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THE WISDOM OF INDIA

BY

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मेधां सायं मेधां प्रातर्मेधां मध्यन्दिनं परि ।
मेधां सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिर्वचसा वेश्यामहे ॥

अथ० ६ । १०८ । ५ ।

“Wisdom at eve, wisdom at
morn, wisdom at noon, wisdom
with the sun’s rays and wisdom
by prayer we seek for ourselves.”

Ath. VI., 108, 5.

DEDICATED

TO THE SACRED MEMORY

OF

MAHATMA HANSRAJ

[Born 1864 A. D. Died 1938 A. D.]

P R E F A C E

We have tried to tell very briefly the story of India's cultural conquest of the whole world in simple and easy language. This book is primarily meant for those who love this country above everything else, and who seek to establish the Kingdom of God (Rama Rajya) in this world. India has from the very beginning played a great role in bringing happiness to mankind. From the earliest times, the Aryas or the people of India tried to lead their lives in accordance with the Rita and Sata i.e., the moral and physical laws which govern this universe. Our sages from time to time explained these moral laws which should guide mankind in their search after Truth and Everlasting Happiness.

By Aryas or Aryans, we mean the early inhabitants of India as well as their descendants, who have been called Hindus or Indians in later periods. Similarly Aryavarta, Brahmvarta, Bharata, Hindustan and India are the names given to this very country. The old Aryavarta, however, extended beyond the present limits of India.

India is as immortal as the Himalayas. She always faced heroically all the vicissitudes and changes in her fortune. The basic principles of her culture, however, always remained the same. She always prized righteousness or Dharma above everything else; and so long as India tries to keep to the basic principles of her culture and civilisation there shall never be any danger to her existence.

The Acharyas or teachers, the leaders of political parties, as well as the princes, who played an important role in the past never failed to resuscitate and to revivify her ancient culture. We should try to do the same now.

The lessons of the past must never be forgotten. While we should take advantage of every new discovery in the domain of science made by other nations, we should push forward the cause of righteousness and peace all over the world.

This book is dedicated to the sacred memory of Mahatma Hans Raj, who after having graduated in 1885, took a vow of poverty in order to serve his country. He became the life and soul of the Vedic Cultural Movement, which was initiated by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. The Mahatma's life of austerity, simplicity and purity, his deep learning and wise guidance inspired many a youngman to dedicate his life to the great cause for which Mahatma Hans Raj had worked and died. We, therefore, associate his name with this book with great pride and pleasure.

14, QUEENSWAY,
NEW DELHI.
MAY 10, 1951.

NANAK CHAND PANDIT

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

1

Views of scholars - Vedic Culture - The Aryas - Arya Dharma - Acknowledgement - An Exhortation.

CHAPTER II

THE IMMORTAL VEDAS.

11

The word of God - Supreme Authority - Unique Method of Preservation - Views of European Scholars - Vedas contain seeds of all True Knowledge - Qualification for study of Vedas - Misinterpretation of Vedic Texts - Macaulay & Max Muller - Efforts to popularise Christianity - Importance of Vedas belittled - Correct interpretation by Maharishi - Max Muller extols India - Aurobindo's support to Maharishi - Worship of one God only - Views of impartial European Scholars.

CHEPTER III

THE FOUR YUGAS OR AGES.

35

The age of the Vedas - The great Deluge - The Second flood - Arya Varta or India : Arya's original home - The four epochs - Satyuga or the Golden age - Adityas & Daityas - The Silver age - The Brass age - The Iron age - Islam ineffective.

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH OF THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE.

48

Sanskrit Grammar - Spread of Aryas' Language - Philology - Grammarians - Panini praised by Europeans - Lexicons or Dictionaries - World's debt to Sanskrit - An integral part of Society.

CHAPTER V

THE PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT OF ARYAS

58

European Scholars' Views - Six Darshanas - Theory of Rebirth - Patanjali's Yoga Shastra - Nyaya Darshana of Gautama - Vaisheshika of Kanada - Jaimini's Purva Mimansa - Uttara Mimansa of Vyasa.

CHAPTER VI	
THE UPANISHADS AND THE EPICS	69
The Bhagvad Gita - The Ramayana - The Mahabharata.	
CHAPTER VII	
FABLES AND DRAMAS.	81
Panchtantra and Hitopadesha - The Drama - Sanskrit Drama eulogised - Biographies and Histories.	
CHAPTER VIII	
THE LOST LITERARY TREASURES OF INDIA.	90
Brahma's works - 70 Tantras and 300 Shastras - Veterinary Science - Agriculture - Manuscripts in Foreign Countries.	
CHAPTER IX	
CULTURAL CONQUEST OF THE WORLD.	96
Lithunia - Scandinavia - Germany - Britain - Colonisation of America - Mexico - Peru - Afghanistan - The Summerians - Egypt - Abyssinia - Greece - Asia and Indonesia - China - Burma - South East Asia.	
CHAPTER X	
THE VEDAS AND BUDDHISM.	113
Buddhism.	
CHAPTER XI	
THE VEDAS AND OTHER RELIGIONS.	120
Christianity - Religion of the Jews - Islam.	
CHAPTER XII	
MATERIAL PROSPERITY.	134
Medical Science - Medicine and Surgery - Purity of Food - Music - Mathematics - Architecture - Sculpture and Painting.	
CHAPTER XIII	
TRADE AND COMMERCE IN ANCIENT INDIA	156
Roads - Ships.	

CHAPTER XIV

THE VEDIC POLITY

164

Rule of Righteousness - Ancient works on Politics - Fearlessness - The Arya State - Elected Rulers - The Law code of Manu - The State Assemblies - Military Science - Aeroplanes - Ship Building and the use of Boats - Armies - Weapons.

CHAPTER XV

THE ORGANISATION OF ARYA SOCIETY

185

The Brahmins - The Kshatriyas - The Vaishyas - The Shudras.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ARYA PATH OF LIFE

192

Brahmacharya Ashrama - Grihastha Ashrama - Vanaprastha and Sanyas - The Yamas and Niyamas - Additional Steps.

CHAPTER XVII

CHARACTER OF THE ARYAS

200

CHAPTER I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Ever since my childhood I have been hearing about the great and glorious past of India. The Kathas (stories) of our great Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—had always an attraction for me. They left a deep and abiding impression on my mind. These great Epics of the Aryas of ancient India speak of still more ancient times with great reverence and pride. In no uncertain terms, they pay the highest homage to the Vedas and regard them as the source of all true knowledge.

Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati, a great reformer, religious leader and great thinker, who appeared on the Indian scene, caught the imagination of the public. In his immortal work, the “Rig—Vedadi-Bhashya—Bhumika” and “Satyaratha Prakash,” he tried to unfold to the Indians in particular and mankind in general, the great teachings of the Vedas and of the ancient Rishis of India. He was hailed as a great renovator of our culture. No doubt, in the beginning he met with opposition from all sides—from the orthodox Hindus, the Christians and the Mohammedans—yet in the end he succeeded in leaving an indelible imprint on the mind of our people. Even those who opposed yielded before the fire of his eloquence and the strength of his arguments. Researches into the ancient Indian history, philosophy and religious literature and the archaeological finds give more than ample support to the views which this great son of India had endeavoured to propagate. He lived at a time

(1824 A.D.-1883 A.D.) when India was in a mood of depression, and when her religion, culture and civilisation were being assailed from all sides. The Maharishi was, however, more than a match for all those who tried to ridicule India's glorious past and lofty traditions.

VIEWS OF SCHOLARS

After Dayananda Saraswati came several other leaders, who likewise sought inspiration from India's great past and endeavoured to reveal to us the sources of her inner strength which lay in her age-long culture which had inspired almost all the nations of the world to glorious deeds of adventure. In spite of the efforts of these soldiers in India's cause, the glamour of Western material civilisation was so great, that our scholars brought up in Indian colleges staffed by European Professors and by Indians trained by European teachers, paid only lip-homage to India's ancient culture. In some cases they actually ridiculed it. They had read the translations of the Vedas and the Vedic Shastras by prejudiced European writers and had become convinced that the Vedas were the books of a semi-barbarous people. They were, therefore, not expected to appreciate the truths contained in the Vedas which were meant to guide man during his sojourn on this earth. They never undertook seriously the study of the ancient scriptures and Vedic Shastras in accordance with the rules laid down by the Indian seers and Rishis. Max Muller, Macdonell, Griffith, Tawney, Hornle, Roth, Thibant, Keith and other European scholars were according to them better guides in translating these ancient scriptures than the Indian Rishis and sages. They flaunted their borrow-

ed and second-hand views in such a manner that ordinary people really began to doubt whether there was anything grand and good in the ancient literature of India. Thanks, however, to the work of Dayananda Saraswati, Shri Aurobindo Ghosh, Lokmanya Tilak and our modern research scholars that the Vedas and Vedic teachings have come to the forefront again, and people are desirous of having a complete picture of what India was in ancient days and how she was able to guide the various nations of the world in the path of progress.

Impartial European scholars, like, Pococke, the author of "India in Greece," Count Bjornsterna, the author of "The Theogony of the Hindus," Col. Tod, the author of "Annals of Rajasthan," E. B. Havell, the author of the "History of Aryan Rule in India" and several others, have come to the conclusion that India was the teacher of mankind and her culture conquered the whole world at no remote period of world's history. It is unfortunate that inspite of the discoveries made by these European scholars, our Indian students are ignorant of their own great past ; and for every assertion made by an Indian historian that India was the teacher of mankind, they require testimony from outside sources as well. I have made an humble attempt to collect this evidence from Indian sources, as well as from the writings of impartial European scholars. What has impressed me and should impress every thinking person is the vitality and the continuity of our Indian culture and civilisation.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his "Discovery of India" remarks : "Astonishing thought that any culture or civilisation should have this continuity for five or six thousand years or more ; and not in a static,

unchanging sense, for India was changing and progressing all the time. She was coming into contact with the Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Chinese, the Arabs, the Central Asians, and the peoples of the Mediterranean. But though she influenced them and was influenced by them, her cultural basis was strong enough to endure. What was the secret of this strength? Where did it come from?" Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it appears, has attempted to answer this question in his book.

VEDIC CULTURE

To discover the secret of India's inner strength, however, not one man, but several scholars have to put their heads together, and go through that mass of literature in Sanskrit and Pali or Prakrit which lies unread, un-digested and un-edited in the several libraries of the world. In addition to them, a large number of manuscripts are also to be found in the private palaces of the Indian Princes as well as in the temples and the private houses of the people of India. The archaeological discoveries which have been made in recent years and which are being made at the present time are bound to throw more and more light on the magnificence of our immortal Vedic culture and civilisation.

Vedic culture and civilisation has withstood the vicissitudes of time and though at the present time it is not as vigorous as it was when the Aryas of India carried their civilisation into all parts of the world, it cannot be doubted that this culture and civilisation is still a great living force. Out of all the ancient countries of the world, which developed their own separate civilisations, India alone has kept to the root and the basic principles of her ancient civilisa-

tion. Other civilisations have perished, but not India's—the spiritual and cultural basis of her greatness remains unchanged.

The history of ancient Indian culture and civilisation and her cultural conquest of the whole world is an inspiring theme. Historians have yet to write a correct and faithful account of this long period of India's history. Research on the right lines would disclose that the Aryas' original home was India herself. The earliest name of India was Aryavarta or Aryadesha. It was also called Brahnavarta after the name of Maharishi Brahma. Bharat or Bharatvarsha was the name given to it long afterwards and India is really a very modern name. Aryadesha or Aryavarta included not only India of the present day, but also Afghanistan, parts of Iran, Tibet, Kashmir, Burma and a large territory towards the east.

The Vedas were the sacred books of all those peoples residing in Aryadesha. The Rishis and sages of India expounded the teachings of the Vedas and wrote learned commentaries. The Aryas of India migrated to several other countries of which mention has been made in the following pages. Thus the Vedas are the source, not only of the culture and civilisation of India, but also practically of the whole civilised world.

THE ARYAS

The name Hindu was given to the people of this country in more recent times. Aryas or Hindus are descendants of the same people. The ancient Aryas were a brave and adventurous people, full of faith in themselves and in their mission. We can only justify ourselves if we follow their example. We must recapture the adventurous spirit, the enthusiasm, the faith, the

courage and the spirit of self-sacrifice which our ancient fore-fathers displayed in spreading far and wide the message which the Vedas and the ancient sages gave to the world. We have to explain to the world that our culture was not one-sided, but embraced every department of human activity. The perusal of the following pages is bound to show to an impartial reader that such was the case. Not only the ancient Aryas (Hindus) were in the fore-front of religious and philosophical thought, but they were teachers of mankind in the material sciences as well.

