him.

46. So shall it be with the Kshatriya who takes to himself the cow of the Brahman who hath this knowledge.

47. Quickly, when he is smitten down by death, the clamorous vultures cry.

48. Quickly around his funeral fire dance women with dishevelled locks, striking the hand upon the breast and uttering their evil shriek.

49. Quickly the wolves are howling in the habitation where he lived.

50. Quickly they ask about him, what is this ? What thing hath happened here ?

51. Rend, rend to pieces, rend away, destroy, destroy him utterly.

52. Destroy Angirasi ! the wretch who robs and wrongs the Brahmans.

53. Born of evil womb, thou witchcraft bid, for Vaisvadevi is thy name.

54. Consuming, burning all things up, the thunderbolt of spell and charm.

55. Go thou, becoming Mrityu sharp as razor's edge, pursue thy course.

56. Thou bearest off the tyrant's strength, their store of merit and their prayers.

57. Bearing off wrong, thou givest in that world to him who hath been wronged.

58. O cow, become a tracker through the curse the Brahman hath pronounced.

59. Become a bolt, an arrow through his sin, be terribly venomous.

60. O cow, break thou the head of him who wrongs the Brahmans, criminal, niggard, blasphemous of the gods.

61. Let Agni the spiteful wretch when crushed to death and slain by thee.

62. Rend, rend to bits, rend through and through, scorch and consume and burn to dust.

63. Consume thou, even from the root, the Brahman's tyrant, godlike cow!

64. That he may go from Yama's home afar into the worlds of sin.

65. So, goddess cow, go thou from him, the Brahman's tyrant, criminal, niggard, blasphemous of the gods.

66. With hundred-knotted thunderbolt, sharpened and edged with razor blades.

67. Strike off the shoulders and the head.

68. Snatch thou the hair off his head, and from his body strip the skin.

69. Tear out his sinews, cause his flesh to fall in pieces from his frame.

70. Crush thou his bones together, strike and beat the marrow out of him.

71. Dislocate all his limbs and joints.

72. From the earth let the carnivorous Agni drive him, let Vayu burn him from mid-air's broad region.

73. From heaven let Surya drive him and consume him.

ATHARVAVEDA, XII. 4.

"1. I give the gift, shall be his word : and straight-way they have bound the cow for Brahman priests who beg the boon, that bringeth sons and progeny.⁶⁰

2. He trades and traffics with his sons, and in his cattle suffers loss who will not give the cow of gods to Rishis' children when they beg.⁶¹

3. They perish through a hornless cow ; a lame cow sinks them in a pit. Through a maimed cow his house is burnt ; an one-eyed cow destroys his wealth.

4. Fierce fever, where her droppings fall, attacks the master of the kine. So have they named her Vasa,⁶² for thou art called uncontrollable.

5. The malady Viklindu⁶³ springs on him from ground whereon she stands, and suddenly, from fell disease perish the men on whom she sniffs.

6. Whoever twitches up her ears⁶⁴ is separated from the gods. He deems he makes a mark, but he diminishes his wealth thereby.

⁶⁰ On the imperative duty of giving cows to Brahmans, and the sin and danger of withholding the gift.

⁶¹ The cow of gods : that belongs to holy priests.

⁶² Vasa : a barren cow, a cow ; the word being fancifully connected with Vasa, power, authority, control.

⁶³ Viklindu : the meaning is uncertain, perhaps dissolution, general decay.

⁶⁴ Twitches up her ears in order to brand them ; and mark the cow as his own property.

7. If to his own advantage one applies the long hair of her tail, his colts, in consequence thereof, die, and the wolf destroys his calves.

8. If, while her master owneth her, a carrion crow hath harmed her hair, his young boys die thereof, decline overtakes them after fell disease.

9. What time the Dasi⁶⁵ woman throws eye on the droppings of the cow, misshapen birth arises thence, inseparable from that sin.

10. For gods and Brahmanas is the cow produced when first she springs to life, hence to the priests must she be given; this they call guarding private wealth.

11. The God-created cow belongs to those who come to ask for her. They call it outrage on the priests when one retains her as his own.

12. He who withholds the cow of the gods from Rishis' sons who ask the gift is made an alien to the gods and subject to the Brahman's wrath.

13. Then let him seek another whatever his profit be in this. The cow, not given, harms a man when he denies her at their prayer.

14. Like a rich treasure stored away in safety is the Brahman's cow. Therefore men come to visit her, with whomsoever she is born.

15. So when the Brahmanas come unto the cow they come unto their own. For this is her withholding, to oppress these in another life.

16. Thus after three years may she go, speaking what is not understood.⁶⁶ He, Narada I would know that cow, then Brahmanas must be sought unto.

⁶⁵ Dasi: of barbarous or indigenous race or slave girl.

⁶⁶ Speaking what is not understood: that is giving warnings which are disregarded. Ludwig taking gada in "Avijnata gade" as coming from gadam, poison, instead of from Gada, speech, translates whose

17. Whoso call her a worthless cow, the stored-up treasure of the gods, Bhava and Sarva, both of them, move round and shoot at him.

18. The man who hath no knowledge of her udder and the teats thereof, she yields him milk with these, if he hath purposed to bestow the cow.⁶⁷

19. If he withholds the cow they beg, she is rebellious in his stall.

Vain are the wishes and the hopes which he, withholding her, would gain.

20. The Deities have begged the cow, using the Brahman as their mouth; the man who gives her not incurs the enmity of all the gods.

22. If hundred other Brahmans beg the cow of him who owneth her, the gods have said, she, verily, belongs to him who knows the truth.

23. Whoso to others not to him who hath this knowledge, gives the cow, earth with the Deities, is hard for him to win and rest upon.

24. The Deities begged the cow from him with whom at first she was produced: Her, this one, Narada would know: with Deities he drove her forth.

25. The cow deprives of progeny and makes him poor in cattle who retains in his possession her whom Brahmans have solicited.

poison (deadly danger of retaining her) none hath recognized. Narada: a devarishi or Rishi of the celestial class who acts as a reporter between heaven and earth. His name is introduced as an imaginary auditor to make a warning or speech more solemn and authoritative. Cf. V. 19-9. The meaning of the stanza seems to be that the cow must not be retained beyond three years.

⁶⁷ The cow which the owner intends to bestow on a Brahman will give him milk without the trouble of milking her.

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26. For Agni and for Soma, for Kama, Mitra and Varuna, for these the Brahman ask: from these is he who giveth not estranged.

27. Long as her owner hath not heard, himself, the verses,⁶⁸ let her move among his kine; when he heard, let her not make her home with him.

28. He who hath heard her verses and still makes her roam among his kine, the gods in anger rend away his life and his prosperity.

29. Roaming in many a place the cow is the stored treasure of the gods. Make manifest thy shape and form when she would seek⁶⁹ her dwelling place; then verily the cow attends to Brahman priest and their request.

31. This thought he settles in his mind, this surely goeth to the gods. Then verily the Brahman priests approach that they may beg the cow.

32. By Svadha to the Fathers, by sacrifice to the Deities, by giving them the cow, the prince doth not incur the mother's wrath.

33. The Prince's mother is the cow: so was it ordered from of old. She, when bestowed upon the priests, cannot be given back, they say.

34. As molten butter, held at length, drops down to Agni from the scoop, so falls away from Agni he who gives no cow to Brahman priests.

35. Good milker, with rice-cake⁷⁰ as calf, she in the world comes nigh to him, to him who gave her as a gift the cow grants every hope and wish.

⁶⁸ The verses: the holy texts recited by the Brahman who ask for her as their fee.

⁶⁹ Would seek: jighamsati (as suggested by Whitney, Index Verborum) instead of jighansati of the text.

⁷⁰ Rice-cake: Purodasa; a sacrificial cake of ground rice usually divided into pieces and offered in one or more cups.

36. In Yama's realm the cow fulfils each wish for him who gave her up; but hell, they say, is for the man who, when they beg, bestow her not.

37. Enraged against her owner roams the cow when she hath been impregnated. He deemed me fruitless, is her thought; let him be bound in snares of death.⁷¹

38. Whoever looking on the cow as fruitless, cooks her flesh at home, Brihaspati compels his sons and children to beg.

40. The animal is happy when it is bestowed upon the priests; but happy is the cow when she is made a sacrifice to gods.

41. Narada chose the terrible vilip⁷² out of all the cows which the gods formed and framed when they had risen up from sacrifice.

42. The gods considered her in doubt whether she were a cow or not, Narada spake of her and said, 'The veriest cow of cows is she.'

⁷¹ Prof. Hadg observes in his note: "That cows were killed at the time of receiving most distinguished guests is stated in the Smritis. But, as Sayana observes, which entirely agrees with the opinions held now-a-days, this custom belongs to former Yugas (periods of the world). Thence the word Goghna, i.e., cow-killer, means in the more ancient Sanskrit books 'a guest' (see the commentators on Panini 3,4,73): for the reception of a highly respected guest was the death of the cow of the house." According to Apastamba's Aphorisms on the Sacred Law of the Hindus, the Snataka or student who has completed his course of religious study, when he speaks of a cow that is not a milch-cow is not to say 'she is not a milch-cow' but 'But this is a cow which will become a milch-cow.' See Sacred Books of the East, Vol. II, p. 26.

Fruitless: Vehatam; a cow which habitually miscarries, and which may therefore be slaughtered 'when a king or another man deserves high honour' is to be received (Aitareya Brahmana, I. 15).

⁷² Vilip⁷²: literally, besmeared or anointed.

43. How many cows, O Narada, knowest thou, born among mankind I ask thee who dost know, of which must none who is no Brahman eat ?

44. Vilipti, cow, and she who drops no second calf, Brihaspati ! Of these none but a Brahman should eat if he hope for eminence.

45. Homage, O Narada, to thee who hast quick knowledge of the cows. Which of these is the direst, whose withholding bringeth death to man ?

46. Vilipti, O Brihaspati, cow, mother of no second calf ; of these none, not a Brahman should eat if he hope for eminence.

47. Threefold are kine, Vilipti, cow, the mother of no second calf : these one should give to priests, and he will not offend Prajapati.

48. This, Brahmins ! is your sacrifice : thus should one think when he is asked, what time they beg from him the cow fearful in the withholder's house.

49. He gave her not to us, so spake the gods, in anger, of the cow. With these same verses they addressed Bheda,⁷³ this brought him to his death.

50. Solicited by Indra, still Bheda refused to give this cow. In strife for victory the gods destroyed him for that sin of his.

51. The men of evil counsel who advised refusal of the cow, miscreants through their foolishness, are subjected to Indra's wrath.

52. They who seduce the owner of the cow and say, bestow her not, encounter through their want of sense the missile shot by Rudra's hand.

⁷³ Bheda : nothing further appears to be known of this man who refused to give his cow to Indra.

53. If in his home one cooks the cow, sacrificed or not sacrificed, wronger of gods and Brahmins, he departs, dishonest, from the world.

1. The gods, O Prince, have not bestowed this cow on thee to eat thereof. Seek not, Rajanya, to devour the Brahman's cow which none may eat.⁷⁴

2. A base Rajanya, spoiled at dice, and ruined by himself, may eat the Brahman's cow, and think, to-day and not to-morrow, let me live !

3. The Brahman's cow is like a snake, charged with dire poison, clothed with skin. Rajanya ! bitter to the taste is she, and none may eat of her.

4. She takes away his strength, she mars his splendour, she ruins everything like fire enkindled. That man drinks poison of the deadly serpent who counts the Brahman's cow as mere food to feed him.

5. Whoever smites him, deeming him awakening blasphemer, coveting his wealth through folly, Indra sets fire alight within his bosom. He who acts thus is loathed by earth and heaven.

6. No Brahman must be injured, safe as fire from him who loves himself. For Soma is akin to him and Indra guards him from the curse.

7. The fool who eats the Brahman's food and thinks it pleasant to the taste; eats, but can never digest, the cow that bristles with a hundred barbs.

8. His voice is an arrow's neck, his tongue a bow-string, his windpipes fire-enveloped heads of arrows, with these the Brahman pierces through blasphemers, with god-spied bows that quell the hearts within them.

⁷⁴ A. V., V. 18. The hymn declares the wickedness and ruinous consequences of oppressing and robbing the Brahmins.

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9. Keen arrows have the Brahman, armed with missiles ; the shaft, when they discharge it, never faileth. Pursuing him with fiery zeal and anger, they pierce the foeman even from a distance.

10. They who, themselves ten hundred, were the rulers of a thousand men, the Vaitahavyas.⁷⁵

11. The cow, indeed, when she was slain, overthrew those Vaitahavyas, who cooked the last she-goat that remained of Kesaraprabandha's⁷⁶ flock.

12. One and a hundred⁷⁷ were the folk, those whom the earth shook off⁷⁸ from her : when they had wronged the Brahman's race they perished inconceivably.

13. Among mankind the gods' despiser moveth ; he hath drunk poison, naught but one is left him, who wrongs the kinsman of the gods, the Brahman, gains not the sphere to which the Fathers travelled.

14. Agni, in sooth, is called our guide, Soma is called our next-of-kin. Indra quells him who curses us. Sages know well that this is so.

15. Prince ! like a poisoned arrow, like a deadly snake, O Lord of Kine ! dire is the Brahman's arrow ; he pierces his enemies therewith.

⁷⁵ Vaitahavyas, a tribe or people in the north ; literally, descendants or people of Vitahavya. A Rishi of this name appears to be mentioned in *Rigveda*, VI. 15, a hymn ascribed to him by Sayana. The Vaitahavyas are mentioned in the *Anusasana parva* of the *Mahabharata*, 1952-1977, where they are said to have been defeated and slain in battle.

⁷⁶ Kesaraprabandha : I can find no other mention of this woman.

⁷⁷ One and a hundred : an unlucky number, used with reference to phases of disease, modes of death and the like.

⁷⁸ The earth shook off : in horror at their wickedness.

1. The sons ⁷⁹ of Vitahavya, ⁸⁰ the Srinjayas waxed exceeding strong. They well-nigh touched the heavens, but they wronged Bhrigu and were overthrown.

2. When men pierced Brihatsaman ⁸¹ through, the Brahman, son of Angiras, the ram with teeth in both his jaws, the sheep, devoured their progeny.

3. If men have spat upon or shot their rheum upon a Brahman, they sit ⁸² in the middle of a stream running with blood, devouring hair.

4. While yet the Brahman's cow which men are dressing quivers in her throes, she mars the kingdom's splendour; there no vigorous hero springs to life.

5. Terrible is her cutting up; her bitter flesh is cast away. And it is counted sin among the fathers if her milk is drunk.

6. If any king who deems himself mighty would eat a Brahman up, rent and disrupted is that realm where in a Brahman is oppressed.

7. She ⁸³ grows eight-footed, and four-eyed, four-eared, four-jawed, two-faced, two-tongued, and shatters down the kingdom of the man who doth Brahman wrong.

⁷⁹ The subject of the hymn A. V., V. 19 is wickedness and ruinous consequences of oppressing, robbing or insulting a Brahman.

⁸⁰ Vitahavya: see v. 18, 1.

Srinjayas: a people in the north. Bhrigu: a Rishi regarded as the ancestor of the ancient race of Bhrigus who are frequently mentioned in the Rigveda in connection with Agni, and who are specially associated with the Atharvaveda hymns. The story of the overthrow, of the Vitahavyas is told in the Mahabharata Anusasana-parva, 1952-1977, but Bhrigu is there said to have given refuge to the King Vitahavya after his defeat.

⁸¹ Brihatsaman: the name of this descendant of the ancient Rishi Angiras does not recur in the Veda, and his story is not mentioned elsewhere.

⁸² They sit: after death in the internal regions.

⁸³ She: the cow.

8. As water swamps a leaky ship, so ruin overflows that realm. Misfortune smites the realm wherein a Brahman suffers scathe and harm.

9. The very trees repel the man, and drive him from their sheltering shade, whoever claims, O Narada, ⁸⁴ the treasure that a Brahman owns.

10. That wealth, King Varuna hath said, is poison by the gods prepared. None hath kept watch to guard his realm who hath devoured a Brahman's cow.

11. Those nine and ninety ⁸⁵ people whom the earth shook and cast away from her, when they had wronged the Brahman race, were ruined inconceivably.

12. Oppressor of the Brahmins; thus the gods have spoken and declared, the step-effacing wisp ⁸⁶ they bind upon the dead shall be thy couch.

13. Oppressor of the Brahmins! tears wept by the man who suffers wrong, these are the share of water which the gods have destined to be thine.

14. The share of water which the gods have destined to be thine, is that, oppressor of the priest! wherewith men lave the corpse and wet the beard. ⁸⁷

15. The rain of Mitra-Varuna falls not on him who wrongs the priest. To him no command brings success; he wins no friend to do his will.

⁸⁴ Narada: a Devarishi or saint of the celestial class who often comes down to earth to report what is going on in heaven and return with his account of what is being done on earth. His name is introduced to make the warning more solemn and impressive.

⁸⁵ Those nine and ninety: cf. V.18, 12 where they are said to have been a hundred and one.

⁸⁶ The step effacing wisp: obliterating the footsteps of the dead on his journey to the other world, so that death may not reach the surviving kinsmen by the same path.

⁸⁷ The beard: to be shaved off before cremation.

1. How, terrible in might, hast thou here spoken to the great god, how to the gold-hued Father? Thy mind watched, greedy Varuna, to recover the brindled cow thou hadst bestowed as guerdon. ⁸⁸

2. Not through desire do I revoke my present: I bring this brindled cow to contemplate her. Now by what lore, by what, inherent nature, knowest thou all things that exist, Atharvan. ⁸⁹

3. Truly I am profound in wisdom, truly I know by nature all existing creatures. No Dasa by his greatness, not an Arya, may violate the law that I will establish. ⁹⁰

4. None, self-dependent Varuna! existeth wiser than thou or sager by his wisdom. Thou knowest well all these created beings: even the man of wondrous powers fears thee.

5. O self-dependent Varuna, wise director, thou knowest verily all generations. What is, unerring one! beyond this region? What more remote than that which is most distant?

6. One thing there is beyond this air, and something beyond that one most hard to reach remotest. I, Varuna, who know, to thee declare it. Let churls be mighty in the lower regions. Let Dasas sink into the earth beneath them. ⁹¹

⁸⁸ This curious hymn contains A. V., V. 11, a dialogue between the primeval priest Atharvan and Varuna about the possession of a wonderful brindled cow. The god has bestowed the cow upon the priest, and now retracts his gift. Atharvan remonstrates. Atharvan speaks. Spoken: declared thy promise to give me the cow. The great god: heaven. The gold hued father: the sun.

⁸⁹ Varuna replies. To contemplate her: or, to count her with the rest of the herd.

⁹⁰ In this and the two following stanzas Atharvan speaks.

⁹¹ Varuna replies: Beyond the air is heaven, and beyond that is infinity.

7. Many reproaches, Varuna, dost thou utter against the misers who revoke their presents. Be not thou added to that crowd of niggards: let not men call thee an illiberal giver. ⁹²

8. Let not men call me an illiberal giver. I give thee back the brindled cow, O singer. Attend, in every place where men inhabit, with all thy powers, the hymn that tells my praises. ⁹³

9. Let hymns of praises ascend to thee, uplifted in every place of human habitation. But give me now the gift thou hast given. Thou art my friend for ever firm and faithful. ⁹⁴

10. One origin, ⁹⁵ Varuna! one bond unites us: I know the nature of that Common kinship. I give thee now the gift that I retracted. I am thy friend for ever firm and faithful.

11. God, giving life unto the god who lauds me, sage, strengthener of the sage who sings my praises. ⁹⁶ Thou, self-dependent Varuna! hast begotten the kinsman of the gods, our sire Atharvan. On him bestow most highly lauded riches. Thou art our friend high over all, our kinsman.

The Sachi Paulomi hymn of the Rigveda (X. 159) in which a queen is made to speak in a tone of exultation of her own and of her daughter's imperial sway seems also

⁹² Atharvan speaks.

⁹³ Varuna speaks.

⁹⁴ Atharvan speaks this stanza and the first hemistich of 10. Ever firm and faithful Saptapadas, literally 'having taken seven steps' by which an alliance or a marriage is confirmed.

⁹⁵ One origin: the ancient Rishis frequently assert their kinship with the gods, as sons of Dyaus or Father Heaven. Varuna speaks the second hemistich and the first of the following stanza.

⁹⁶ Unto the god: the priest Atharvan. The second and third lines are spoken by the poet of the hymn.

to contain a clear allusion to the institute of queens. The hymn runs as follows :—

“ 1. Yon Sun hath mounted up, and this my happy fate hath mounted high.

I, knowing this, as conqueror have won my husband for my own.

I am the banner and the head, a mighty arbitress am I.