The secret of India's greatness was that the Aryas or the Indians always preferred to follow the path of righteousness rather than any other path. Their outlook on religion was not narrow. There was full freedom for a man to follow the highest dictates of his own conscience.

ARYA DHARMA

Arya Dharma has been well-defined by Pandit Nehru in his book "Discovery of India." He says : "The old inclusive term for religion in India was Arya Dharma. Dharma really means something more than religion. It is from a root word which means to hold together ; it is the inmost constitution of a thing, the law of its inner being. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness, and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities. Arya Dharma would include all the faiths (Vedic and non-Vedic) that originated in India ; it was used by Buddhists and Jains as well as by those who accepted the Vedas. Buddha always called his way to salvation as the 'Aryan Path.'

I maintain that Buddhism and Jainism that arose in India, borrowed most of their doctrines from the

teachings of the Vedic Rishis. Those who believe that Mahatma Buddha pointed out a new way of life are wrong. Mahatma Buddha really revived the old Vedic or Aryan path of life, and in modern times Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati, Mahayogi Aurobindo Ghosh and Mahatma Gandhi have tried to clarify this very path. An effort has been made in the following pages to throw light on the important fact that the sources of Indian culture were the Vedas and the Vedic Shastras written by ancient Rishis, like, Brahma, Kapila, Gautama, Kanada, Patanjali, and Vyas and other sages, Acharyas and teachers, too numerous to be mentioned here. However, I acknowledge my debt to their writings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Amongst the modern writers I acknowledge my debt to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose thought-provoking book 'The Discovery of India' was eagerly read by me. I have taken many quotations from it, though in certain matters the views of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru are not acceptable to me.

I also acknowledge my debt to Shri Aurobindo, Shri Radha Krishnan, Shri Radha Kumud Mookerji and Shri Sisir Kumar Mitra, whose books I have read with great benefit to myself. I have quoted several passages from these books in appropriate places.

My indebtedness, however, to Shri Har Bilas Sardar for his book the 'Hindu Superiority' is very great indeed. This book was written at a time when very few persons knew about the universal nature of Indian culture. I am afraid, the Indians did not study this book with the attention which it deserved. Shri Sardar did a pioneer's work in this direction. I have derived the

greatest possible help from this book and have quoted profusely from it.

Similarly, European writers like Pococke, Count Bjornsterna, Havell and several others have been quoted very frequently by me in order to show that their researches fully support the theme of India's ancient culture.

I express my debt of gratitude to Shri Bhagavada Datta, an eminent Indian scholar, who has devoted more than thirty years to the research of Indian history. He wrote a history of India based on original sources in 1940. Its revised edition appeared in 1947. He is now engaged in writing a bigger history of India which will cover several volumes. I had the privilege of reading the manuscripts of his first two volumes, and I am grateful to him for allowing me to make use of the historical material which he has collected. The dates of various Sanskrit books referred to by me have been taken either from his published history or from his manuscripts. I discussed the matters with him and with some other scholars. I have found that the periods fixed by Shri Bhagavada Datta of the authorship of the Indian Shastras and of the Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—are far more worthy of credence than those given by some of the Europeans. However, this is a field of research in which the Indian scholars must combine together, and give to the world their considered opinion after having studied all the new material which has become available now.

Amongst others my grateful thanks are due to the following, who took a lively interest in reading the manuscript and who made some very valuable suggestions which I adopted—namely, to Mr. Justice Mehr

Chand Mahajan of the Supreme Court of India ; to Shri J. D. Shukla, I.C.S., and to Dr. G. L. Dutta, Principal, Hans Raj College, Delhi.

AN EXHORTATION

It should be realised that India never accepted defeat even during her worst days, when she was under foreign rule. It is true that this country was several times, or parts of it many times, conquered by foreign legions, but "she has always resisted them," as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru remarks, "often successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully, and even when she failed for the time being, she has remembered and prepared herself for the next attempt. Her method has been two-fold ; to fight them and drive them out, and to absorb those who could not be driven away. She resisted, with considerable success, Alexander's legions, and immediately after his death drove out the Greek garrisons in the North. Later she absorbed the Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians and ultimately again established a national hegemony. She fought the Huns for generations and drove them out ; such as remained being absorbed. When the Arabs came they stopped near the Indus. The Turks and Afghans spread further only gradually. It took them several centuries to establish themselves firmly on the throne of Delhi. It was a continuous, long drawn-out conflict and, while this struggle was going on, the other process of absorption and indianization was also at work, ending in the invaders becoming as much Indian as any one else."

It is true that India has become free, but we must not forget that intellectual and spiritual slavery amongst our educated people still persists. It has to be removed. Indians have once more to assert them-

selves not forgetting their great and immortal heritage. Let them remember the words of the American—Will Durant — who says : “ India was the mother-land of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe’s languages ; she was the mother of our philosophy ; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics ; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity ; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all.”

With these words of introduction I place the material which I have collected, before the public. I hope that the Indian scholars and students who read the following pages will be inspired to do their utmost to co-operate with one another to bring back to India that credit and glory which made her name immortal.

CHAPTER II

THE IMMORTAL VEDAS

The Vedas are four in number : the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. The Aryas (Hindus) consider them to be the word of God. The Hindus, whether orthodox or belonging to the Reformist School of the Arya Samaj, are unanimous in regarding the Vedas as God revealed. According to them, God gave His knowledge to mankind in the beginning of creation, in order to guide man in all matters, religious as well as secular, during his sojourn on earth. This position is quite understandable. God could not have, it is argued, waited for giving His dispensation to mankind several thousands of years after the appearance of man on earth. Thus the claims made by the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims that the Bible and the Quran were the words of God cannot be sustained. Leaving aside other reasons, one main ground for the rejection of this claim is that the earlier societies could not have been deprived of the benefit of Divine guidance. It was, therefore, divine justice to provide guidance at the beginning of the career of mankind. Hence the revelation of the Vedas (Divine Knowledge) in the very beginning.

The revelation was made to the four Rishis. To Agni Rishi was revealed the Rig Veda ; to Vayu Rishi the Yajur Veda ; to Aditya or Ravi Rishi the Sama Veda ; and to Angiras Rishi was revealed the Atharva Veda. The Indian Rishis - who were

really seers of the highest scientific and spiritual truths – Acharyas and scholars, both ancient and modern, believe that the Vedas are immortal. As the cycle of creation and dissolution of the universe is beginningless and endless, so are the Vedas beginningless and endless. Thus in the beginning of the present creation the Vedas were given to mankind in the manner stated above.

The authors of almost all the ancient Sanskrit Shastras, available in more than 400 texts even now, pay the highest homage to the Vedas. These Shastras in their turn have won the admiration of several unbiased Sanskrit scholars of the West. The authors of these Shastras maintain the divine origin of the the four Vedas. Brahmana granthas, such as Aitareya, Kasishitaki, Shatapatha, Taittiriya, Tandya or Panchavinsha, Jaiminiya, and Gopatha, the law-code of Manu, as well as the law-codes of later savants, like, Narada, Brihaspati, Atri, Shankhalikhita, Deval, Harita and Katyayana; the Upanishadas; the Sutras; the Darshanas; the Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; the scientific works of Ayurveda and Astronomy, as well as the Puranas, look upon the four Vedas with the highest reverence and regard them as the word of God Himself.

THE WORD OF GOD

All the law-givers, headed by Svayambhava Manu, and the authors of the earliest Puranas acclaim the Vedas as of divine origin. That they were regarded by the learned sages, Rishis and Maharishis of ancient Bharata as the word of God is proved by the following evidence:—

Yajnavalkya says in Shatapatha Brahmana (circa 3100 B. C.) ¹ that the Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas are the Nishvasa of the Supreme Spirit. That is to say that they came out of Him as breath comes out of the human body. At the time of the dissolution of the universe they are drawn in again by God.

Kapila, whose doctrine has been redacted in the Samkhya Sutra (3000 B. C.) ² declares the Vedas to be self-authoritative as their author is God Himself. Similarly, Vyasa, a contemporary of Bhishma, the grandsire of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, and the author of Vedanta Sūtras, regarded God as the source from whom the Vedas have proceeded.

Gautama (circa 3150 B. C.), in the Nyaya Sutra states : "Vedas are eternal. They are the word of God. Their authority is supreme as is evidenced by the Yogis, the Rishis and sages who always admitted them as having proceeded from God."

Patanjali's view in Yoga Shastra (3100 B. C.) is, "Verily He is the teacher of the ancients as He is not bound by time."

The Vedas themselves declare that they are the word of God, meant for all mankind. The internal evidence afforded by the Vedas themselves is emphatic on this point. Thus the Yajur Veda says : "From that universally adored Being the Rig, the Sama, the Yajur and the Atharva Vedas were produced. (vide Yajur Veda, Ad. XXI, Mantra VII).

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1. Bharatavarsha ka Brihad Itihasa by Pandit Bhagavad Datta, Vol. I, p. 71.
 2. Kapila lived in the beginning of Treta age (circa 7000 B. C.). His voluminous work is lost. His doctrines were summed up by the Rishis during the time of the Mahabharata period.

The Atharva Veda says : From Him came out the Rig Veda and the Yajur Veda; the Sama Veda is like His hair and the Atharva Veda is like His mouth. (Atharva Veda, Kand X, Mantra XX)

There are many more Mantras in the Vedas, which, in no uncertain terms, declare the Vedas to have proceeded from Him.

SUPREME AUTHORITY

The Ramayana of Valmiki definitely gives to the Vedas the supreme authority in all matters, because they have proceeded from the Divine Being. As a matter of fact, the education of all the the four 'varnas' was considered incomplete, unless they had mastered the four Vedas together with their 'angas' and 'upangas', directly or indirectly. In all important matters the king always sought the advice of the Purohits and the Rishis who were conversant with the Vedas and their branches, especially the 'Artha Shastras'. Not only was there a Cabinet of Ministers, but there was also a Council of Advisers, who were all learned persons well versed in the sublime secrets of the Vedas. It was considered that their advice must be sought, as they were the persons who could speak with a detached mind, uninfluenced by any personal or party consideration.

Equally emphatic was the view of the learned men and kings of the Dvapara age regarding the sanctity of the Vedas. It is mentioned in the Mahabharata that the Vedas were Divine and their teachings were true for all times. Bhishma, the great warrior, as well as Dronacharya, the great preceptor of the Kauravas and Pandavas, held the Vedas in high respect, just as the ancient Rishis did. A large number

of historical events mentioned in the Mahabharata point out that from the ancient-most times the Vedas were regarded as books of divine revelation to which every respect was due. The Rishis, who flourished in the Dvapara age,¹ taught the Vedas to the sons of the rich and the poor alike. The injunctions of the Vedas were to be carried out. The virtues that the Vedas exalted were to be the rules of conduct for all persons of all times.

The Rishis who wrote the Upanishadas spent many years in meditation trying to understand the significance of the Vedic Mantras. After hard penance when they had themselves realised the meaning of the Mantras, they explained them to the people at large.

So great was the esteem in which the Vedas were held that the Brahmans and the Kings thought it their duty that these sacred texts should be committed to memory by the pious Rishis. It was thought that there should be no interpolations of any kind in the Vedic texts, hence the necessity of learning the Vedas by heart. Thousands of Brahman families devoted themselves to commit to memory the Vedas and it is a very important and significant fact that while some interpolation have taken place in several old Shastras, there have been no interpolations in the Vedic texts.

UNIQUE METHOD OF PRESERVATION

Well-deserved homage is paid by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith to those Brahmans, who committed the Vedas to memory and thus preserved them in their pristine purity. Mr. Griffith says : "These four Vedas are

-
1. The Hindus divide the period into four Yugas or ages ; the Sat Yug, the Treta, Dvapara and the Kaliyug.

considered to be of divine origin and to have existed from all eternity. The Rishis or the great poets to whom the hymns are ascribed were merely inspired seers, who saw or received them by sight and directly from the Supreme Creator. In accordance with this belief these sacred books have been preserved and handed with the most reverential care from generation to generation.”¹.