2. I am victorious and my lord shall be submissive to my will.

My sons are slayers of the foe, my daughter is a ruling queen.

3. I am victorious : over my lord ; my song of triumph is supreme.

Oblation, that which Indra gave and thus grew glorious and most high,—

4. This I have offered, O ye gods, and rid me of each rival wife destroyer of rival wife, sole spouse, victorious conqueror.

5. The others' glory have I seized as it were the wealth of weaker dames.

6. I have subdued as conqueror these rival wives these my fellow wives,

That I may hold imperial sway over this hero and the folk.”

It should be noted here how the queen is made to speak of her sons as being merely slayers of the foe while her daughter is represented as a ruling queen. She is also made to speak of her husband as holding a subordinate position in the kingdom over which her power was supreme. It is true that his hymn can also be explained on the supposition of the existence of a hereditary monarchy running on the line of male issues and of princesses being wedded to a ruling king of a different state, and of plurality of wives in the royal harem. Still it cannot be

denied that the hymn and its peculiar expressions can also find a ready explanation on the hypothesis of the institution of Brahmajayas or queens, in the light of which her imperial sway over the folk and over her husband can be taken as a fact instead of a boast.

The other words which appear to have been misunderstood by our epic writers and which gave rise to a number of inconsistent and exaggerated statements and stories are Brahma and Praja. The word Brahma in the Vedas meant a priest as well as a god, while praja denoted one's own children or people at large. The Epic-writers took the word Brahma in the sense of a god and praja in the sense of children. Accordingly such Vedic expressions as 'Manu was Brahma's son' and 'Prajās were Manavas' seem to have been taken by them to mean that Manu was the Creator's own son, and that the people were Manu's children, while the real sense was that Manu was the Chief Priest's son and that the people were Manu's subjects when he was first elected as a king. Likewise expressions such as 'Sagara had sixty-thousand prajās or people under him' seem to have meant for them that Sagara had sixty-thousand sons.

The story of Krishnadvaipayana begetting on the queens Amba and Ambalika, Dhritarashtra and Pandu to rule over the Kuru kingdom can also find a satisfactory explanation in the light of the institution of queens.

It may therefore conclude that the priestly class of the Aryan invaders of India established an institution of queens and reserved to themselves the right of begetting on them a ruling king and warrior soldiers to protect and defend the kingdom, the king and the soldiers being compelled to observe a celibate life and having no ruling powers over the priestly class. Consequent on the desire of the Kshatriyas to set up a hereditary monarchy with

right of marriage for the Kshatriyas also, a Civil War ensued between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas and ended in a triumph for the latter. It is also probable that as Divodasa, Purukitsa, Trasadasyu and others are found mentioned in the Vedas as hereditary monarchs, there were some states which set up hereditary monarchy at the very start with no institution of queens, while in others that institution was amicably settled to terminate in hereditary, though in its pristine Vedic form it is still found to linger in the states of Travancore and Cochin. As there is reason to believe that the elected queens were of Aryan descent and the begetting priests also were true Aryans, it follows that many of our Kshatriya kings and especially those of Travancore and Cochin are kings with true Aryan blood running in their veins, while the same cannot be said of all the Brahmins owing to their connection in some cases with Sudra women by marriage, the offspring of this union having been allowed to exercise the functions of Brahmins.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Latyayana Branta, IX. 2, 6.

LECTURE IV

THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

From time immemorial, the Aryans as a race seem to have exhibited an innate desire to settle their social, religious, or political questions in an assembly of their own. The Greeks had their Areopagus, the Romans their Curia ; and the Anglo-Saxons their Witanagemot. Likewise the Aryans of India had their own Sabha or Samiti. The other names given to a Sabha are Janata, and Parishad. The words Sabha, Samiti and Janata, are Vedic and Parishad is the word commonly used during the Sutra-period. Brihaspati quoted in the Vyavaharakanda of Parasaramadhava (pp. 18, 19) mentions four kinds of assemblies ; one called the immovable assembly in a town or a village, a second termed movable assembly, perhaps of learned men moving from place to place, a third ⁹⁸ called chartered committee with a presiding superintendent and a fourth ⁹⁹ styled ordered assembly with the king to preside over its deliberations. Bhrigu, quoted in the same work (p. 19), mentions some other minor assemblies of particular castes. He says that wild tribes have their own assemblies, the merchants their own guild, the army its own assembly composed of soldiers, the villagers their own, the townspeople their own, and the Srenis or washermen and other eighteen kinds of low caste people have their own special assemblies. These classes, whether a Gana, composed of a number of families, or a congregation of heretics, or a corporation of Brahmans or an assemblage

⁹⁸ Mudritadhyakshasamyukta p. 19.

⁹⁹ Rajayukta cha Sastrita, p. 19.

of people of different castes and creeds, are termed Vargins and are said to have their own assemblies. Apart from these minor assemblies, there seems to have been in each stage during the Sutra period a grand assembly consisting of families, elders, government officers and the king himself.¹⁰⁰

It is probable that even during the Vedic period there were in addition to the grand assembly of the State minor assemblies formed by each class for settling its own social or religious questions. The grand assembly with the king as its president seems to have been the final authority on all questions. According to Narada quoted in Parasaramadhava Vyavahara (p. 32) the gradation of appellate authorities is as follows:—(1) families (kulani), (2) Srenis or washermen and other eighteen low-castes, (3) Gana, or congregation of families and (4) the anointed king himself. Even now only such social, religious, or political questions as villagers find it difficult to satisfactorily settle in their own village assemblies are brought before criminal or civil courts for settlement. It is probable that even during the Vedic period the same practice of settling their affairs either by themselves or by the king in his assembly was followed by the Aryans. It is improbable, if not impracticable, that each of the many villagers that constituted a kingdom of the Vedic period was compelled to go to the grand assembly in the capital town of the king for the settlement of its questions. It is therefore likely that the numerous references¹⁰¹ to sabhas or assemblies found in the Vedic literature are not merely to the single king's

¹⁰⁰ Kulani Kulikaschaiva niyukta nripatisabha. Parasaramadhaviya Vyavahara, p. 19.

¹⁰¹ Rig. VI. 28, 6; VIII. 4, 9, X. 34, 6; VI. 71, 10, A. V. 31, 6; VII. 12, 2; VIII. 10, 5; XIX. 55, 6. Tai. S. I. 6, 7. Tai. Br. I. 1, 10, 6. Sat. Br. II. 3, 2, 8; V. 3, 1, 10. Vaj. S. III. 45; XVI. 24^b; XX. 17, etc.

assembly in the capital town, but to minor village assemblies also:

‘With regard to membership of assemblies, there seems to have been no restriction whatever. Whether old or young, educated or uneducated, all seem to have had free admittance into the assembly whenever it was convened. It is also probable that there was no question of quorum, but the presence of every villager was necessary to make the assembly fully authoritative. Even now it is an accepted custom with villagers in Mysore to ascertain whether every villager is present in the meeting before authorising the assembly to take up the question at issue into consideration. The educated and the aged are respected by the uneducated and the young merely by granting to the former seats of honour or by seating themselves at a respectable distance, though on the same mat or carpet. Though the right of discussion and decision is as a matter of fact granted by a common consent to the educated and the aged, no man, whether ignorant or young, is denied the right of expressing his view, merely on account of his ignorance or youth. Even during the times of Charaka, the author of Charaka-samhita, the same procedure of convening meetings with men of all grades and positions seems to have been in vogue. This is what Charaka says about the various kinds of assemblies prevalent at his time:—

“Without doubt, the assembly may be of two kinds: (1) an assembly of men endued with knowledge and wisdom, (2) an assembly of men that are ignorant. Though principally of two kinds, it may be of three kinds according to difference of causes noted below:— (1) an assembly that is friendly, (2) an assembly that is indifferent and (3) an assembly that is already committed

to one side.¹⁰² As the Krishnayajurveda (II. 2, 2) has prescribed some sacrificial spells for avoiding nervousness in an assembly and for the acquisition of the power of eloquence, it follows that assemblies were convened on a grand scale and that no one was denied the right of expressing his views in the assembly. The priests, representing the educated, the nobility representing the agricultural and the trading class were all present there. As questions of election and banishment of kings and of restoration of banished kings were discussed in the assembly, it is doubtful whether kings attended it or not. If it were a rule that the king should attend it, it would follow that he attended it as its head to preside over its deliberations. But as questions of election and restoration of a king cropped up as subjects of discussion only when there was no king in the kingdom, some one else, a distinguished priest or a noble, might volunteer himself as its president for the time being; and when the question of the banishment of the tyrannical king was the subject of discussion in the assembly, the tyrant himself might stay away from it in the interests of his own personal safety or dignity. There is however no reliable reference found in the Vedas about the king's attendance in the assembly as its president. The Rigvedic references to the presence of a Raja in the midst of an assembly (IX. 92, 6, and X. 97, 6) can be taken to mean either as the presence of a noble in the midst of an assembly or as the presence of a king in festal assemblies or congregations, or battles, as interpreted by Sayana in (IX. 92, 6). On no account the two passages can be taken to mean that the king attended the assembly as its president. Moreover as there are Vedic passages enjoining certain charms and spells for

¹⁰² Vimanasthana. Chapter 8, 17.

the acquisition of the power of eloquence so as to secure unanimity in the assembly, it appears that the right of addressing the assembly was vested in no one, but was given to any one who volunteered himself to undertake it. Similar is the custom in vogue in villages even now. The best speaker or pedagogue is even now allowed to address the people and carry the day as he might. The same form of pedagogy which is recommended by Charaka for vanquishing an opponent in disputation prevails even now in the assemblies of villages, and seems to have prevailed also during the Vedic period. This is what Charaka says :—

“An opponent that is weak in the Scriptures should be vanquished with citations of lengthy aphorisms. An opponent should be vanquished by the use of phrases fraught with words, the sense of which is too difficult to understand. An opponent that is unable to understand the words he hears should be vanquished by reciting lengthy aphorisms full of difficult words.”¹⁰³

That such was the form of debate in the Vedic period is confirmed by the various kinds of sacrifices prescribed in the Vedas for the attainment of debating power in assemblies.¹⁰⁴ It is likely therefore that no king ever presided in the assembly of the people, but that only he consented to do or undo anything, as required by the unanimous desire of the assembly. That he was bound to act up to the unanimous decision of the assembly is confirmed by the following hymn of the Atharvaveda : (VI. 88, 3) :—

“Firm, never to be shaken, crush thy foemen, under thy feet lay those who strive against thee. One-minded,

¹⁰³ Vimāṇasthāna, Chapters 8, 17.

¹⁰⁴ A. V. V. 31, 6. ४

true to thee be all the regions ; faithful to thee, the firm, be this assembly."¹⁰⁵

Drinking of Sura, an intoxicating liquor, seems to have been a common custom with men going to Sabha or assembly. This is confirmed by the following passage of the Atharvaveda :—

“He, (the Vratya) went away to the people. Meeting, assembly, army and wine followed him. He who hath this knowledge becomes the dear home of meeting, assembly, army and wine.”¹⁰⁶—(A. V. XV. 9.)

It follows therefore that eloquent talk and wild and violent disputation was a common feature of the debate in an assembly, perhaps often leading to broils. But there is evidence to believe that assembly-halls were considered so sacred that while in the assembly, even a criminal was sure of his personal safety. This is confirmed by the following passage of the Rigveda (I. 31, 6) :—

“Agni, thou savest in the assembly when pursued, even him, O farseeing one ! who walks in evil ways.”

To win glory by exhibiting extraordinary power of eloquence in the assembly seems to have been the highest ambition of men even in those days. Among the various blessings hoped for, the birth of a son fit for the assembly is one, as clearly expressed in the following grand benedictory passage of the Yajurveda (VII. 5, 18) :—

“In this priesthood may a Brahman be born of spiritual glory ; in this kingdom may a prince be born, an archer, a hero, and a great chariot-fighter ; a milk cow, a draught ox, a swift racer (horse), a prolific woman, a victorious warrior, a youth fit for the assembly (sabhya). To

¹⁰⁵ See Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 431 :—concord between the king and his assembly was essential for his prosperity.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Rig. VII, 85, 6 ; VIII. 2, 12 ; 21, 14 ; A. V. XIV. 1, 35-36.

this sacrificer may a hero be born. May Parjanya rain for us whensoever we desire. May our plants ripen with fruits. May union and peace be ours."

One of the Rigvedic hymns conveys the same idea (I. 40, 5-6):—

"Now Brahmanaspati speaks forth aloud the solemn hymn of praise,

Wherein Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, the gods have made their dwelling place.

May we in holy assemblies, O gods, recite that hymn, peerless, that brings felicity.

If you, O heroes, graciously accept this word.

May it obtain all bliss from you."

In this connection the following Atharvavedic prayers for power of debate and of voice are also interesting:—

1. Let not the enemy win the cause! strong and predominant art thou.

Refute my adversary's speech. Render them dull and flat, O! plant.

2. The strong winged bird discovered thee, the bird unearthed thee with his snout.

Refute my adversary's speech. Render them dull and flat, O! plant.

3. Ye, Indra laid thee on his arm to cast the Asuras to the ground.

Refute my adversary's speech. Render them dull and flat, O! plant.

5. With this, I overcome my foes as Indra overcame the wolves.

Refute my.....

7. Indra, defeat the speech of him who meets us with hostility.

Comfort us with power and might. Make me superior in debate." A. V. II, 27.

“ 1. Mine be the glory in the hill, in vales, in cattle, and in gold,

Mine be the sweetness that is found in nectar and in flowing wine.

2. With your delicious honey balm me, Asvins, lords of splendid light !

That clear and resonant may be the voice I utter to mankind, assembly.

3. In me be strength, in me be fame, in me the power of sacrifice.

Prajapati establish this in me as firm as light in heaven.” A. V. VI. 69.

Decision on questions seems to have been arrived at by obtaining vote of the majority as prevalent later at the time of Chanakya,¹⁰⁷ and disputes about field by securing the unanimous consent of the people assembled, any jarring note of dissent being hushed up by the persuasive power of eloquence of the speaker or speakers.

This is proved by the following hymns of the Atharva-veda :—

“ 1. Agree and be united : let your minds be all of one accord.

Even as the gods of ancient days, unanimous, await their share.

2. The Rede is common, common the assembly, common the law, so be their thoughts united.

I offer up your general oblation ! together entertain one common purpose.

3. *One and the same be your resolve*, be all your hearts in harmony.

One and the same be all your minds that all may happily consent.” (A. V. VI. 64.)

¹⁰⁷ Artha. III. 9.

"1. In *concilium* may Prajapati's daughters, Sabha and Samiti, both protect me.

May every man I meet respect and aid me. Fair be my words, O' Fathers ! at the meetings.

2. We know thy name, O conference : thy name is interchange of talk.

Let all the company who join the conference *agree with me*.

3. Of the men seated here, I make the splendour and the lore mine own.

Indra make me conspicuous in all this gathered company.

4. Whether your thoughts are turned away or bound and fostered here or there.

We draw them hitherward again : let your mind firmly rest on me." (A.V. VII. 12.)

Since the word Sabha is a name given to the gambling-hall where the favourite, though ruinous, game of dice was played at, it is probable that assemblies also met there whenever necessary. In villages having no gambling houses, meetings seem to have been held in temples, or places of fireworship built for common use or in private houses with such common apartments.¹⁰⁰ Sabhya and Sabhika are two modern terms, of which the latter denotes a member of the gambling company. Sabhapathi, lord of the assembly, seems to have denoted a mediator or president.

Though there is however no Vedic record as to the way in which business was done in the assembly, still some hint may be gathered about this point from what Brihaspati and other Smriti writers have spoken of it at a later period. Regarding the ten essential constituents

¹⁰⁰ Artha, III. 8 ; Vedic Index, Vol. II, p. 426.

of an assembly Brihaspati is said to have laid down as follows :—

“(1) The king, (2) the appointed members of the assembly, (3) the Smritis, (4) the accountant, (5) the writer, (6) gold, (7) fire, (8) water, and (9 & 10) witnesses of the two parties. Of these, the king is to decide ; the members of the assembly to examine ; the smritis to furnish the law, gold and fire for taking oaths upon, water for the thirsty, the the accountant to count, the writer to take down the statements and the witnesses to confirm the case.”¹⁰⁹

Of these, the king and the writer may be omitted, as no king seems to have attended the assembly and no writing was known in those days. That the rest were all there, as constituents, is a point that need not be doubted.

While this statement of Brihaspati determines to some extent the procedure of business done in the assembly, there is a good deal of uncertainty as to the nature of subjects that were discussed in the assembly still it is not, however, difficult to guess at the truth from internal and external evidences. Since special mention is made not merely of election and banishment of kings as pointed out elsewhere, it follows that those questions were thoroughly discussed and decided in the peoples' assembly. Though Macdonell and Keith admit that there are clear references to kings being expelled from their realms, and their efforts to recover their sovereignty, they hesitate to accept Zimmer's opinion that while the Vedic monarchy was sometimes hereditary, as is indeed shown by several cases where the descent can be traced, yet, in others the monarchy was elective, though it is not clear whether the selec-

tion *by the people* was between the members of the royal family only or extended to members of all the noble clans.¹¹⁰

I do not see any reason for this doubt on their part when according to the express text of the Krishna Yajurveda¹¹¹ the elected king is declared to be the sovereign not of all the people, the clergy, the nobility and common folk, but merely of the two latter classes. The text runs as follows :—

“ This is your king, O Bharatas, but Soma is the king of us, Brahmins.” (I. 8, 10.)

Here the priests seem to be the king-makers or Rajakrits, as they are called in two of the Atharvavedic hymns (IV. 22, 3 & 5 ; VIII. 7, 6). Thus when the king-makers elect a king after obtaining the unanimous consent of the nobility and the common people, as stated in the other hymns of the Atharvaveda quoted above (I. 9 ; III. 4 ; IV. 22) and declare that the elected and anointed king is not to be considered to be the king of the Brahmins also, it follows that the constitution was partly oligarchical and partly monarchical and that the voice of the priests on the election and retention of a king was supreme in the people's assembly.

The other questions that seem to have formed the subjects of discussion in the assembly are¹¹² war,¹¹³ peace,¹¹⁴ disputes about land,¹¹⁵ recovery of debts,¹¹⁶ cheating at

¹¹⁰ Vedio Index, Vol. I. p. 211.

¹¹¹ Yajus, I. 8, 10.

¹¹² A. V., VI. 75, 108.

¹¹³ A. V., VII. 52.

¹¹⁴ Krishna Yajus, II. 2. 1.

¹¹⁵ A. V., VI. 117.

¹¹⁶ A. V., VI. 118 and 119.

play,¹¹⁷ inheritance,¹¹⁸ taxation,¹¹⁹ abduction of women,¹²⁰ protection of men and cattle,¹²¹ cattle stealing,¹²² distribution of war-spoils,¹²³ currency or coins of money such as Krishnal, Nishka, and Satamana,¹²⁴ trade and tolls (sulka),¹²⁵ crimes such as theft, assault, and murder.

Apart from these questions which are all referred to directly or indirectly in the Vedas, many of the questions that obtained cognisance in the civil and criminal courts of the Sutra period seem also to have engaged the attention of the peoples' assembly of the Vedic period. Among the several duties assigned in the Sutras to the kings' assembly for decision, the following seem appropriate for the Vedic period also¹²⁶ :—

- (1) Destruction of fruit trees.
- (2) Falsification of weights and measures.
- (3) Provision for the wives of soldiers slain in battle.
- (4) Exemption of Brahmans and widows from taxation.
- (5) Maintenance of the poor, eunuchs, and madmen.
- (6) Punishment of false witnesses.

It should however be noted that neither the veracity of social, religious and political questions discussed in the assembly nor the way in which the decision was arrived at is of so much importance as the question of the constitution of the government machinery itself. We know for certain

¹¹⁷ Krishna Yajus, II. 6, 1.

¹¹⁸ A. V. III. 29.

¹¹⁹ A. V. V. 17.

¹²⁰ A. V. VI. 107.

¹²¹ Rig. I. 118.

¹²² Rig. II. 111.

¹²³ Satapata Br. XII, 7, 2, 13 ; XIII, 1, 1, 47, etc.

¹²⁴ Tai. Sa. III. 1, 2. 1.

¹²⁵ Vaj. Samhita XXX. 5.

¹²⁶ Vasishtha and Bodhayana : Bühler's Translation.

that the two important elements that constituted the government of the Vedic period were the assembly and the king. Of these two, the assembly must have been more important than the king who evidently was at the mercy of the former. As pointed out already, it was the assembly that managed the affairs of the kingdom during the periods of interregnum due to death or banishment of kings. Even during the later periods of hereditary monarchy it is the assembly of ministers that invariably assisted the king in all matters concerning the State. While during the Vedic period the assembly evidently held a permanent place in the constitution, it occupied a subordinate place in the Sutra period,

LECTURE V.