Professor A. A. Macdonell maintains that the ancient sages adopted steps for preserving the Vedic texts with the faithfulness unique in history. Briefly stated those steps were (i) Analysis of the whole text into words called Pada Patha. (ii) Krama Patha, i. e., reading every word twice, connected with both the preceding word and the word that follows. (iii) The woven text or Jata Patha stating each of its combinations three times, the second time in reverse order. (iv) The climax of this precaution was, according to Prof. Macdonell, reached in what was called Ghana Patha in which the order of words is ab, ba, abc, cba, abc; bc, cb, bed, etc. All these varieties of texts were learnt by heart. Only by the deepest faith and devotion combined with a marvellous memory and a spirit of self-sacrifice could have accomplished this feat.”² Even now there are hundreds of Brahmans in Banaras and South India who know the Vedas by heart.

The Vedas were regarded as the source of true knowledge ; and hence the Rishis and sages built their Ashramas on high mountain-tops or in the forests or in other equally attractive places to study the Vedas with concentrated minds. These teachers drew students

1. Translation of the Rig Veda, Introduction, by Griffith.

2. Dr. Gokal Chand Narang's "Real Hinduism."

from all parts of India. In the Treta and the Dvapara Yugas the whole of the country was studded with the hermitages or the Ashramas of the Rishis, who taught the Vedas to the deserving Brahmacharis. Thus Vedic culture was kept alive ; and these Rishis in order to carry out the Vedic injunctions taught the Vedas to all others. According to the Yajur Veda, this injunction given by God Himself, is as follows :-

“As I have given the word (Veda) which is the word of salvation for all Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishas, Sudras, women, servants, and even for the lowest of the low, so also you should teach and preach the Vedas to all mankind.”

The Vedas were not regarded the monopoly of the Brahmans or the Kshatriyas alone. It was only due to their shortsightedness that certain castes and classes wanted to monopolise their studies and debar other persons from the benefits which the Vedic study bestowed. The theory that women and Sudras were not entitled to study or listen to the recitation of the Vedas, was invented at a time when India had fallen a prey to the teachings of many false prophets.

VIEWES OF EUROPEAN SCHOLARS

Even European scholars, who do not believe in the divinity of the Vedas, regard them as the oldest scriptures of mankind. Voltaire, the French philosopher, when presented with a copy of the Yajur Veda, remarked that it was the most precious gift for which the West had ever been indebted to the East.

Guigault says : “The Rig Veda is the most sublime conception of great highways of the humanity.”

Mons. Leon Delbos says : "There is no monument of Greece or Rome more precious than the Rig Veda."

Sir W. W. Hunter remarks : "The age of this hymnal (Rig Veda) is unknown."

Prof. Max Muller admitted that the Vedas were the oldest of books in the library of mankind. "In the history of the world, the Vedas fill a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill," he remarked. "I maintain that to every body who cares for himself, for his ancestors, for his history, for his intellectual development, a study of Vedic literature is indispensable."

Prof. Heeren maintains : "Even the most ancient Sanskrit writings allow the Vedas as already existing." ¹

VEDAS CONTAIN SEEDS OF ALL TRUE KNOWLEDGE

The ancient sages and even many modern Indian scholars of the Vedas who have studied them in a really scientific spirit, maintain that the Vedas contain the seeds of all true knowledge. They not only give directions to mankind as to how an individual is to attain salvation or 'moksha', how God is to be worshipped, what prayers are to be offered, what truths one has to realise in one's life, what rules of conduct one has to follow here on earth, how a man has to receive the full benefit of the working of Nature (Prakriti), but they also enunciate the loftiest principles on which human society and the State is to be built and the well-

1. The above quotations have been taken from Har Bilas Sarda's book "Hindu Superiority".

being of the human race is to be secured. These principles rightly understood and rightly acted upon will prove of immense benefit to the present day humanity which is in the grip of mortal fear. Furthermore, Vedic Mantras give clue to the discovery of subtle scientific truths and formulas. Several Mantras have been quoted by Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati in his Rig - Vedadi - Bhashya - Bhumika ("Introduction to the Vedic Commentary") dealing with the science of mathematics, astronomy, gravitation and attraction, the revolution and rotation of the sphere. Those Mantras are also quoted which mention aeroplanes, boats, ships and other means of conveyance which people use in modern days.¹

There were four Up-Vedas which dealt with Ayurveda or science of life (including medicine), Dhanur Veda or military science, Gandharva Veda or science of music, and Artha Veda or science of economics, statecraft, and sociology and other similar branches of learning. Many of these ancient books have been lost or completely destroyed while a very large number still exists which have won the admiration of even the Europeans.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR STUDY OF VEDAS

It is maintained by the ancient Rishis and modern learned men of India that in order to correctly understand the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads and the commentaries of the ancient Rishis on Vedas, like, the Nirukta, must be studied. Dayananda Saraswati maintains that he alone can correctly understand the Vedas who has undergone discipline ('tapa') and has acquired efficiency in Sanskrit according

1. Rig-Vedadi-Bhashya-Bhumika by Maharishi Dayananda Sarawsati.

to the ancient traditional method. Thus he remarks in the Rig – Vedadi – Bhashya – Bhumika :-

“The Mantras cannot be interpreted in an off-hand manner on hearing them or with the help of reasoning alone. They ought to be explained with due regard to their context, that is, with reference to what precedes as well as to what follows. But a man who is not a Rishi, who has not performed the austerities (‘Tapas’), whose mind is not pure and who does not possess adequate learning cannot realise the meaning of the Mantras. Unless a man is fully acquainted with the context of the Mantras, has the necessary qualification for realising their sense and is a man of highest erudition, he is not in a position to grasp the meanings of the Vedic Mantras however good his reasoning may be.”

Dayananda Saraswati’s view is based on an ancient passage quoted by Patanjali in his Mahabhashya:-

“Shadango Vedo sdhyeyo jyeyasha iti.”

(“The Veda should be studied and mastered with the help of the six Angas.”)

Like Swami Dayananda Saraswati other earlier commentators hold the same view.

MISINTERPRETATION OF VEDIC TEXTS

Unfortunately, the European translators of the Vedas have either through political motive or through ignorance of the correct method of interpreting the Vedas, translated several of the Hymns in a manner which makes their meaning ambiguous. They have read into these passages meanings which are entirely foreign to the subject matter of the Hymn or do not fit in with the context.

There is some justification for upholding the view that political motive has played a great part in thus distorting the meaning of the Mantras. Lin Yutang in his book 'The Wisdom of India' remarks: "But the great age of Western appreciation of Indian literature and philosophy, the age of Sir William Jones, Franz Bopp and Sir Edward Arnold has passed. The enthusiasm that came with the discovery of Sanskrit and the founding of the science of Indo-Germanic philology directly inspired by it soon evaporated. 1860 marked the turning point."

J.T. Garrett writes: "This phase was not fated to last. His (Sir William Jones's) successors soon began to adopt that slightly hostile and superior attitude which characterises the work of Englishmen writing on Indian subjects. From about 1836 this tradition had become firmly established."

MACAULAY AND MAX MULLER

In 1835, Macaulay was the President of the Board of Education in India. It was his attempt to introduce a system of education in India which should create a class of persons "Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect." On his advice grant made by the Government of India to the Sanskrit Colleges was discontinued and efforts were made that the funds thus realised should be employed "in imparting to the native population a knowledge of the English literature and science through the medium of English language."

On 28th December 1855, Max Muller was given an interview by Macaulay. When the Professor primed with every possible argument in favour of oriental

studies had to sit silent for an hour, while the historian poured out his diametrically opposite views and then dismissed his visitor who tried in vain to utter a single word. "I went back to Oxford," says Max Muller, "a saddler man and a wiser man." (Life of Max Muller, edited by his wife, Longmans Green & Co., 1902, quoted in Cambridge Modern History, Vol. VI, 1932.)

Prof. Max Muller, when he returned to Oxford after his interview with Macaulay, was a changed man. His conception of the Vedas and of the Sanskrit literature underwent a great change. He then translated the Rig Veda with a particular object, namely, with the object of converting the people of India to Christianity.

EFFORTS TO POPULARISE CHRISTIANITY

In 1866, he wrote to his wife: "I hope I shall finish that work and I feel convinced that I shall not live to see, yet this edition of mine and the translation of the Vedas will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last three thousand years."

In 1868, he wrote to the Duke of Argyle, the then Secretary of State for India, "The ancient religion of India is doomed and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?"

In 1899, the Professor wrote to N. K. Majumdar, a Brahmo-Samajist: "You know for how many years I have watched your efforts to purify the popular religion of India and tried to bring it nearer to the purity and perfection of other religions, particularly of Christianity." In this letter of his he praised the

efforts of Ram Mohan Roy and Keshav Chander Sen as well as of Majumdar himself. He wanted to know from Majumdar the difficulties that prevented him and his countrymen from openly following Christ. He wrote : "Tell me some of your chief difficulties that prevent you and your countrymen from openly following Christ and when I write to you, I shall do my best to explain how I and many who agree with me have made them and solved them. From my point of view India, at least the best part of it, is already converted to Christianity. You want no persuasion to become the follower of Christ." (vide Life and Letters of Fredrick Max Muller, quoted in *Ecclesia Divina* by Swami Bhuma Nand).

E. B. Pusey's letter addressed to Prof. Max Muller is very important in this connection. He says : "Your work will form a new era in the efforts for the conversion of India and Oxford will have reason to be thankful that, by giving you a home, it will have facilitated a work of such primary and lasting importance for the conversion of India, and which, by enabling us to compare that early false religion with the true, illustrates the more than blessedness of what we enjoy."

IMPORTANCE OF VEDAS BELITTLED

Similarly, many scholars in England and other European countries, combined together to show that the Vedas were the songs of a semi-civilized or semi-barbarous people. The Vedas, according to them, were full of magic incantations and inculcated the worship of many gods and goddesses, of mountains, rivers and trees. Other scholars sought to find history in these scriptures. These scholars maintain that the Aryas had come into India from outside in search of pasture

lands for their cattle, and they composed Vedic Hymns in the Punjab or the North-West part of India.

In England and other countries of Europe, societies were formed and chairs in the Universities were founded in order to belittle the antiquity and importance of the Vedic literature and of the ancient civilisation of India. European scholars trained under these teachers were sent to occupy chairs of Sanskrit in Indian Universities. These Professors and teachers taught their students that the Vedas were the religious books of a semi-civilised people, who worshipped the forces of nature and believed in many gods and goddesses. The Indian students brought up in such an atmosphere and taught by such teachers have tried to decry the teachings of those ancient scriptures and to belittle the greatness and magnificence of the literature of their ancestors which was based upon the Vedic texts. During the British rule in India which lasted in some places for about two hundred years, the lessons taught by these foreign professors have left a deep impression on the minds of these Indian students, and even today we find that most of these Indians have not given up the erroneous beliefs inculcated by their European teachers; but on the other hand, they are trying their utmost to propagate these views.

CORRECT INTERPRETATION BY MAHARISHI

It was, however, left to two of India's great sons of modern times once more to show the way to the world regarding the method of the proper interpretation of the Vedas. One of them was Dayananda Saraswati, who lived from 1824 to 1883, and the second was Sri Aurobindo, who died at the age of 79 in

December, 1950. Dayananda Saraswati left his home at the age of 21. For more than twenty years he was wandering from place to place seeking knowledge and trying to find out eminent teachers in order to study the Vedas under them. He led a hard life of penance, took the vow of poverty and celibacy and sought enlightenment from whatever source it came. Ultimately, he found a Guru in Virjananda Saraswati, a man of gigantic intellect, who lived in Mathura and under whom he studied for about three years. It was here that he found the key to the correct interpretation of the Vedas. The Nirukta and Nighantu of Yasakacharya (C. 3100 B. C.) and Ashtodhayayi (circa 2900 B. C.) of Panini furnished this key for the correct interpretation of the Samhitas.

Dayananda Saraswati met Bechler (a German Scholar in Indian Government service) and Monier Williams (a professor in Balliol College, Oxford) when they came to India. He also had meetings with Rudolph Hornle and G. Thibaut, the Principals of Queens College, Banaras.

MAX MULLER EXTOLLS INDIA

Besides, the Maharishi corresponded with Pandit Shyamji Krishen Varma, his disciple, who was at one time Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford. Shri Varma often discussed Dayananda Saraswati's translation of the Vedas with Professor Max Muller and Monier Williams, who were teaching Sanskrit at Oxford University at the time when Shyamji Krishen Varma was there. It appears that in later years Max Muller was again converted to some extent to the view that Indian culture was unrivalled in many respects. Thus, while delivering his lectures in Cambridge in 1882, he said :

“If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature, we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India.”