THE DUTIES AND PREROGATIVES OF THE KINGS AND PRIESTS.

It may be stated without the fear of contradiction that history of the world means the history of the play of intellect. It is the intelligent few that rule the world and are the causes of its progress or deterioration. It is they that shape the policy of governments and give it this or that name to please the vanity and whimsical notions of the times. So long as the intelligent few are altruistic in their acts towards the people that are in social intercourse with them, they are respected and admired. When they act either in their own self-interests or against the selfish or unselfish interests of the powerful or of a body of the people, they begin to be hated by the latter. When the intelligent few form themselves into a separate class or caste and begin to be hated for their apparent selfish interests, the feeling of hatred is in the long run converted into a permanent class or caste hatred, though the cause of that feeling may have long died away.

What at a later period appear as forms of selfish interests originate themselves at first as deserved privileges and rights granted and enjoyed in honour of the intellectual superiority, protective capacity or governing skill. The chief, the king, the medicine man, the religious priest with his assumed power of interpreting the signs of the heavens and his spells, incantations and sacrificial exploits are first admired and respected for their power in war, in governing, in curing diseases, and in exorcising devils and averting calamities of hidden origin, and are granted gifts. The families of these men continue to enjoy those privileges

even on the death of the heroes and the priests with whom the rights originated. In the long run the rights become mere toys with no merit to render them deserved, no matter whether the claimants of the rights are individuals or a class of people.

This is what has happened with the prerogatives of Indian priestly class, which earned its privileges in honour of its superior intellect. The rights and privileges of the king, on the other hand, began to increase in proportion to the growth of his governing duties. The duties of the kings, whether hereditary or elected for life, were very few at first while those of the priests were many. While the king was expected to confine his attention to the protective and defensive measure of the kingdom, it was the priest with whom the power to help the kings by the performance of necessary sacrifices and spells was believed to rest. It was his sacrifice that averted droughts by causing timely rains. It was his sacrifice that ensured victory to the king over his enemy. It was his sacrifice that brought in a plentiful harvest. It was his sacrifice and medical amulet that introduced concord between the king and the people. In short there was no public or private activity that is not attended with a sacrificial performance. His memory was so strong that he remembered a number of suitable prayers which he alone knew to interpret. He alone knew to perform sacrifices so correctly as to ensure success. His failure to achieve expected success was due to insufficiency of the sacrifices. Thus he was a god incarnate to the people of his times. Even so late as the time of Chanakya, the duty of a king it was to employ a chief priest well learned in the Vedas and experienced in the performance of various kinds of sacrifices.

The other kinds of service which the priestly class rendered to the king and his people in addition to the

religious and sacrificial services and which made the privileges granted to it highly deserved in the eyes of the people are educational, spiritual, and ministerial. As repositories of knowledge, both secular and sacred, the priests were justly looked upon as persons well qualified to impart knowledge of all kinds to those who were inclined to acquire them. Their abodes not merely in towns and villages but also in hermitages situated on the banks of rivers in forests seem to have been frequented by all sorts of people, inclusive of kings. Their hermitages and other settlements seem to have been regarded so sacred as to insure safety of person and security of property. Even kings defeated, driven out and chased from the battlefields seem to have found in the hermitages a safe shelter from their blood-thirsty enemies. This is confirmed by the story of Kings Sudarsana and Suratha narrated in IV. 16, 17 and V. 32 of the Devibhagavata. The story of Sudarsana is as follows :—Dhruvasandhi, son of Pushpa and King of the Kosalas had two sons, one called Sudarsana by his first wife Manorama and another named Satrujit by Lilavati. Dhruvasandhi died while hunting. A battle ensued between Virasena, King of Kalinga, and Yudhajit, King of Ujjaini, each being interested in securing the throne of Dhruvasandhi to his own nephew, Sudarsana and Satrujit respectively. Then apprehending danger from Yudhajit, Manoranma with her young son fled to the hermitage of Bharadvaja and lived there in peace till her son grew old and received his education in the Vedas, politics and military art from Bharadvaja himself so as to recover his lost kingdom. So he did to the satisfaction of his mother.

Likewise, Suratha, an ancient king, driven out from his kingdom by his enemies, sought refuge in the hermitage of Sumedhas and with his assistance recovered his kingdom.

The birth and growth of Sagara in the hermitage of Aurva on the death of his father Bahu defeated and driven out from his kingdom by the Haihayas and the Tala-janghas is another instance of the indispensable protective care and shelter which kings in exile sought and received from the priestly class.¹²⁷

It seems to have been a unique spectacle to see the priestly hermits "seated on deer-skins spread under the shadow of Sala trees and engaged in teaching their students the Vedas, Sastras and other useful arts, as required by the latter."¹²⁸ They seem to have been given to a life of much self-denial and penance and sacrifices. Whether they lived as householders in villages and towns, or as hermits and ascetics in forests, their life seems to have been as simple as their learning high. Though, as hermits and ascetics in hermitages, they seem to have lived sometimes on the flesh of wild animals, or on wild rice gleaned and collected by themselves from fields or on fruits and roots gathered from the forests, and other times on the bounty of kings and wealthy men,¹²⁹ the householders in villages and towns seem to have engaged themselves in various kinds of occupations, agriculture, cattle rearing, medicine, corn-grinding and even gambling.¹³⁰

This highly learned, though pious, priestly oligarchy or aristocracy, independent of the king and exempt from the ordinary exercise of the royal power, is not a peculiar feature of the Indian Aryans alone. It appears to have been a common characteristic of the Aryan race as a whole, whatever might be the country it had occupied, Greece, Rome or India. The ancient Greeks and Romans are

¹²⁷ Vishnupurana, IV. 3.

¹²⁸ Devi Bhagavata, V. 32, 26-27.

¹²⁹ Baudhayana, III. 2 and 3.

¹³⁰ Rig. IX. 112.

said to have had a similar kind of priestly oligarchy among them. In his *City State of the Greeks and Romans* (pp. 115-119, Ed. 1907) Fowler says as follows :—

“In the age of kingship, as we saw, the functions of government were religious, judicial and military. These functions have now passed out of the hands of the king and belong to the magistrate and councils of the aristocracy. Let us see how they might be used so as to favour the interests of the few as against those of the many. The secrets of the religion consisted of a knowledge of the ritual proper to each occasion ; the knowledge, that is, of the art of keeping the human inhabitants of the city on good terms with its divine members. Every public act was accompanied by a sacrifice, and all sacrifices must be performed in exactly the right way. The sacrificial hymns must be rightly sung ; the omens must be taken, the purificatory processions conducted exactly in the received manner, or the gods would not answer and bless. The whole life and happiness of the State depended on the proper performance of these necessary duties. Now in a State made up, as we have seen, by the union of lesser communities, each of which had its own peculiar worship conducted by its own noble family or families, it is plain that all these worships, now embodied in the State, must have remained in the hands of the aristocracy. The whole organisation of the State's religious life was theirs also. The regulation of festivals, of marriage, of funerals, of holy places and land belonging to the gods,—all that the Romans understood by the words *jus sacrum*,—was theirs and theirs only. For a person to meddle with such things, who was not qualified by birth or education or tradition nor expressly invited by the State as a reformer, was not only to interfere with the rights of a class, but positively to disturb the good relations of the City with its gods, and

thus imperil its very life. Of these relations, and of this life the noble families were in a way trustees; what wonder then, if their trusteeship increased their pride and narrowed their sympathies, raising in them a growing contempt for men who know nothing of the will or the needs of the divine inhabitants of the City?

"So it was also in the religion of profane law, as it slowly disentangled itself from the law of religious usage. Here, too, the rule held good that all solemn acts must be performed according to prescribed order, if they were to have any binding force. Rules governing the tenure of land, rules governing the transference of all property by succession or sale, rules governing the treatment of evil-doers and the adjustment of all disputes, so far as they were administered by aristocracy only, they were as much matter of technical and traditional knowledge as the religious law and could not be administered save by those to whom a divine order had entrusted that knowledge. The executive of the State, in fact, was in the hands of the only true Statemen (Politai). What wonder, then, once more, if these men and their families believed themselves to be the only lawful possessors of secret of Government, as well as religion, which they might turn to their own particular advantage?

'Even in military matters—the third department of Government—the same tendency is seen; for the aristocracy took the greater risk in actual warfare, and were at greater expense than the commons in providing themselves with horses and superior arms. They, like the chivalry of the Middle Ages, were the flower of the State's Army; they had a greater stake in the State and they like their mediæval counterparts, came to look down on the people as beings who could not or would not fight, unworthy alike of honour on the battlefield and of power in the constitution?

Thus we may be sure that in course of time there came to be a greater distinctness of outline of the position of the class to whom all the secrets and advantages belonged. While the State was not yet fully realised, while its elements were still in solution, this distinctness was less strong. But when the various elements of population came to face each other in the well-knit State, the idea of privilege began to make itself felt. The holders of the secrets which we have been describing, so soon as they began to use them for their advantage as a class, would cease to be thought of as heaven-appointed trustees, and would come to be considered as privileged." (*The City State of the Greeks and the Romans*, pp. 115-119. Ed. 1907.)

The same fact is briefly expressed by Mr. A.H.J. Grundige in his "*Handbook of Greek Constitutional History*" (p. 21, Ed. 1911).

"We may now form some idea of the power of this nobility of birth. In most cases its members had won their territory by the right of conquest, and were the large land-owners in the States. Their special claims to honour were the exclusive knowledge of its laws, and the sole possession of that citizenship which resulted from higher birth and from inherited wealth and culture. This was the rule of the best aristoi; and for a time these governments have been the truest aristocracies that the Greek world ever see. It was not merely the position, it was still more the qualities which made these men at once priest, judges, and soldiers that seemed unattainable by the common herd. Their ruler had a divine sanction; but the theocratic element was not oppressively present; it was less obvious than at Rome, for the clan worship, exclusive as it was, was less baneful than the inscrutable knowledge of the priestly colleges of the Roman Patriate, which created a strong tie of interest between all the families of

the privileged class, and professed to give rules for all things human and divine."