Unfortunately, however, Max Muller's translation of the Vedas remained unchanged and remains up to this day to mislead and misguide the Sanskrit students of both the East and West. His translation of the Vedas has been condemned as being wrong and in certain places absurd and obscene by no less a person than Prof. Boulangar, Russian editor of the 'Sacred Books of the East'. He says: “What struck me in Max Muller's translation was a lot of absurdities, obscene passages and a lot of what is not lucid. . . . As far as I can grasp the teaching of Vedas, it is so sublime that I would look upon it as a crime on my part if the Russian public become acquainted with it through the medium of a confused and distorted translation, thus

not deriving for its soul that benefit which this teaching should give to the people.”

Dayananda Saraswati realised that the root meaning of the words must be first sought and then applied, always keeping in view the context. Thus he was able to translate with the help of the ancient commentaries the Yajur Veda and a good portion of the Rig Veda. Many Vedic words have several meanings. The meaning which fitted best with the context should be accepted and not the meaning then in vogue. The Maharishi gave many instances where the Indian and European scholars went wrong. He corresponded with Prof. Max Muller as well, and showed him his mistakes in interpreting the Vedic Hymns. No doubt in the beginning, the scholars were not able to appreciate the method adopted by the Maharishi, but later researches confirmed the accuracy of his method in interpreting the Vedas.

AUROBINDO'S SUPPORT TO MAHARISHI

The second great son of India, who led the way to a correct interpretation of the Vedic Samhitas, was Shri Aurobindo. He supports the view of Dayananda Saraswati. He remarks : “Objection has also been made to the philological and etymological method by which he (Dayananda Saraswati) arrived at his results, especially in his dealings with the names of the God-heads. But this objection, I feel certain, is an error due to our introduction of modern ideas about language into our study of this ancient tongue. We moderns use words as counters without any meaning or appreciation of their original sense ; when we speak, we think of the object spoken of, not at all of the expressive word, which is to us a

dead and brute thing, mere coin of verbal currency with no value of its own.

“In early language the word was, on the contrary, a living thing with essential powers of signification; its root-meanings were remembered because they were still in use ; its wealth of force was vividly present to the mind of the speaker. We say ‘wolf’, and think only of the animal ; any other sound would have served our purpose as well, given the convention of its usage ; the ancient said ‘tearer’ and had that significance present to them. We say ‘agni’ and think of fire, the word is of no other use to us ; to the ancients ‘agni’ means other things besides, and only because of one, or more of its root-meanings was applied to the physical object fire. Our words are carefully limited to one or two senses ; theirs were capable of a great number, and it was quite easy for them, if they so chose, to use a word like Agni, Varuna or Vayu as sound-index of a great number of connected and complex ideas, a key-word. It cannot be doubted that the Vedic Rishis did take advantage of this greater potentiality of their language. . . . The Nirukta bears evidence to this capacity, and in the Brahmanas and Upanishads we find the memory of this free and symbolic use of words still subsisting. . . .

“In the matter of Vedic interpretation,” declares Shri Aurobindo in the concluding portion of his article, “I am convinced that, whatever may be the final, complete interpretation, Dayananda will be honoured as the first discoverer of the right clues. Amidst chaos and obscurity of old ignorance and age-long misunderstanding, his was the eye of direct

vision that pierced to the truth and fastened on that which was essential. He has found the keys of the doors that time had closed and rent asunder the seals of the imprisoned Fountain ?”

WORSHIP OF ONE GOD ONLY

Like the old Indian Sages and Rishis, Dayananda Saraswati also maintained that the Vedas taught the worship of one God only and that the Vedic Hymns mention only one God under different names. Shri Aurobindo concurs with this view. He says : “Here Dayananda’s view is quite clear, its foundation inexpungable. The Vedic Hymns are chanted to the One Deity under many names, names which are used, and even designed, to express His qualities and powers. Was this conception of Dayananda’s arbitrary conceit fetched out of his own too ingenious imagination ? Not at all ; it is the explicit statement of the Veda itself ‘One Existent, Sages’ not the ignorant, mind you but the Seers, Men of direct knowledge ‘speak of in many ways, as Indra and Yama, as Matariswan, as Agni.’ The Vedic Rishis ought surely to have known something about their religion, more, let us hope, than Roth or Max Muller ; and this is what they knew.

“We are aware how modern scholars twist away from the evidence. This Hymn, they say, was a late production, this loftier ideal, which it expressed with so clear a force rose up, somehow, in the later Arya mind, or was borrowed by them from their Dravidian enemies. But throughout the Veda we have confirmatory Hymns and expressions : Agni or Indra or any other is expressly hymned as one with all the other Gods. Agni contains all other Divine Powers within Himself, the Maruts are described as well as His own,

or most commonly. He is given, as Lord and King of the Universe, attributes only appropriate to the Supreme Deity."

VIEWS OF IMPARTIAL EUROPEAN SCHOLARS

Impartial European scholars have admitted that the Vedas inculcate worship of only one God.

Ernest Wood writes : "In the eyes of the Hindus, there is but One Supreme God. This was stated long ago in the Rig Veda in the following words : "Ekam Sadvipra bahudha vadanti," which may be translated as "The sages name the One Being variously." ¹

Count Bjornsjerne, after giving quotations from the Vedas, says : "These truly sublime ideas cannot fail to convince us that the Vedas recognise only One God, Who is Almighty, Infinite Eternal, Self-existent, the Light and Lord of the Universe."

Mr. Ward says : "It is true, indeed, that the Hindus believe in the unity of God. 'One Brahma without a second,' is a phrase very commonly used by them when conversing on subjects which relate to the nature of God. They believe also that God is Almighty, All-wise, Omnipotent, Omniscient."

Mr. Charles Coleman says : "The Almighty, Infinite, Eternal, Incomprehensible, Self-existent Being; He who sees everything though never seen; He who is not to be compassed by description and who is beyond the limits of human conception, is Brahma, the one unknown true Being, the Creator, the Preserver and Destroyer of the universe. Under such and innume-

1. An Englishman Defends Mother India, p. 128

rable other definitions is the Deity acknowledged in the Vedas, or the sacred writings of the Hindus.”

VEDIC TEACHINGS AND SCIENCE : NO CONFLICT

The Aryas' (Hindus') view of religion is quite consistent with science. There is really no conflict between the two.

W. D. Brown, an English scholar writes in his book “Superiority of the Vedic Religion”: “It (Vedic Religion) recognises but one God. It is a thoroughly scientific religion, where religion and science meet hand in hand. Here Theology is based upon science and Philosophy.”

Jaccoliot, a French savant, author of “The Bible in India”, wrote thus in his book about the Vedas : “Astonishing fact ! The Hindu Revelation (Veda) is of all revelations the only one whose ideas are in perfect harmony with modern science.”

Edward Carpenter, the famous author and philosopher, thus remarks : “A new philosophy we can hardly expect or wish for, since the same germinal thoughts of the Vedic authors have come all the way down history, even to Schopenhauer and Whitman, inspiring philosophy after philosophy, religion after religion. Science is able to provide for these world-old principles, somewhat of a new form and so wonderful, a garment for illustration and exposition as it does.” (‘Art of Creation.’)

Materlink, a distinguished Nobel Prize winner, philosopher of Belgium, writes about the Vedas as follows : “Only the glare of the clairvoyant directed upon the mysteries of the past may reveal the unrivalled wisdom which lies hidden behind these writings.”

Thoreau, a famous American thinker, writes :
“What extracts from the Vedas I have read, fall on me like the light of a higher and purer luminary which describes a loftier course through purer stratum, free from particulars, simple, universal. The Vedas contain a sensible account of God.”

Mrs. Besant, speaking in Calcutta, remarked :
“India is the mother of religion. In her are combined science and religion in perfect harmony, and that is the Hindu religion, and it is India that shall be again the spiritual mother of the world.”

In an article on the “Vital Value in the Hindu God Idea” in the Hibbert Journal, Mr. W. Tully Seegar frankly admits that the Hindu idea is much more highly developed than that of modern Christianity, and concludes : “Enough has been said to suggest the probability that the Hindu conceptions regarding ‘the Self,’ are just what the Occident needs and must appropriate, if it is to see through life’s falsities and lay hold of its spiritual realities.”

Schlegel says : “It cannot be denied that the early Indians possessed a knowledge of the true God. All their writings are replete with sentiments and expressions, noble, clear, severely grand, as deeply conceived as in any human language in which men have spoken of their God.”

Dayananda Saraswati was clearly of the opinion that the Vedas were the word of God and contained the seeds of true knowledge.

Shri Aurobindo supports this view in the following words :—

“On the question of revelation suffice it to say that here too Dayananda was perfectly logical, and it is quite grotesque to charge him with insincerity because he held to and proclaimed the doctrine. There are always three fundamental entities which we have to know if we would understand existence at all, God, Nature and the Soul. If, as Dayananda held on strong enough grounds, the Veda reveals to us God, reveals to us the law of Nature, reveals to us the relations of the Soul to God and Nature, what is it but Revelation of Divine Truth ? And if, as Dayananda held, it reveals them to us with a perfect truth, flawlessly he might well hold it for an infallible Scripture. The rest is a question of the method of revelation, of Divine dealings with our race, of man’s psychology and possibilities. Modern thought, affirming Nature and Law, but denying God, denied also the possibility of revelation, but so also has it denied many things which a more modern thought is very busy re-affirming; we cannot demand of a great mind that it shall make itself a slave to vulgarly received opinion or the transient dogmas, the very essence of its greatness is this; that it looks beyond, that it sees deeper.”

Whether the secrets of science are contained in the Vedas or not, and whether the ancient civilisation possessed those secrets, Aurobindo remarks as follows :—

“His (Dayananda’s) idea is increasingly supported by the recent trend of knowledge about the ancient world. The ancient civilisation did possess secrets of science, some of which modern knowledge has recovered, extended and made more rich and precise, but others still remain to be recovered. There is then nothing fantastic in Dayananda’s idea that the Vedas contain truths of science as well as truths of religion. I will even add

my own conviction that the Vedas contain other truths of a science the modern world does not at all possess, and in that case Dayananda has rather understated than overstated the depth and range of the Vedic wisdom."

Whatever view may be taken by the Vedic scholars, who will appear in the field in later years, we have not the least doubt that they shall have to discard the method adopted by some of the European scholars in translating the Vedas. Those persons who have merely followed these scholars in maintaining that the Vedas are the songs of a pastoral or semi-civilised people shall have to change their views if they study these ancient scriptures with unprejudiced eyes. Moreover, after having read the testimony of impartial and unprejudiced Europeans they shall realise that the Vedas contain truths of great beauty and shall disclose to an earnest seeker the true path for the realisation of lasting happiness. The views of such eminent persons as Dayananda Saraswati and Shri Aurobindo, they will find, are in the main correct.

The great civilisation of India was based on the Vedas and the Vedic Shastras composed in later times by great Indian Rishis and sages.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUR YUGAS OR AGES

In order to fully appreciate the benefits of the Vedic culture and teachings, and their influence on the various cultures of the world, it is necessary to state briefly those historical facts which have been now brought to light by several Indian scholars. Their conclusions are supported by the writings of some impartial Western authors as well, who uninfluenced by political and religious considerations, have tried to find out the origin of the various cultures and civilisations of the world.

THE AGE OF THE VEDAS

The ancient sages of India from the very beginning maintained that this earth had been created several million years ago. Dayananda Saraswati, relying on the ancient astronomical works, gave the age of the Vedas as 1,960,852,976 years.¹ In other words man appeared on earth for the first time in the present cycle at about that period. The Vedas, according to the ancient sages of India as well as the later scholars and reformers, had been given in the very beginning for the good of mankind, for their guidance here on earth. The earth, therefore, must have come into existence many thousand years before man actually appeared on the scene.

It is true that our earth has undergone many changes. Its structure must have been quite different from what it is at the present day. According to several writers there were many cataclysms, such as great

1. Rig-Vedadi—Bhashya-Bhumika by Dayananda Saraswati

deluges, universal fires, earthquakes and smaller calamities, like floods, earthquakes on a small scale and visitations of similar nature. Many ancient cultures and civilisations have been destroyed several times over. The remains of a few of them have been unearthed by the archaeologists.

THE GREAT DELUGE

According to the ancient Indian Shastras, the last great deluge occurred about 16,000 years ago. This deluge seems to have been preceded by great fires which burnt down animals, men and vegetation. It is stated that the heat of the sun became terrible, almost unbearable by living beings. This heat was followed by torrential rains, which lasted for a year, and the whole earth was covered with water, causing destruction on a universal scale.