Having thus surveyed the physical and intellectual superiority which enabled the kings and the priestly class to put forward claims for special privileges and prerogatives fitting their positions, we may now turn our attention to the consideration of the peculiar nature of the privileges themselves :—

As a defender of the kingdom, the king seems to have been allowed the right of 'eating the rich'¹³¹ by levying taxes and tributes from them¹³² and of distributing treasures collected from taxation and plunder amongst his people, especially the priestly class in his own discretion. He had the right of passing judgments in civil and criminal cases, perhaps as decided in the people's assembly.¹³³ His was the right of bestowing handsome gifts on priests in sacrifices and in festivities. He seems to have been allowed the right of selecting his own priest from the family of the royal priest and of appointing the seven Ratnins or officers, such as the Commander of the army (Senapati), the charioteer (Suta), the village-headman (Gramani), the chamberlain (kshattar), the Collector of taxes (Sangrahitar), the distributor or divider of food (Bhagadugha) and the dice-player (akshvapa).¹³⁴

He seems to have had his own private lands and cattle, as Sugrieva and other ancient kings had their Madhuvana or pleasure gardens. According to Ramayana, honey and fruits in the Madhuvana of Sugrieva became the spoils of the exulting monkey troops on their return from Lanka in the joy of having found out Sita in the Asoka

¹³¹ Rig. I. 65, 4.

¹³² A. V. XIX. 2, 6, and Rig. 173, 6.

¹³³ A. V. XIX. 24, 3.

¹³⁴ Tai. Samhita, I. 8, 9.

garden of Ravana. Even the queens and princes are said to have possessed their own lands and wealth in the Arthashastra (II. 7). Whether the Vedic kings had their private lands or not, depends on the view we take of their origin. If they were elected from among the common people or from among the Kshatriya class evolved out of the people themselves, it would follow that the elected kings continued in the enjoyment of the landed property which they must have had before election. If they were elected from the very beginning from among the descendants of the institution of the queens, it would follow that they had no private property of their own, the queens being allowed to have all the property as their own as in Travancore and Cochin.

✓As the resources of entering into a war or an agreement of peace lay with the kings, the question of war or peace seems to have rested with them alone. It cannot however be denied that he had to consult his own priests and officers and the people's assembly as well. Even in the matter of anointing their own eldest sons in the kingdom when they themselves grew old, ancient kings appear to have ascertained the view or inclination of their people's assembly. Dasaratha's attempt to gauge the opinion of his people and the assembly on the question of installing Rama on his throne is an instance on the point. Duryodhan's maltreatment of the Pandavas and their wife Draupadi against the verdict of his assembly seems to be an exception.

The king was called Vispati, lord of the people, as contrasted with the Brahmins. As Vispati, he had no royal power over the priests.

The levy of benevolences and special taxes and tolls, as stated in the Arthashastra, was a royal privilege of later period.

The king was a man among men: neither does he seem to have made, nor the people to have acquiesced in, his claim for divine birth or right, which, as will be seen later on, is a political expedient devised by politicians of the post-Kautilya period.

In addition to their prerogative of being independent of the king, the priest seems to have claimed and secured immunities in important judicial matters, as set forth in the following passages of the Yajurveda :—

“If a Brahman and a non-Brahman have a litigation, one (the king) should support the Brahman; if one supports the Brahman, one supports oneself; if one opposes the Brahman, one opposes oneself; therefore one should not oppose a Brahman (Tai. Samhita, II. 5, 12).”

“Him who reviles a Brahman, he (the king) shall fine with a hundred; him who strikes a Brahman, he shall fine with a thousand; he who draws blood from him shall not behold the world of the Pi-ris.” (Tai. Samhita, II. 6, 11).

The fines levied from the offender were paid not to the king, but to the Brahman, as a kind of Wergeld. The last sentence seems to mean that no funeral rites should be performed in the name of a slayer of a Brahman on his death.

In still clearer terms are enumerated the immunities of the priests in the Sutra literature. The Apastamba Sutra, for example, says as follows :—

“In his realm no Brahman should suffer hunger, sickness, cold, or heat, be it through want or intention-ally.” (Apa. II. 10, 25, 11.)

“The king who, without detriment to his servants, gives land and money to Brahmans according to their deserts gains endless worlds.

"They say that a king who is slain in attempting to recover the property of Brahmans performs a sacrifice where his body takes the place of the sacrificial post and at which an unlimited fee is given.

"A learned Brahman is free from taxes." (Apa. II, 10, 26, 1, 2, 10.)

Thus it is clear that the Vedic political constitution consisted of (1) a priestly aristocracy independent of the king and exempt from punishment for offences and from taxes and tolls on land and other property, and with acknowledged claims to protection from hunger, sickness, cold, or heat; (2) a king, elected at first and hereditary later; and (3) a state-assembly consisting of priests, nobles and the common people with powers to elect and banish kings, to restore banished kings, and to have an authoritative voice on all political and judicial matters of the state. The most troublesome element of the constitution was the priestly aristocracy with which the kings were, as already pointed out, at war for the sake of the mysterious cow, and perhaps on account of their exorbitant privileges also.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Vishnu Purana, I, 13. Vena versus the Brahmans. How this discord ended will be seen later on.

LECTURE VI.

THE EFFECT OF JAINISM AND BUDDHISM ON THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF INDIA.

At no time in the history of India had its priestly aristocracy a more desperate struggle for existence than during the Sutra period. Apart from splits in itself due to difference of opinion on matters of minute details in sacrifices, its dispute with the kings regarding the question of its privileges does not seem to have come to an end, though it had to set aside the question of cows on the defeat of Parasurama, its champion, and his flight to the West Coast corner of Southern India. The question of allowing the priests to continue in the enjoyment of their exorbitant privileges seems to have been still under dispute. King Vena, for example, is said to have caused it to be everywhere proclaimed that no worship should be performed, no oblations offered and no gifts bestowed upon the Brahmins.¹³⁶

What was worse still, there arose two successive separatist movements, one after another, with the set purpose of reforming and purifying the social and religious order of the Indian Aryan community as a whole. They were the movements founded by ruling princes after mature deliberation. The earlier of these two movements is known as Jainism, called after the name of Rishabha or Jina, the first founder and teacher of that religion. Of the 24 Tirthankaras or teachers beginning with Rishabha

¹³⁶ Vishnu Purana, I. 13.

and ending with Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, all of whom seem to have belonged to the Kshatriya class or to ruling princes, the last three, Nemi or Arishtanemi, Paśvanātha and Mahāvīra, seem to have been the most powerful preachers. Arishtanemi is stated to have been a prince and cousin of Krishna of the Yādava race. The story, as narrated in the commentary of the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra¹³⁷ says that when he was told that the herd of animals which he met in his procession preparatory to his marriage with Rājimati was being led to be slaughtered for the purpose of a banquet to be given in honour of his marriage and coronation in the Yādava Kingdom, he relinquished his marriage and the kingdom in disgust and took to forest life following the orders of the old Tīrthankaras, and leaving the kingdom to his cousin Krishna. Paśvanatha who succeeded Arishtanemi, 773 B. C., as a Tīrthankara was a prince like his predecessor and was succeeded by Mahāvīra, a king like himself.

The object with which these Tīrthankaras embraced asceticism was not merely to emancipate themselves from the unending chain of birth and death, but to save the Aryan people from the social, religious and political bondage from which they believed them to be suffering. While they kept themselves under a stern religious discipline with a firm mind to conquer the six enemies, desire, anger, niggardliness, delusion, intemperance, and jealousy, and to attain emancipation by meditation and contemplation on the self or soul, they seem to have been preaching to the people at large to give up the social and religious customs of the Brāhmins and to practise as far as possible the observance of the four gifts,—the gift of food, gift of

¹³⁷ Jaina Series, published by Rao Bahadur Raja Dhanapalasimha, Vol. XLI, pp. 655-670.

protection of animal life, gift of medicine, and gift of true knowledge (*Ahārbāhayabhaishajya sāstradāna*¹³⁸), as stated in the inscriptions of Hoisala Ballaladeva. While the first three gifts determine the guiding principle of the various activities which man may take upon himself as a social and industrial being, the last inculcates the necessity of his learning and teaching true knowledge, as taught in the philosophy of the Jains. This philosophy is based partly upon the Upanishads and partly upon the atheistic philosophy of Kapila. The philosophy as expounded by Kapila, teaches us that there are only two principal entities, man and nature, man suffering or enjoying according to the attitude of his mind under his control, and Nature having a productive power manifesting or presenting to man the externally indestructible matter in its various forms. Attachment to Nature brings pain to man, while non-attachment or neutrality by merging self in self brings on emancipation to him. Accordingly Sankhya philosophy knows neither God nor Dharma, charity or virtue in any form. The Jaina philosophy, though equally atheistic, is an improvement on the Sankhya by the addition of Dharma¹³⁹ as a means for the attainment of emancipation.¹⁴⁰ Hence knowing neither God nor an authoritative revealed text, Jainism has rejected the Vedas of the Brāhmins with all its animal sacrifices, as inconsistent with the promise of abstaining from injury and cruelty to animal life.¹⁴¹ Apart from the four gifts and from rendering service to saints, teachers, ascetics, the infirm, the ganas, kulas, Sanghas, the good, and the enlightened, as inculcated in the

¹³⁸ Inscription in Banasankari temple at Udri in Sorab, Shimoga District, Mysore.

¹³⁹ *Uttaradhyāyana sūtra*, p. 577, verse 20.

¹⁴⁰ *Tatvarthasūtra*, I. 1, 2, 3 & X. 1.

¹⁴¹ Gift No. 2 quoted above.

Tatvārthasūtra (IX. 24), there is no other Dharma which a Jaina has to know. The Jainas do not seem tired of discussing the question of Dharma and Adharma from various points of view. A religious practice, a social custom or a political duty or function is according to the Jainas a Dharma or virtuous practice only when it is not antagonistic with the four gifts enumerated above. Accordingly the Vedas are not revealed texts, as they teach sacrifices inconsistent with Abhayadāna or promise of protection. Nor are they eternal, as believed by the Brahmans, since no human utterance or writing can possibly be eternal.¹⁴²

Neither during the Vedic period nor during the Jaina and the Buddhist periods till the first few centuries of the Christian era was there such a rigid caste system as prevailed later. The people were divided into classes with rights of connubium and commensality with each other. When the Jainas had formed an order of their own, they had observed the same class system without any detriment to their faith and practice.¹⁴³ Along with such antecaste customs as flesh-eating, plurality of wives married from other classes inclusive of the Sudras, interdining with Sudras and the like, the Brahmans seem to have been imposing on suspected persons some restrictions to the right of connubium and commensality and to the right of social intercourse with the Chandalas. Restriction to the right of connubium and commensality is thus referred to in the Taittirīya Saṃhita (VI. 2, 6).

“On a place of sacrifice which is distinctly marked should he cause him to sacrifice regarding the person, of whom they have doubts as to admitting him to common meals or to marriage.”

¹⁴² Nandi Sūtra, pp. 20-30.

¹⁴³ Uttaradhyāyana sūtra, p. 156.

The Jainas seem to have condemned these and other exclusive and indiscreet or intemperate customs as inconsistent with Dharma or Virtue. As to the question of untouchability of the outcastes, the Jainas have condemned it outright as a mere profession incapable of being translated into practice, inasmuch as the wind is found to carry minute particles of strong-smelling flowers and fruits in the hands of the outcastes right through the nose into the very stomach of the Brahman.¹⁴¹

Amitagati, a Jaina-writer, who, as stated by himself in the introduction to his work, *Dharmapariksha*, lived in 1014 A. D. makes a Gaudharva, an imaginary character, talk of the widow marriage and other customs of the Brahmins in a condemnatory tone, as follows :—

“When I saw my widowed mother being wedded to another, I narrated my relationship with her and asked the pious men, ‘pray tell me whether there is no sin in her being married to another.’

“When it is said that Draupadi had the five sons of Pandu as her husbands, where is sin for thy mother, if she has two husbands. The husband being dead by misfortune, the maiden, though once betrothed, deserves the right of marriage consecration for a second time. The woman that has brought forth a child has to wait eight years, while a maiden should wait only four years before marrying another, if the husband has gone abroad. If second husbands are married for reasons mentioned in the five enumerated cases, there is no guilt for women, as stated by Vyasa and others.”

By way of condemning the customs of the Brahmins and of pointing out the nature of a true Brahman, a true Kshatriya, a true Vaisya, and a true Sudra, Jayaghosha, a

¹⁴¹ Nandi Sutra, pp. 344-5, Calcutta Ed.

Jaina ascetic, is stated to have instructed a Brahman named Vijayaghosha in the following passages of the Uttarādhyāyana Sutra (XX V. 24, 33) :—

“He who does not injure living beings in any of the three ways (thoughts, words, and actions), him we call a Brahmana. He who does not speak untruth from anger or for fun, from greed or from fear, him we call a Brahmana.

By one's actions one becomes a Brahmana, or a Kshatriya or a Vaisya or a Sudra.”

In the dialogue between Nami and Indra who advised him to retain royalty instead of renouncing it, the duties of a king according to the reformed notions of the Jainas are thus hinted^{1 4 5} :—

In reply to Indra's advice to Nami to erect a wall, gates, and battlements, to dig a moat and to construct Sataghuis, he answers that faith is his fortress, penance and self-control the bolt of its gate, patience its strong wall, zeal his bow, and carefulness in walking its string.

In reply to his advice to punish thieves, robbers and burglars, Nami answers that men frequently apply punishment wrongly, by putting the innocent in prison and by setting the true criminal at liberty.

‘In reply to Indra's advice to him to conquer his foes, to perform sacrifices and to feed Brahmans, Nami answers that though a man should conquer thousands of valiant foes, greater will be his victory if he conquers nobody but himself ; that one should fight with one's own self and conquer the five senses and anger, pride, delusion and greed ; and that self-control is better than sacrifices and gifts to Brahmans.

Still stronger was the denunciation hurled by the Buddhists on the Brahmins. In the *Tevigga Sutta*, a dialogue between a Brahmin named Vasettha and Gotama on the character of the Brahmins, the defects of the Brahmins, are thus pointed out.

Gotama asks Vasettha :—

"Now what think you, Vasettha, are the Brahmins versed in the Vedas in the possession of wives and wealth, or are they not?"

Vasettha replied :—

"They are, Gotama."

"Have they anger in their hearts, or have they not?"

"They have, Gotama."

"Do they bear malice, or do they not?"

"They do, Gotama."

"Are they pure in heart, or are they not?"

"They are not, Gotama."

"Have they self-mastery, or have they not?"

"They have not, Gotama."

"Very good Vasettha. That these Brahmins versed in the Vedas and yet bearing anger and malice in their hearts, sinful, and uncontrolled, should after death, when the body is dissolved, become united to Brahma, who is free from anger and malice, sinless and has self-mastery—such a condition of things has no existence."¹⁴

The sacred and secular learning of the Brahmins and their capacity to perform various sacrifices to secure good, or to avert bad results either to the king or to the people are thus denounced in the *Tevigga Sutta* (II. 3) :—

"Or whereas some Samana Brahmins, who live on the food provided by the faithful, continue to gain a livelihood by such low arts and such lying practices as these,

¹⁴ *Uttaradhyāyana*, I. 38.

that is to say, by foretelling future events, as these :
 ' There will be a sortie by the king.' ' There will not
 be a sortie by the king.' ' The king within the city will
 attack.' ' The king outside the city will retreat.' ' The
 king within the city will gain victory.' ' The king outside
 the city will be defeated.' ' The king outside the city
 will be the conquerer.' Thus prophesying to this one
 victory, to that one defeat."

" This is the kind of goodness that he has. "

" Likewise by predicting that there will be abundant
 rainfall, abundant harvest, famine, disturbances, sickness
 or health ; or by drawing deeds, making up accounts, giving
 pills, making verses, or arguing points of casuistry, or
 by giving advice touching the taking in marriage, or the
 giving in marriage, the forming of alliances, or dissolution
 of connections ; by teaching spells to procure prosperity,
 or to cause adversity to others ; or by worshipping the
 sun, or by worshipping Brahma, by spitting fire out of
 their mouths'—this, too, is the kind of goodness that he
 has."¹⁴⁷

While under this severe criticism directed by the
 Jainas and the Buddhists against the social, religious and
 political views of the Brahman oligarchy, the firm hold
 which it had on the peoples' mind was fast loosening, the
 constructive organisation made by the separatists to re-
 form the Aryan Society in all its aspects appeared to
 render that old oligarchy quite powerless to survive.
 Though atheistic, it was a humanitarian religion based
 upon justice, charity, and brotherhood. As every man
 was obliged to free himself at all costs from the six ini-
 mical passions, desire, anger, greed, delusion, lust and
 jealousy, he had no cause whatever to apprehend injustice

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 11.5,6.

from his fellow beings. Men and women were required to regard each other as brothers and sisters and to be kind not only to their fellow beings, but also to beasts. The duty of kings and rich householders was according to the new gospel to construct alms-houses, to erect hospitals both for men and beasts, to plant avenue trees, to open roads and to dig wells of water at intervals here and there. It was the duty of the Sangha, the Buddhist order of monks, to preach to the people at large and prevail upon them to free themselves from all passions and to tread on the new path of Dharma, justice and charity, declaring *abhaya* or promise of protection from fear to all. It was a league of men with sincere and open heart, but not of nations with lip sympathy and cunning heart. Under the protection of this kingdom of virtue or natural law (Dhammachakka) there was no room for criminals, robbers, or enemies. Kings might disband their huge army and spend their revenue in relieving the misery of the needy and the infirm. There could be no talk of war, for who would dare to raise his weapons against a league of men devoted to the service of Natural justice and dharma? It may be presumed without any fear of contradiction that among the several Aryan and non-Aryan kingdoms from the Himalayas down to the Cape Comorin, there was no kingdom that was deaf to the preachings of the Jainas and the Buddhists. Jaina and Buddhist monasteries began to rise in numbers in all the kingdoms throughout the length and breadth of India, as confirmed by a number of Jaina and Buddhist inscriptions already discovered and still under discovery. Benares, North West Provinces, Rajaputana, Central India, Gujerat, the Pandya and Chola kingdom, and Mysore,—all teemed with Jaina and Buddhist settlements and monasteries.

To allay all fear of exaggeration at rest and to confirm the assertions I have ventured to make here, some of the edicts of Asoka, the first Indian Emperor, are quoted below :—

“ Here in the Capital no animal may be slaughtered for sacrifice, nor may holiday feasts be held, for His Majesty King Priyadarsin sees manifold evil in holiday feasts.”

Edict I.

“ Everywhere in dominions of His Majesty King Priyadarsin, and likewise in the neighbouring realms such as those of the Chola, Pandya, Satiyaputra and Keralaputra, in Ceylon, in the dominions of the Greek King Antiochus, and in those of the other kings subordinate to that Antiochus—everywhere, on behalf of His Majesty have two kinds of remedies been disseminated, remedies for men and remedies for beasts.....on the roads trees have been planted and wells have been dug for the use of man and beast.”

Edict II.

“ Obedience to father and mother is good ; liberality to friends, acquaintances, relatives, Brahmans, and ascetics is good ; avoidance of extravagance and violence of language is good. The clergy will thus instruct the lieges in detail.”

Edict III.

“ Now, by reason of the practice of piety, instead of the war-drum, the sound of the drum of piety is heard.”

Edict IV.

“ Even for a person to whom lavish liberality is impossible, the virtues of mastery over the senses, purity of mind, gratitude and fidelity are always meritorious.”

Edict XXI.

Of all the Edicts of Asoka, the most important is the thirteenth Edict entitled the 'True Conquest.' It is the edict in which the Emperor has proclaimed to the world at large his full belief in the efficiency of the Buddhist law of piety as a real force in making a true conquest of man, not by weapons but by appealing to his moral sense and conscience and by pointing out the ruin which he may bring upon himself and others by addictions to passions. It runs as follows:—

"His Majesty King Priyadarsin in the ninth year of his reign conquered the Kalingas.¹⁴⁸ One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times that number perished.

"Ever since the annexation¹⁴⁹ of the Kalingas, His Majesty has zealously protected the Law of Piety, has been devoted to that law, and has proclaimed its precepts.

"His Majesty feels remorse on account of the conquest of the Kalingas, because, during the subjugation of a previously unconquered country, slaughter, death, and taking away captive, of the people necessarily occur, whereat His Majesty feels profound sorrow and regret.

"There is, however, another reason for His Majesty feeling still more regret, inasmuch as in such a country dwell Brahmans and ascetics, men of different sects, and householders who all practice obedience to elders, obedience

¹⁴⁸ The Kalingas, Kalimngani; the country extending along the coast of Bay of Bengal from the Mahanadi river on the north to or beyond the Krishna river on the south; often called 'the Three Kalingas,' which are supposed to be the kingdoms of Amaravati. In this edict the name is used in both the singular and the plural. The Dhauli and Jaugada rock inscriptions are situated in this conquered province.