The whole mankind was decimated. Only a few Rishis, their families, their descendants and their students living on the high mountain tops of the Himalayas were saved. Indian Shastras give the names of seven Rishis who escaped the great deluge : Maharishis Brahma, Vasishtha, Bhrigu, Atri, Daksha, Kashyapa and Angirasa¹.

THE SECOND FLOOD

There was a later 'jala-plava' or flood in Vaivasvata Manu's time which was not so devastating. The ancient Indian traditions make clear the distinction between the great deluge of Brahma's time and the flood of Manu's time. The traditions of several ancient people seem to have confused the two ravages, and thus to have lost the distinction between these two floods.

1. Mahabharata, Adiparva, and the Puranas.

However, the Chaldeans, and the South American Indians have kept alive the distinction between these two ravages. The Babylonian or Chaldean tradition is mentioned in a prophecy by Besorus: "Besorus, the priest in the Marduk temple of Babylonia under the rule of Selucid wrote that the world would burn when all the planets come into the crab¹."

The cuniform text mentions kings before the flood in opposition to kings after the flood. "In the time before the flood, there lived heroes who dwelt in the under-world or like the Babylonian Noaha were removed in the heavenly worlds. At that time there lived too the seven sages²." Similarly, the traditions of South American Indians support the theory that there were two floods. "It is noteworthy that among the several South American Indians it is generally held that the world was destroyed twice—once by fire and again by flood as amongst the Eastern Tupes and the Arvakas of Guina³." It appears that reference to fire is to the great heat of sun, which must have caused several conflagrations preceding the flood in Brahma's time.

The Jewish, the Christian and the Islamic traditions seem to have confused the two floods. The Noaha's Arc has reference to the flood in the Manu's time, but it has been wrongly associated with the great deluge of Brahma's time, which decimated almost the whole of the human race. Similarly, confusion exists in the Jewish and the Mohammedan tradition regarding Adam who is really Brahma of the Hindu tradition. As a matter of fact *Adam* is the *Atma-bhu* of the

1. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Article on Ages.

2 & 3. Ibid.

Aryas. 'Atma-bhu' is another name of Brahma. He is also called Hiranyagarbha. According to Islamic traditions Adam lived on the soil of India. Also some of Noaha's sons came to India in Noaha's Arc and settled here¹.

ARYAVARTA OR INDIA : ARYAS ORIGINAL HOME

Thus it appears that the repopulation of the earth began in Bharatavarsha, also named Aryavarta and Brahmavarta. The descendants of the seven Rishis—survivors from the first great deluge of Brahma's time—called themselves Aryas; and they naturally named their country 'Aryavarta.' It was called 'Brahmavarta,' as the dominating personality of this period was Brahma.

It is wrong to maintain that the Aryas came to India from Europe or Central Asia as mentioned by European scholars and by their Indian disciples. This is an important fact which must be borne in mind in order to understand the significance and importance of the Vedic civilisation.

The Aryas of Aryavarta, i.e. of India or Bharata, emigrated to other countries and founded many colonies in different parts of the world. The Arya or the Vedic culture, therefore, was born in India and spread to other countries from India.

THE FOUR EPOCHS

The next important point to be noted is that the Arya or Hindu historians divide the period into four epochs or ages ² :

1. See two articles in the Statesman (1949) by Dr. Syed Mahmood of Bihar (India)—a Mohammedan by religion.
2. Mahabharata.

- (a) Satyuga, which lasted for 4000 years. The intervening period between Satyuga and Tretayuga consisted of 800 years.
- (b) The Tretayuga lasted 3000 years and the intervening period between Treta and Dvapara Yugas was of 600 years.
- (c) Dvaparayuga lasted 2000 years and the intervening period between Dvapara and Kaliyuga was of 400 years.
- (d) The Indian historians divide Kaliyuga into two Yugas, viz. Kaliyuga and Mahakaliyuga. The present period is of Mahakaliyuga. Kaliyuga lasted for 1000 years with an intervening period of 200 years between it and the Mahakaliyuga. The Mahakaliyuga has already passed through 3800 years. Thus the great deluge occurred about 16000 years ago, i. e. in 14000 B.C.

This division of the cycle into four epochs is mentioned in the traditions of other countries also, viz. of the Parsis, of the Babylonians and even of the Greeks. "The Greek view is presented by Hesiod according to whom there had been four ages : Golden, Silver, Brass and Iron—*each worse than the one preceding*. Hesiod lived 400 years before Herodotos, the historian. Herodotos wrote that Homer and Hesiod lived 400 years before his time." The Arya or Hindu view is very firm and definite that each succeeding age is worse, than the one preceding. This view was accepted by the ancient Greeks and all other ancient people.

SATYUGA OR THE GOLDEN AGE.

According to the Arya or Hindu Shastras men of the Satyuga were very healthy and lived up to a very advanced age. Our histories mention that the age of some of them went even beyond three or four hundred years. They were tall and healthy and subsisted on 'fruits and vegetables which the earth yielded spontaneously.' There was plenty of milk yielded by cows, which formed an important article of their diet. In the early Satyuga or Golden age there was no necessity for agriculture as spontaneous food was sufficient to support the early inhabitants of India or Aryavarta.

It is remarkable that Megasthenes, when speaking of the Indian traditions of his time, remarked that in primitive times the inhabitants subsisted on such fruits as the earth yielded spontaneously. Mr. Robertson remarks: "In this age men lived in peace with all animals eating the spontaneous fruits of the earth¹."

Another remarkable feature of this Age was that men were not merely literate, but were learned on account of their being in direct union with God. Brahma Maharishi and his companions were engaged in teaching important lessons on Dharma (righteousness), Artha (material prosperity) and Kama (fulfilment of the noble aspiration of man)². This was called Trivarga. Another work taught by Brahma Maharishi was on Moksha, i. e. Emancipation or release of the soul from the cycle of birth and death, after the soul had communion with God. Brahma composed a voluminous work on Ayurveda, as well as a work on mathematics and another on astronomy. He gave to mankind the first Brahmana

1. The Religion of the Semites by W. Robertson Smith, 3rd ed., London 1927, p. 303.
2. See Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chs. 58-59.

Granthas and the Upanishads. There were many other Shastras composed in Satyuga which have been either completely lost or destroyed.

In this Age man was free from worry and lived in peace not only with men, but with animals also. There was no government as every body was virtuous. Thus the Vedic injunctions were followed to the very letter.

ADITYAS AND DAITYAS

It is necessary to mention two names, viz. one of Daksha and the other of Kashyapa, the two *prajapatis* (forefathers of mankind) who are most famous in the Shastras as being the earliest progenitors of mankind. Several daughters of Daksha were married to Kashyapa, three of whom are more famous Diti, whose descendants were Daityas, one of whom was Belus (Sanskrit Bala), the founder of Babylonia ; and Danu whose descendants were called the Danavas, one of whom was Viprachitti Danvasur (Dionysios)¹. The Daityas and Danavas appear to have occupied the Western part of Aryavarta, viz., the modern North-Western Frontier Province, Afghanistan, parts of Iran and other territories towards the west going up to the river Oxus. The twelve sons of Aditi were called the Adityas, whose descendants occupied Tibet, Assam, Kashmir, Northern India, Burma and other parts towards the east. The descendants of these Rishis especially, and of the other sages in general mentioned in the annals of other ancient civilisations as the seven sages, were the earliest progenitors of the human race now populating the whole world.

In the last years of Satyuga, the institution of kingship came into existence and the first anointed

1. See Mahabharata, Adiparva.

king of the earth was Prithu, son of Vena.¹ The so-called Dravidians of India are Aryas. The whole mankind was divided into two classes : the Aryas (noble or good men) and the Dasyus (the ignoble or bad men). The nomenclature of division of mankind into various races of the world now recognised is of a much later date.

THE SILVER AGE

It was in the period intervening between Satyuga (Golden Age) and Tretayuga (Silver Age), and the early Tretayuga, that the emigrations of the Aryas to the different parts of the world began. It is being established that the North of Europe and of America were colonised by the Brahmans and the Solar Kshatriyas—descendants of Manu (son of Vivasvan). This emigration of Aryas or Hindus continued in later ages also.

It was in the Treta Age that great increase in the the Sanskrit literature took place. It was in this age that the science of language was clearly described as such. Several grammarians lived and wrote their grammars of outstanding merit in this age. The Rishis, who gave to the world the Upanishads, the Brahmanagranthas and the Darshanas, flourished in this period. Manu's great law book or Dharma Shastra consisting of one hundred thousand Shlokas was redacted in the Tretayuga. The approximate date of this great work is 9000 B.C.

Kapila's Sankhya Shastra, a very big work, was also written in this Yuga. The date ascertained now is circa 7000 B.C.

Great historical works—the earlier Puranas—were also written in this period; so also were other works of great worth and merit produced in this age.

1. Ibid—Shanti-Parva.

Rishi Valmiki's immortal poem about Rama, the Ramayana, was composed almost at the end of Treta-Yuga. Valmiki gives a description of the hermitages and Ashramas of the Rishis where scholars learnt the highest truths and were instructed in different branches of learning. Bharadvaja's Ashrama where Rama lived for a day or two is worth noticing in this connection. Discussions open to the public on religious questions took place in which men and women equally took part. Knotty problems of life and death, were freely discussed. This system of open discussion and debates was called Shastrartha and continues to be popular even up to the present day.

The Rishis also taught the art of war and use of different weapons to princes and peasants alike. Rishi Vishvamitra taught the use of several formidable Shastras to Rama and Lakshmana, sons of King Dashratha of Ayodhya¹. Dronacharya, the Brahman and a disciple of Agnivesha, taught the use of arms to Kuru and Pandu princes at the end of the Dvapara Age.

It was in this Age too that great merchants and traders flourished. Their ships sailed the oceans and the seas, and carried merchandise of various description to other countries. Goods were carried by land routes also, when large caravans were formed for the purpose of exporting and importing goods on backs of camels, horses and mules. Similarly, new land routes were discovered, and roads were made in order to carry goods and to facilitate travel.

The stream of emigrants to different parts of the world continued to flow, without any diminution.

1. Ramayana of Valmiki—Balkand.

THE BRASS AGE

The Tretayuga was followed by the Dvaparyuga. It was a period of intense activities of various kinds. In the Treta Age whole of India – North as well as the South—had become populated. In Dvapara great kingdoms arose. There were 101 States, big and small, in India. Lunar dynasty – descendants of Manu's daughter Ila – held the predominant position. The Lunar kings had overshadowed the greatness of the Solar kings, that is the descendants of Ikshvaku. Afghanistan was a part of Aryavarta or India which had begun to be called Bharata after Bharata, a great Serv-Bhaum Ruler of Satyuga. Dhritarashtra was married to the daughter of the king of Kandhar—called Gandhara in those days.

The great works produced in the Treta and Satyuga which existed in voluminous treatises were reduced to lesser dimensions by the Indian sages. It was between the years 3200 B.C. and 2800 B.C. that the last redaction of the Upanishads, the Darshanas, the Purans, the Dharma Shastras, and the Brahmana-granthas took place. The world famous Veda-Vyasa Krishna Dvaipayana composed the great Mahabharata with the help of his disciples. The great Panini wrote his famous grammar “Ashtadhyayi” in circa 2800 B.C.

Great importance was attached to sacrifices (Yagyas or Yajnas); Ashvamedha Yagya became specially important. The kings vied with one another to celebrate their Chakravarti sovereignty by the performance of this Yagya. Emigration to foreign countries continued in full force. India had become over populated. The fame of her wealth, her learning, her system of education had spread far and wide. Therefore, scholars from the different parts of the world came to this country to learn

wisdom at the feet of Indian Rishis. Commerce and trade flourished. Emigration to other parts of the world continued as heretofore, with greater intensity.

However, there was decrease of righteousness or Dharmic living in this Age. Gambling became common. Even a righteous king, like Yudhishtira, was compelled to indulge in this vice. The Brahmans became proud of their learning, the Kshatriyas of their valour and the Vaishyas of their wealth. Luxurious living was much sought after. Thus the seeds of decay became apparent.

THE IRON AGE

When Kaliyuga or Iron Age began, the Jainism and, later on, the Buddhism became popular. Parshva Nath and later Mahavira Swamis of Jainism laid stress on a life of penance. But Sankhya Muni Gautama proclaimed the Vedic truths in a new garb. Buddhism partially promulgated the ethical part of the Vedic teachings, as incorporated in the teachings of the Sankhya system (as we shall show in another chapter). It spread in India and several other countries of the world. In the universities Brahman-acharyas and Buddhist monks taught the tenets of the two religions, the Vedic Dharma and Buddhism, side by side. Vedic teachings were later explained by the Acharyas, like Shabara, Kumarila, Udyotkara, Shankara and Ramanuja, in their great works and commentaries. Shankara organised the Sanyasis into ten orders. Buddhism which had become quite alien, both in spirit and letter in the time of these Acharyas, was soon driven out of India. Neo-Hinduism with its new methods of worship conquered and overcame it. Temples, pilgrimages to holy places, Kathas or recitations from Puranas, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, things of a truly national character, soon won over the wavering population to neo-Hinduism.

ISLAM INEFFECTIVE

On the advent of Mussalmans, wherever Buddhism existed in its new phase, people submitted to their ruler. It was, however, in the heart of India that Islam met with great resistance and was halted in its onward march in spite of the fact that the Hindu kings and princes in several parts of India had to bow before the Muslim invaders. Although the Muslim rule in these parts of India lasted for several centuries, yet the influence of Islam was not effective and lasting. The great Muslim poet Hali depicts this defeat in a beautiful couplet : "That great Armada of the Arabian religion, whose flags fluttered on all parts of the world, and whose onward march was not stopped either on the Oxus, on the Meditteranian, and which crossed the seven seas, this very Armada was sunk in the waters of the Ganges." In the South-east Asia, in Burma, Siam, Annam, Malaya and Indonesia, the Hindu supremacy lasted till 1500 A.D. and even after.

There is not the least doubt, however, that struggles between the people of India against Islam met with varied fortunes. When the British came to India, the Hindus had been able to recover almost the whole of their lost power. But India lost to the British on account of mutual quarrels between the Hindus and Mussalmans which had not ceased. There was no feeling of oneness or nationalism in the different parts of India ; and Indian princes fought with one another for attaining their own selfish ends.

Learning decayed. Religion or righteousness lost its hold on the people. In spite of the great bravery displayed by the Indians on the battle-fields, the British succeeded in pitching men of one province against men

of the other province. Thus by their superior diplomacy the British were able to establish their hold over the whole of India by 1850 A. D.

The story of India's struggle for freedom is too recent and is known to the modern generation. It forms a glorious chapter of modern Indian history as to how India secured her freedom in 1947.

The Britishers were, however, able to divide the country into two parts – India and Pakistan. How the Indians of both the parts are to behave and act towards one another and how India will revive and resuscitate her Vedic culture remains to be seen.

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH OF THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE

The language of the Aryas of India was originally called Brahmi. Its script was also called Brahmi, because the author of both the language and the script was Maharishi Brahma. Even Devanagari script is called the Brahmi script.

Sanskrit, it is recognised, was derived out of the language of the Vedas. Maharishi Brahma and the later Rishis drew upon the Vedas for giving names to various things and ideas, and to express their thoughts and ideas they coined new forms of words out of the Vedic roots. The root meanings of the Vedic words were also extended by adding affixes and suffixes. They thus compiled several works on different branches of human knowledge.

SANSKRIT GRAMMAR.

The division of the language into different parts of speech took place slowly, but steadily. Noun, pronoun, verb, adverb and different tenses formed the basis of its grammar. Great grammarians and lexicon writers appeared on the scene. Their learning and ingenuity extended the scope of the language, and this Brahmi language began to be called the Sanskrit or the purified or the perfected speech. It was in contrast to the unrefined speech of a section of the people, known as the Prakrita or Apabhramsa, i.e. the deformed forms of the original language. Sanskrit was greatly developed and was made rich in words and phrases adaptable to express every condition of life and line of thought.

A very interesting account of the origin of the grammar is given in the Taittiriya Samhita of the Yajura Veda : "In former times the speech was without a grammar. The Devas (descendants of Aditi and Kashyapa) approached Indra and requested him to clarify the speech by dividing it into its grammatical components. He replied : 'I accept your invitation, but make Vayu Rishi my helper in the work.' Thereupon, the Devas went to Vayu and requested him to help Indra in the preparation of a grammar. Vayu demanded his share for the work. This being arranged, Indra, disciple of Brihaspati, a master of language, compiled the first grammar in the world."

Rishi Vayu was also a great master of language and knew the roots of the words and how these words could be utilised for various purposes by adding affixes and suffixes. Not only Vayu, but his son Hanuman—the helper of Shri Rama against Ravana, King of Lanka—was equally versed in the complexities of words and their use, and was master of the science of language. After Hanuman had met Shri Rama for the first time and had a long talk with him, Shri Rama expressed surprise at his learning, and his faultless mastery of language and its correct expression.

SPREAD OF ARYAS' LANGUAGE

When the Aryas travelled the different parts of the world as teachers, missionaries, ambassadors or physicians, they spread the Sanskrit language and literature, and helped in the establishment of centres of Sanskrit learning in several countries, kingdoms and independent territories. The script adopted by these missionaries was the same Brahmi. Thus this script and the Sanskrit language became the mother of the script and languages of the different countries of the world.

Sir William Jones asserts that "Devanagari, i.e., Brahmi is the original source whence from alphabets of western Asia were derived"¹.

Mr. Pococke says: "The Greek language is a derivation from Sanskrit."

Sir William Jones and Professor Heeren are of the view that the Zind is derived from Sanskrit.

Miss Carpenter observes: "Though the original home of Sanskrit is Aryavarta, yet it has now been proved to have been the language of the most of the countries of modern Europe in ancient times."²

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru writes: "Indian civilisation took root especially in the countries of South-East Asia and the evidence for this can be found all over the place today. There were great centres of Sanskrit learning in Champa, Angkor, Shri Vijaya, Majapahit and other places. The names of the rulers of the various States and Empires that arose are purely Indian and Sanskrit. This does not mean that they were pure Indians but it does mean that they were Indianized. State ceremonies were Indian and conducted in Sanskrit. All the officers of the State bear old Sanskrit titles and some of these titles and designations have been continued up till now not only in Thailand but in the Moslem States of Malaya. The old literatures of these places in Indonesia are full of Indian myth and legend. The famous dances of Java and Bali derive from India. The little island of Bali has indeed largely maintained its old Indian culture down to modern times and even Hinduism has persisted

1. Asiatic Research. Vol : I.

2. The Journal of Indian Association quoted by Shri Har Bilas Sarda in the "Hindu Superiority."

there. The art of writing went to the Phillipines from India.

“In Cambodia the alphabet is derived from South India and numerous Sanskrit words have been taken over with minor variations. The civil and criminal law is based on the Laws of Manu, the ancient law-giver of India, and this has been codified, with variations due to Buddhist influence, in modern Cambodian legislation. . . .

“Sanskrit is still used for some ceremonial purposes in Thailand (Siam) It is interesting to note that in modern Thailand when the need arose for new technical, scientific and governmental terms, many of these were adapted from Sanskrit.”¹

PHILOLOGY

Philology and grammar were developed in India to the highest degree at a time when no such development had taken place in European countries. Professor Wilson remarks : “It is well-known how long it took before the Greeks arrived at a complete nomenclature for the parts of speech. Plato only knew of noun and verb as the two component parts of speech and for philosophical purposes. Aristotle too did not go beyond that number In the Pratisakhya (a sub-division of Sikhsha-phonetic) on the contrary, we meet at once with exhaustive classification of the parts of speech.”²

Alexander Thomson (at one time the Principal of the Agra College, Agra) once remarked : “The consonantal division of the alphabet of the Sanskrit

1. Discovery of India.

2. Wilson's Essays on Sanskrit Literature, Volume III.

language was a more wonderful feat of human genius than any the world has yet seen.”¹

Prof. Macdonell says : “We Europeans, 2500 years later, and in the scientific age, still employ an alphabet which is not only inadequate to represent all the sounds of our language, but even preserve the random order in which vowels and consonants are jumbled up as they were in the Greek adaptation of the primitive Semitic arrangement of 3000 years ago.”

Rev. Ward says : “In Philology the Hindus have, perhaps, excelled both the ancients (Greeks and Romans) and the moderns.”

Prof. Max Muller writes : “The idea of reducing a whole language to a small number of roots, which in Europe was not attempted before the sixteenth century by Henry Estienne, was perfectly familiar to the Brahmans at least 500 years before Christ.”

Sir W. W. Hunter observes : “The science of language, indeed, had been reduced in India to fundamental principles at a time when the grammarians of the West still treated it as accidental resemblances.”

GRAMMARIANS

The Sanskrit grammar too captured the world's imagination. India produced eminent grammarians, like Indra, Vayu, Brihaspati, Bharadvaja, Shakatayana, Apishali and Kash-Kritsna. Some of these were the predecessors of Panini, whose work “Ashtadhyayi” still holds the field and is unbeaten as a record of the best grammar treatise.

1. Quoted by Shri Har Bilas Sarda.

Max Muller opines : "Their (Hindus) achievements in grammatical analysis are still unsurpassed in the grammatical literature of any nation."

Mrs. Manning says: "Sanskrit grammar is evidently far superior to the kind of grammar which for the most part has contented grammarians in Europe."

PANINI PRAISED BY EUROPEANS

Many European scholars have paid glowing tributes to Panini and his grammar.

Mr. Elphinstone remarks : "His (Panini's) works and those of his successors have established a system of grammar, the most complete that ever was employed in arranging elements of human speech."

Prof. Sir Monier Williams writes : "The grammar of Panini is one of the most remarkable literary works that the world has ever seen, and no other country can produce any grammatical system at all comparable to it, either for originality of plan or analytical subtlety."

Sir W. W. Hunter aptly remarks : "The grammar of Panini stands supreme among the grammars of the world, alike for its precision of statement and for its thorough analysis of the roots of the language and of the formative principles of words."

Several commentaries of Panini's grammar were written later on, of which Patanjali's Mahabhashya is well-known and has survived.

The Europeans have wrongly described Panini as the 'first great grammarian of India'. In fact Indian history has extended so far in time and has been so much replete with greatness, that we are inclined to consider the mere vestiges of the later greatness as the

beginning. Chandragupta Maurya, who was the last and by no means a very brilliant of Kings in Sarvabhaum (rulers of the world) and Chakravarty (the ruler of a large territory) tradition, for instance, has been taken by Western scholars, followed by their Indian disciples, as the first great Emperor of India. Similarly, Chandragupta's great Minister Kautilya (also called Vishnu Gupta) has been considered by modern scholars to be the first Indian writer on political theory and state-craft. Not to refer to Mahabharata and other works, Kautilya himself, before proceeding with his treatise, remembers ancient writers on politics and state-craft and mentions as many as twelve of them by name. So has Panini been taken as the chief and the first grammarian, although he himself admitted to be the last of all the grammarians—Apishali, Kashyapa, Gargya, Galava, Chakravarmana, Bharadvaja, Shakatayana, Shakalya, Senaka and Sphotayana—whom he paid homage. Thus the Sanskrit grammar was perfected by Aryas of India long before the age of Panini.

LEXICONS OR DICTIONARIES

There were a number of lexicons by eminent Sanskrit scholars which were a great storehouse of words and phrases. Long before the famous Amar Singh author of "Amara Kosha," there were Katya, Vyadi, Bhaguri and Vachaspati, other great authors of various Koshas or lexicons. Some of these lexicons have come down to us and have extorted the admiration of modern scholars.

WORLD'S DEBT TO SANSKRIT

The Sanskrit language so perfected and developed was utilised by the Arya scholars for giving to the world a literature, the rival of which it is difficult to find even

in these days. Western writers and scholars have vied with one another in paying tributes to the excellence of Sanskrit literature.

Professor W. C. Taylor has paid a remarkable compliment in the following words : “Hindustan possessed . . . a language of unrivalled richness and variety ; a language, the parent of all those dialects the Europe has fondly called classical—the source alike of Greek flexibility and Roman strength . . . To acquire the mastery of this language is almost the labour of a life ; its literature seems exhaustless . . . Its philosophy has touched upon every metaphysical difficulty ; its legislation is as varied as the castes for which it was designed.”

Professor Macdonell remarks : “The intellectual debt of Europe to Sanskrit literature has been undeniably great . . . Sanskrit literature in quantity exceeds that of Greece and Rome put together.”

Sir William Jones was of the opinion that “human life would not be sufficient to make oneself acquainted with any considerable part of Hindu literature.”