¹⁴⁹ Conquered, vijita; 'annexed,' *ladheshu*.

to father and mother, obedience to teachers, proper treatment of friends, acquaintances, comrades, relatives, slaves and servants, with fidelity of devotion.¹⁵⁰ To such people dwelling in that country happen violence, slaughter, and separation from those whom they love.

"Even those persons who are themselves protected retain the affections undiminished:—ruin falls on their friends, acquaintances, comrades, and relatives, and in this way violence is done to those who are personally unhurt.¹⁵¹ All this diffused misery¹⁵² is matter of regret to His Majesty. For there is no country where such communities are not found including others besides Brahmans and ascetics, nor is there any place in any country where the people are not attached to some one sect or other.¹⁵³

"The loss of even the hundredth or the thousandth part of the persons who were then slain, carried away captive, or done to death in Kalinga would now be a matter of deep regret to His Majesty.

"Although a man should do him an injury, His Majesty holds that it must be patiently borne, so far as it can possibly be borne.

"Even upon the forest tribes in his dominions His Majesty has compassion, and he seeks their conversion, inasmuch as the might even of His Majesty is based on repentance. They are warned to this effect—'Shun

¹⁵⁰ That is to say, who practise the dharma, or Law of Piety, of which a summary is given.

¹⁵¹ That is to say, they are hurt in their feelings.

¹⁵² 'Diffused misery,' equivalent to Böhler's 'all this falls severally on men.' M. Senart denies the distributive sense of *pratibhagam*, and translates (i. 309) '*toutes les violences de ce genre.*'

¹⁵³ This sentence is translated from the fuller form in the Kalsi text, as corrected by M. Senart from the newly discovered Girnar fragment, J. R. A. S. for 1900, p. 339.

evildoing, that ye may escape destruction'; because His Majesty desires for all animate beings security, control over the passions, peace of mind, and joyousness.¹⁵⁴

"And this is the chiefest conquest, in His Majesty's opinion—the conquest of the Law of Piety; this also is that effected by His Majesty both in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as six hundred leagues¹⁵⁵ even to where the Greek King named Antiochus dwells, and beyond that Antiochus to where dwell the four Kings severally named Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magus, and Alexander;¹⁵⁶ and in the south, the Kings of the Cholas, and Pandyas, and of Ceylon,¹⁵⁷ and likewise here, in the King's dominions, among the Yonas, and Kambojas, in Nabhaka of the Nabhitis, among the Bhojas and Pitinikas, among the Andhras and Pulindas,¹⁵⁸ everywhere men follow the Law of Piety as proclaimed by His Majesty.

¹⁵⁴ "Joyousness" *rabhasiye* (Shuhb), *madvam* (Girnar), *madava* (Kalsi). The translation of the first sentence of this paragraph is in accordance with M. Senart's corrections.

¹⁵⁵ 'League' *yojana*, a varying measure, commonly taken as equal to seven or eight miles.

¹⁵⁶ Antiochus Theos, of Syria; Ptolemy Philadelphus, of Egypt; Antigonus Gonatas, of Macedonia; Alexander, of Epirus; Magus, of Cyrene.

¹⁵⁷ The Chola capital was at Uraiyur near Trichinopoly; the Pandya capital was at Madura. Tishya (Tissa) was the contemporary King of Ceylon.

¹⁵⁸ The Yonas (Yavanas) must mean the clans of foreign race (not necessarily Greek) on the north-western frontier, included in the Empire; the Kambojas seem to have been also a north-western tribe.

I cannot offer any explanation of 'Nabhaka of the Nabhitis' (Bühler).

The Andhras inhabited the country near the Krishna river, at the southern extremity of the Kalingas. Subsequently, they established a powerful kingdom. The Pulindas seem to have occupied the central parts of the Peninsula. The Pitinikas may have been the inhabitants of Paithana on the Godavari. (See M. Senart in *Ind. Ant.*, XX, 348, and

"Even in those regions where the envoys of His Majesty do not penetrate,¹⁵⁹ men now practise and will continue to practise the Law of Piety as soon as they hear the pious proclamation of His Majesty issued in accordance with the Law of Piety.

"And the conquest which has thereby been everywhere effected, causes a feeling of delight.

* "Delight is found in the conquests made by the Law.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, that delight is only a small matter. His Majesty thinks nothing of much importance save what concerns the next world.

"And for this purpose has this pious edict been written, to wit, that my sons and grandsons, as many as they may be, may not suppose it to be theirs to effect a new conquest; and that even when engaged in conquest by arms they may find pleasure in patience and gentleness, and may regard as the only true conquest that which is effected through the Law of Piety,¹⁶¹ which avails both for this world and the next. Let all their pleasure be the pleasure in exertion, which avails both for this world and the next."

Thus the kingdom of Righteousness which began with Buddha with its eightfold noble path of right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation, took a firm stand in the land during the righteous imperial rule of Asoka, muzzling for years to come the

J.E.A.S. for 1900, p. 340). The names enumerated are those of border tribes under the suzerainty of Asoka.

¹⁵⁹ Missionaries were dispatched in the eleventh or twelfth year of the reign.

¹⁶⁰ Bühler's rendering accidentally omits the words *Ladha* (*bhoti*) *priti dhrama vijayaspi*.

¹⁶¹ I think I have given the meaning correctly, and in accordance with the intention of Bühler.

Brahman oligarchy, its Vedic Gods and animal sacrifices. It must be admitted to the credit of India and her law-abiding sons that this stupendous change in her social, religious, and political institutions was so quietly and peacefully effected with no trace of bloodshed that even to the irritated Brahman oligarchy it appeared as an illusory phenomena brought about by the magic wand of a skilful wizard. "This son of Suddhodana," says the *Agnipurana* (Chapter 16, 3), "was the greatest deluder. He deluded the Daityas and led them away from the Vedic *Dharma*." Compared with persecutions and martyrdoms which attended the spread of Christianity and its various stages of its reform and the reign of terror which preceded and followed political reforms brought about under the influence of Christianity in Europe¹⁶² the quiet and peaceful rise and fall of Jainism and Buddhism in India purely in virtue of its intrinsic vitality and decrepitude appears to be a romantic tale, the like of which the world has never seen. Whether this is due to the peculiar soil and climate of India or to the inexplicable temperament of her people is a question which history has yet to solve.¹⁶³

¹⁶² *Early Church History* by J. V. Bartl.

¹⁶³ *The travels of the Chinese Pilgrim Yuan Chwang*, Vols. I and II.

LECTURE VII.

THE EMPIRE-BUILDING POLICY OF THE POLITICIANS OF THE KAUTILYA PERIOD.

In the kingdom of righteousness (Dhammachakka) firmly set up by the Buddhists in India there was no distinction between man and man, king or priest, monk or householder, trader or tiller of the soil ; all were on the same level. In common with others, each had his clearly defined duty before him, the duty of conquering the six inimical passions and of preparing himself for his final Nirvana or emancipation from the bondage of transmigration. Except his own exertion, he had no need to seek other means, of which there was none at all. He needed neither a god nor a priest to help him in his attempt to relieve himself. He was his own god or Satan according as he walked on the righteous or unrighteous path. If he were born a king, all that he had to do was to direct his officers to superintend the works of Dhamma and insist on every one's duty of observing the Law of Piety, toleration, and charity. None had need to perform mystic sacrifices for securing mystic aims. As all had to tread on the same path of Dhamma, there could be no enemies and consequently no war, necessitating the employment of a huge army. If he were a rich trader, he might continue his profession and accumulate wealth not for his own selfish purposes and ultimate destruction, but for the meritorious purpose of charity to the needy. If he were a priest, he could very well understand his own duty to himself or better than others, inasmuch as he had a cultured mind to aid him in his attempt to reach the final goal.

He had no need for any texts or prayer, revealed or unrevealed, either for his own use or for the use of others. The only qualification which man needed was the knowledge of correct view, correct conduct, correct thought, correct mode of obtaining a livelihood, correct speech, correct meditation, and correct tranquillity.¹⁶⁴ If one succeeded in attaining that knowledge, it would be for one's own good. One had no need to impose upon others and claim privileges therefor.

In this kingdom of Righteousness, there was room neither for a crafty high priest nor for an honest high priest, neither for the sacred Vedas nor for the animal sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas. The Brahman oligarchy which had so much to do in the old social, religious, and political order of the Aryans had to come down from its old high pedestal and relinquishing its claims to exclusive privileges, merge itself among the people with no distinction whatever. At the most he could be a monk, if he could boast of a cultured mind. His Vedas and sacrifices forget he must. It is more than probable that owing to the conversion to Jainism and Buddhism of a number of learned Brahmans that knew the traditional interpretation of the Vedas and of Vedic sacrifices, the true Vedic learning was lost and that mere Vedic recitation remained with the illiterate minority or majority that still obstinately adhered to its old faith. Perhaps it was a majority of Brahmans that stood aloof looking with mortification at the wonderful spread of Jainism and Buddhism at the expense of Brahminism in the land, since it is from those irreconcilables that modern Brahmans have sprung up and revived their old Vedic lore.

¹⁶⁴ Buddhist Suttas : Foundation of the kingdom of Righteousness, pp. 144-147.

Now that Jainism and Buddhism were spreading in the land like wild fire with no such devastation as wild fire commonly does and with no malice, hatred or injury to any one, what could the helpless Brahman do? None needed him as before, yet none injured him apparently. He had no real grievance against any, but his own destiny. The kings and the people whom he had under his clutches left him to his destiny now. Hopeless and desperate as was the task which the Brahman had to undertake in order to regain his lost supremacy in the land, he seems to have entertained no doubts as to the means which he had to employ to succeed in this attempt. Under similar circumstances the Western Brahman or trained politicians would have surely appealed to arms, as he had more often than once done in all his revolutionary propaganda, whether social, religious or political. Time is precious with the Western. He would not wait and spend time in thinking of any peaceful means for success in his attempt. Brute force has a charm for him and he employs it for good or bad. But the Eastern Brahman differs from him in this. He is not for arms where he believes that skill can crown him with success. Though the Eastern has shown his dogged determination in fighting as obstinately as the Western in the battlefield, still it is certainly a mistake to suppose that he prefers the sword to all other means as much as the Western does. Even Professor Wilson, the translator of the Vishnu Purana and other Sanskrit works could not shake himself off from this characteristic bias or notion. While remarking on an ambiguous passage of the Vishnupurana about the conflict of the Brahmans and the Buddhists he seems to think that the Brahmans took to arms and extirpated the Jainas and the Buddhists whereas the truth is that the Brahmans overcame the Buddhists rather by employing peaceful means than sword.