Rev. Ward, as quoted by Sri Har Bilas Sarda, says : “The variety of subjects upon which they wrote prove that almost every science was cultivated among them. The manner also in which they treated these subjects proves that the Hindu learned men yielded the palm of learning to scarcely any other of the ancients.”

AN INTEGRAL PART OF SOCIETY

The debt, which the Indians owe to the Vedas for the purity, refinement, richness and copiousness of the Sanskrit language, is not to be forgotten.

Even after great many upheavals that have occurred in her history Sanskrit still holds a unique place in this country. As Prof. Max Muller remarks, "It is this language which is more widely understood even now than Latin was at the time of Dante." The religious reformers and thinkers always resorted to Sanskrit for writing their works even though it was not the language of the common people. Shabara Swami, Shankaracharya, Udyotkara, Kumaril Bhatta and Ramanuja produced their monumental treatises in Sanskrit. Similarly, Dayananda Saraswati produced his great commentary on the Vedas not only in Hindi, but also in Sanskrit. His important work "Rig-Vedadi-Bhashya - Bhumika" is in Sanskrit. On all the important and sacred ceremonies and rites, Sanskrit is still utilised by the officiating priests, and the Vedic Mantras are still recited. God's name and His various attributes and powers as given in Vedic Mantras are chanted with such fervour and devotion, that even the non-believers are greatly struck by the sincerity and devotion of the Hindu Pandits.

Sanskrit has thus an amazing vitality. It is the great unifying force in India. That writers of the modern Indian languages freely draw upon Sanskrit for enriching their vernaculars should, therefore, surprise none.

Unfortunately, a belief has been widely spread that Sanskrit and the language of the Vedas are very difficult to learn. This is an erroneous impression. The method of teaching adopted in our schools and colleges for teaching this language is faulty. It must be reformed so that the treasures of Sanskrit language and literature as well as of Vedic culture may once more become open to as large a number of people as possible.

We shall now speak about the Hindu philosophy as derived from the Vedas and as explained by the six Darshanas of Kapila, Patanjali, Gautama, Kanada, Jaimini and Vyas, and then make a reference to the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the great Epics—Ramayana and Mahabhart—, and a few other Sanskrit works.

CHAPTER V

THE PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT OF ARYAS

In India and the world it is being steadily realised that the ancient civilisation based upon the Vedic literature was unique in many respects. Most remarkable development took place in the philosophic thought of the Hindus. The Arya Rishis wrote works on philosophy and religion which have become immortal. Unprejudiced Sanskrit scholars of Europe have spoken about them in the highest terms of praise.

EUROPEAN SCHOLARS' VIEWS

Sir William Jones remarked : "I can venture to affirm without meaning to pluck a leaf from the never fading laurels of our immortal Newton, that the whole of his theology, and part of his philosophy, may be found in the Vedas, and even in the works of the Sufis. The most subtle spirit which he suspected to pervade natural bodies, and lying concealed in them, to cause attraction and repulsion, the emission, reflection and refraction of light, electricity, callifaction, sensation and muscular motion, is described by the Hindus as a fifth element, endowed with those very powers."

Sir W. Hunter says : "The problem of thought and being, of mind and matter, and soul apart from both, of the origin of evil, of the *summum bonum* of life, of necessity and free-will, and of the relations of the creator to the creature, and the intellectual problems, such as the compatibility of evil with the goodness of God and the unequal distribution of happiness and misery

in this life, are endlessly discussed. The Brahmin philosophy exhausted the possible solutions of these difficulties and of most of the other great problems which have since perplexed Greeks, Romans, Medieval schoolmen and modern men of science."

Mrs. Manning says : "The Hindus had the widest range of mind of which man is capable."

Schlegel, speaking of noble, clear and severely grand accents of Indian thought, says : "Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason, as is set forth by Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noon day sun, faltering and ever ready to be extinguished."

He adds : "The doctrine of the transmigration of souls was indigenous to India and was brought into Greece by Pythagoras."

Max-Muller opines : "The Hindus were a people remarkably gifted for philosophical abstraction." He further observes that "the Hindus talk philosophy in the street", and this is the reason for the thoroughly practical character of their philosophy.

Dr. Alexander Duff is reported to have said in a speech delivered in Scotland that "Hindu philosophy was so comprehensive that counterparts of all systems of European philosophy were to be found in it."

Mrs. Besant says : "Indian psychology is a far more perfect science than European psychology."

Count Bjornstjerna remarks : "The Hindus were far in advance of the philosophers of Greece and Rome,

who considered the immortality of the soul as problematical Socrates and Plato, with all their longings, could only feel assured that the soul had more immortality than aught else."

Professor Weber, speaking of Hindu philosophy, says : "It is in this field and that of grammar that the Indian mind attained the highest pitch of its marvellous fertility."

SIX DARSHANAS

The exposition of Indian philosophy based on Vedic texts took place very rapidly. Six schools of philosophy were founded, the principles of which were enshrined in the six Darshanas, termed as follows :—

1. Sankhya ; 2. Yoga ; 3. Nyaya ; 4. Vaisheshika ;
5. Purva Mimansa ; and 6. Uttara Mimansa (or Vedanta).

Maharishi Kapila (7000 B.C.), who lived long before Gautama and Kanada, founded the system of philosophy known as Sankhya. His work is the oldest work on philosophy in the world. The original work was very large and voluminous, only its fragments have been pieced together in the present Sankhya Shastra. It teaches that "there are 24 elements and that the 25th, if it can be so called, is Purusha or Atma (soul). The primary cause of the world is Prakriti, one of the twenty-four. Of itself, Prakriti is non-active, is, in fact, neither produced nor productive, but it becomes active by coming in contact with the Purusha."¹

There is an erroneous belief that Sankhya system denied the existence of God. This is wrong, because

1. Shri Har Bilas Sarda's 'Hindu Superiority.'

Maharishi Patanjali, the writer on Yoga, who was a decided believer in God, vindicates the philosophy of the Sankhyas and supplements it by his own system of Yoga.

Sir W. Hunter said in regard to Sankhya : "The various theories of creation, arrangement and development were each elaborated, and the views of the modern physiologists at the present day are a return with new light to the evolution theory of Kapila, whose Sankhya system is the oldest of the Darshanas."

"Sankhya", says Prof. Macdonell, "for the first time in the history of the world, asserted the complete independence of the human mind and attempted to solve its problems by the aid of reason."

We are of the opinion that a systematic and scientific study of the Sankhya Shastra system will reveal that the remaining five systems are the outcome of Maharishi Kapila's teachings. Kapila wrote his great work in circa 7000 B. C. Other Darshanas are of much later period. Sankhya recognises both Purusha and Prakriti—soul and matter—one intelligent and the other unconscious, but both beginningless and endless; eternal but independent of one another. The Jiva (soul) and Prakriti (matter) when joined together produce this manifold creation. Parmatama or the Supreme Soul is the great Power which performs this act of joining together the Purusha and Prakriti.

Kapila lived at a period when the Vedic Rishis fully understood the Vedic texts. They were engaged in explaining and expounding them. Kapila could have, therefore, hardly preached atheism. As one of the great Rishis of his age, his explanations regarding the origin of

Creation were consistent with the Vedic teachings. People of the later Satyuga or earlier Tretayuga would readily understand and accept the idea of God and His being the Creator of the Universe. Of course, seekers after truth and enquirers desire to know now, and must have wished to know then, what were the various processes through which the Jivas and the Prakriti would pass to bring about this vast and manifold creation. Kapila addressed himself to the explanation of these processes, and to the expounding of the great secrets of Nature.

THEORY OF REBIRTH

The sages of the later period pay the greatest homage to Kapila, to his learning and to his teaching which are in full accord with the teachings of the Vedas. Parmatama, Atma and Prakriti, that is, God, soul and matter, are eternal and distinct entities. To understand their different Gunas, to realise their separateness is the way of Gyana (true knowledge). One must discriminate between the body and the soul as well as between the body, soul and God. There is no destruction of the soul when the body is destroyed. Death is merely a change from one body to another. The soul is changeless, unborn, eternal and very subtle. God pervades the soul being subtler than the soul itself. The wise man does not grieve when the body is destroyed. Such is the message of Kapila ; realising which man never grieves.

The Rig Veda says : "Two Birds with fair plumage knit with bonds of friendship have found a refuge in the same pipal tree. One of them eats the sweet fruit, the other does not eat, but simply looks on."¹

1. Vide Rig Veda, 1, 164.20.

PATANJALI'S YOGA SHASTRA

Yoga, the most popular system of philosophy which has caught the imagination of even the Europeans, is very clearly expounded in the Yoga Darshana of Maharishi Patanjali (circa 3100 B.C.). A very learned and extensive treatise on Yoga by Maharishi Hiranyagarbha was extant in the Treta Age, long before the time of Maharishi Patanjali. This work unfortunately has not been traced so far. The Yoga Sh'ashtra of Patanjali explains in detail how Self (Atma) and God are to be realised by means of Yogic practices. There are eight rungs of the ladder by which the soul should ascend to God and realise His presence. They are—

1. Yama (self-control) ; 2. Niyamas (rules of conduct) ; 3. Asana (bodily posture) ; 4. Pranayama (control of breath) ; 5. Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses from sense objects) ; 6. Dharna (concentration) ; 7. Dhyana (meditation) ; and 8. Samadhi (union with God).

The Yoga is the science of the sciences - the science of the soul or the spirit which penetrates the depths and secrets of nature.

A successful Yogi, who has followed the path pointed out above, can secure mastery over the finer and subtler elements of Prakriti (matter). Thus he secures far greater powers than the greatest scientist. By his Yogic powers he can know the highest secrets of nature which are not possible to the greatest scientist. These secrets were known to the ancient sages and seers. Therefore, they could know the past and the future of their lives and other peoples' lives. They could cure the most serious diseases. They could see things far away from them. They could live for 100 and more years without

any deterioration in their mental and spiritual powers. Even today there are Yogis who have attained some Siddhis (extraordinary powers). They can rise above the ground. They can read other peoples' thoughts. They can stop the beating of their heart for several hours and even for days.

But it must be stated very emphatically and clearly, that those who seek emancipation or Moksha and wish to realise God should not stray from the path of Yoga and entangle themselves in Siddhis (that is, in the exercise of extraordinary powers). These are regarded as hindrances in the way of realisation. A man strays away from the straight path into matters which he must avoid if he is to enjoy the Supreme Bliss (Ananda).

All the other seven practices are to lead to the ultimate success in Samadhi.

The Vedic texts have mentioned that the Bliss (Ananda) of Samadhi cannot be described in words. Only those who have attained success in Samadhi can feel what that Bliss is like. There is no joy of the world which can be compared with it. The Yoga philosophy is the special department of human activity in which the Aryas of India excelled. No trace of a system of like nature is to be found amongst any other people ancient or modern.

NYAYA DARSHANA OF GAUTAMA

The author of Nyaya Darshana was Maharishi Gautama (3200 B. C.). A very large number of books on philosophy and logic were written by Indian authors who came after him. A good many of these authors were merely commentators on the philosophy and logic as explained by him. Nyaya Darshana is not

merely a systemised system of logic, but also deals with the nature of the soul as apart from senses, body and the mind.

Shri Har Bilas Sarda has thus summarised the teachings of Gautama : "The relation of the soul with the body is through the medium of the mind of man. The soul and the body cannot affect each other directly but only through the medium of the mind. He then proceeds to prove the transmigration of souls, the omni-presence and omniscience of God and declares that He is separate from the souls, who are countless in number. The author believes the Vedas to be Revelation, and advises all mankind to follow their teachings. The material cause of the universe, he declares is *parmanu* (atom). The *parmanus* are eternal. The author then proceeds to refute atheism, and ends by giving reasons for a belief in God."

Chamber's Encyclopedia has the following passage :—

"Far from being restricted to mere logic, the Nyaya was intended to be a complete system of philosophical investigation, and dealt with some questions—such as the nature of the intellect, articulated sound, genus, variety and individuality—in a manner so masterly as well to deserve the notice of European philosophers."

The German critic, Schelegal, says : "The Nyaya doctrine attributed to Gautama, from all that we can learn, was an idealism constructed with a purity and logical consistency of which there are few other instances, and to which the Greeks never attained."

VAISHESHIKA OF KANADA

The author of Vaisheshika's system of philosophy was Maharishi Kanada. Kanada wrote his work not to oppose the Nyaya system of Gautama, but to supplement it. Both Kanada and Gautama were contemporaries and lived in circa 3200 B. C. Kanada's work is divided into ten books which deal with God, soul, matter, mind, Buddhi (intellect), existence and non-existence. Dr. Roer compares Kanada's doctrine of atoms to that of Democritus, the Greek philosopher, and pronounces the doctrine propounded by Kanada to be vastly superior to that of Democritus.

Sir P. C. Ray, the famous author of Hindu Chemistry remarks: "His (Kanada's) theory of propagation of sound cannot fail to excite our wonder and admiration even at this distant date. No less remarkable is his statement that light and heat are only different forms of the same essential substance but Kanada is anticipated in many material points by Kapila, the originator of the Sankhya philosophy."

JAIMINI'S PURVA MIMANSA

The last system of philosophy is Mimansa which is subdivided into two portions, the Purva Mimansa and the Uttara Mimansa. The Purva Mimansa deals with such practices as Yagyas (sacrifices), Agnikotra and gifts (Dana). The author of the Purva Mimansa is Maharishi Jaimini, the disciple of the great sage Vyasa. He wrote a Brahmana-grantha and a Kalpasutra. Jaimini maintains that Dharma consists in following the teachings of the Vedas. The main object with which Dharma is to be pursued relentlessly is not to secure happiness hereafter, but in this world too.

UTTARA MIMANSA OF VYASA

The sixth or the last system is the Uttara Mimansa also called Vedanta which is the work of Maharishi Vyasa or Badarayana.

Shankaracharya, in his commentary on Vedanta, has maintained that Vedanta teaches that God is everything ; soul and matter are merely manifestations of His powers. On the other hand, several commentators have maintained that the real Vedanta Sutras did not teach the unity of God and soul, but made a distinction between the two. For practical purposes there is no ultimate difference so far as the attainment of Moksha or salvation is concerned.

The Vedanta Shastra has won the admiration of great many Sanskrit scholars and commentators. Sir W. Jones says about Vedanta: "It is not possible to speak with too much applause of so excellent a work: and I am confident in asserting that, until an accurate translation of it shall appear in some European language, the general history of philosophy must remain incomplete The fundamental tenet of the Vedantic school consisted not in denying the existence of matter, that is, of solidity, impenetrability, and extended figure (to deny which would be lunacy,) but in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending that it has no essence independent of mental perception, that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms, that external appearances and sensations are illusory and would vanish into nothing. if the divine energy, which alone sustains them, were suspended but for a moment; an opinion which Epicharmus and Plato seem to have

adopted; and which has been maintained in the present century with great elegance, but with little applause, partly because it has been misunderstood, and partly because it has been misapplied by the false reasoning of some popular writers, who are said to have disbelieved, in the moral attributes of God, whose omnipresence, wisdom and goodness are the basis of the Indian philosophy."

CHAPTER VI

THE UPANISHADS AND THE EPICS

Several works explaining the meaning and significance of Vedic Mantras or of the mystery of existence were written by great Rishis and seers of India. These works are called the Upanishads, namely the knowledge which teaches man how to approach God. These Upanishads have come down to us as a part of our great heritage. There are a very large number of Upanishads but eleven of them are regarded as principal and important : Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka; Mandukya, Svetashara, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chhandogya and Brihadaranyka. The Rishis often held discussions amongst themselves in order to arrive at truth. Sometimes these Rishis were called by the kings to resolve their doubts and satisfy their spiritual cravings. Often kings and Rajas went to the hermitages and Ashramas of these Rishis to find solution for their doubts regarding the mystery of life and death. These sages were also consulted in matters of state policy.

The Upanishads have naturally extorted the admiration of religious and philosophic thinkers both of the East and the West. Professor F. W. Thomas in 'The Legacy of India' says : "What gives to the Upanishads their unique quality and unfailing human appeal is an earnest sincerity of tone, as of friends conferring upon matters of deep concern."

Schopenhauer, who merely read a translation of the Upanishads was greatly struck by the sublimity of the teachings they impart. He said : "From every sentence (of the Upanishads) deep, original and sublime

thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit . . . In the whole world there is no study . . . so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads . . . They are products of the highest wisdom . . . It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people." And again : "The study of the Upanishads has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."

Writing on this, Max Muller says : "Schopenhauer was the last man to write at random, or to allow himself to go into ecstasies over the so-called mystic and inarticulate thought. And I am neither afraid nor ashamed to say that I share his enthusiasm for the Vedanta, and feel indebted to it for much that has been helpful to me in my passage through life."

In another place Max Muller says : "The Upanishads are the . . . source of . . . the Vedanta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to me to have reached its very acme." "I spend my happiest hours in reading Vedantic books. They are to me like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains—so simple, so true, if once understood."¹

Pandit Nehru quotes J. W. Russel—an Irish poet—who said : "Goethe, Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau among moderns have something of this vitality and wisdom, but we can find all they have said and much more in the grand sacred books of the East. The Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads contain such godlike fullness of wisdom on all things that I feel the authors must have looked with calm remembrance back through

1. The above quotations are from Pandit Nehru's work 'Discovery of India.

a thousand passionate lives, full of feverish strife for and with shadows, ere they could have written with such certainty of things which the soul feels to be sure."

Professor Goldstucker regards the Upanishads as containing the germs of philosophy.

The Upanishads discuss the origin of the universe, the nature of the soul and the Supreme Spirit. They try to explain in more popular language the Vedic thoughts in order to make it clear to ordinary persons. Still looked at from our own standard, we find that it requires clearness of intellect, deep study of Sanskrit and purity of thoughts to catch the meaning of the Upanishads.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The most popular book, however, which has enraptured the Indians as well as other nations of the world is the Bhagavad Gita or the Lord's Song. The Bhagavad Gita is the work of Maharishi Veda-Vyasa. The teachings are of Lord Krishna, who on the battle field of Kurukshetra inspired Arjuna, the great Pandava warrior, to fight against Duryodhana, his brothers and their allies. Overwhelmed with grief, finding himself arrayed against his own kinsmen, his preceptor Dronacharya and his friends, Arjuna, was reluctant to fight. At that time Shri Krishna tries to resolve Arjuna's doubts and urges him to fight against unrighteousness wherever it be found. Evil doings and unrighteousness are not to be tolerated even in one's own dear relations and one should always be ready to kill those, who would try to uproot Dharma. In the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita devoted to the explanation of Karma theory, Sri Krishna enlightens the great

warrior about man's duties towards God and his fellow men. The Bhagavad Gita is a great incentive to noble actions, pious deeds and the attainment of righteous rule on earth.

The Bhagavad Gita is read daily by millions of people of India. It is regarded as the essence of the teachings of the Upanishads. It is a clarion call to action, noble endeavour and noble living when man is confronted with doubt and his outlook is darkened by attachment. The Vedic thought is couched in popular language and has a deep significance for those who find great conflict between noble aspirations and worldly life. There can be no renunciation of action in the world. Everybody has to perform actions driven by the force of nature. A noble person performs duties of his calling with detachment. One should seek to do the right without looking to the fruits of his actions. One should not care what happens provided one acts righteously. To use metaphorical language, the gates of heaven are open to him who fights in a righteous cause and dies on the battlefield. The Kshatriya should never turn his back when a call comes to him to fight in defence of Dharma, be it in defence of his own self or his country. This indeed is the teaching of the Vedas themselves and should never be ignored. Whenever, it was ignored by the Hindus, they had to pay very dearly and heavily for their acts of omission in this direction.

Different views have been expressed by Aryan scholars and Acharyas regarding the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. In essence the Bhagavad Gita is really an orientation of the Vedic teachings in popular Sanskrit language, which at the time of the Mahabharata was the language of the people of India. It is an

exposition and an epitome of mainly the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila.

The Bhagavad Gita also teaches the worship of God by the Yogic means. The philosophy of Yoga is also explained in popular language. Moderation in eating and drinking ; purity in thought, word and deed ; and Satvik food and Satvik living are essential for sincere worship of God. Man attains the supreme peace by selfless devotion to God.

The Bhagavad Gita has been translated in almost all the principal languages of the world and has been avidly read by the scholars of the East and the West. Even in modern days, several commentaries on it have been written by various scholars such as Lokmanya Tilak, Shri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Professor Radhakrishnan. Various other scholars have likewise tried to explain the importance of the teachings contained there in.

It is impossible to enumerate the very large number of works dealing with those important subjects of human enquiry which are dealt with in the Darshanas, the Upanishads, the Brahmana - granthas, the Dharma Shastras and religious and philosophic teachings contained in the two great Epics of India. It requires a life time to go through these immortal works and realise their great significance and importance.

THE RAMAYANA

So far as the Epics are concerned, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are household words in India. These Epics are remarkable for their size, for their teachings and for their importance as histories.

The Ramayana or the History of Rama is the older of the two and was written in the Tretayuga or Silver Age, by a contemporary Rishi. The story of Ramayana has become popular and well-known all over the civilised world. The author of this great work was Valmiki Rishi. Its Sanskrit is pure, chaste and easy to understand. Therefore, it is that it has made an abiding impression on the people of India. The hero and the heroine of this great Epic, Shri Rama and Sita, are ideals of manhood and womanhood. Shri Rama is not only a great hero, who inflicted punishment on Ravana for his evil deeds, but is regarded as the noblest example as to how a son should behave towards his parents. Lakshmana, the brother of Rama, devoted, valiant and heroic, considers it his duty to obey and serve his brother through difficult times. The two other brothers Bharata and Shatrughana also give us a picture of the relationship which should exist between brothers. The character of Sita is well-portrayed and her heroic example in following her husband Rama into the jungles, has inspired Indian women through all these ages to lead a life of selfless devotion and purity. Is there a single instance in the history of the nations, both ancient and modern, which can be compared to Sita, the wife of Rama ?

The Ramayana gives us a vivid picture of the life of the people in the Tretayuga. It is full of sublime discourses on the duties of the kings and the rulers towards their subjects. Similarly, we find noble lessons regarding Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha.

The Ramayana, therefore, has rightly been appreciated by the Indians as a great work. Foreign scholars have likewise been touched by its excellence.

Professor Griffiths says : "Well may the Ramayana challenge the literature of every age and country to produce a poem that can boast of such perfect characters as a Rama and a Sita." He adds : "No where else are poetry and morality so charmingly united, each elevating the other as in this really holy poem."

Professor Monier Williams was of the opinion that the Ramayana is, without doubt, one of the greatest treasures of Sanskrit literature.

Michelet, the French historian, (quoted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his 'Discovery of India') wrote in 1864 about the Ramayana : "Whoever has done or willed too much let him drink from this deep cup a long draught of life and youth . . . Everything is narrow in the West—Greece is small and I stifle, Judaea is dry and I pant. Let me look towards lofty Asia, and the profound East for a little while. There lies my great poem, as vast as the the Indian Ocean, blessed, gilded with the sun, the book of divine harmony wherein is no dissonance. A serene peace reigns there, and in the midst of conflict an infinite sweetness, a boundless fraternity, which spreads over all living things, an ocean (without bottom or bound) of love, of pity, of clemency. "

THE MAHABHARATA

So far as the Mahabharata is concerned, it is a great single work which contains about a hundred thousand Shlokas. The author of this great Epic was Maharishi Veda-Vyasa. He was helped in compiling this great Epic by his son and three of his disciples. The Mahabharata was written in the end of the Dwapara Age, about

3000 B.C. It is a poem which gives us a clue to the history not only of India during Dwapara and pre-Dwapara periods, but also of a major portion of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. It contains several discourses by eminent sages on religion, politics, military science, as well as on the great problems of life. It appears that many important works had been lost and it was sought to gather all the traditions in one great work.

We get a picture of the life of the Aryas of those days as well as of the kingdoms which existed at that time. No wonder then that the work so excellently written and composed, should have won the admiration of people who came after the Mahabharata days. It is unfortunate that many interpolations have been made in this great work, just as they have been made in the Ramayana, but inspite of these interpolations it is not difficult to separate the chaff from grain. The work as it originally existed, contained more than eighty thousand Shlokas, the addition of 20,000 or more Shlokas has not in any way taken away from the excellence of the work. Even in its present shape, the Mahabharata is greatly extolled.

The main theme of the Mahabharata is the great war between the Kaurvas and Pandavas—the first cousins—,Kaurvas being the sons of Dhritrashtra, the blind monarch, and Pandavas, the sons of Pandu, who ruled the country in preference to his elder brother Dhritrashtra. After the death of Pandu, Dhritrashtra succeeded him. The Pandavas demanded their share of the kingdom and were given the territories near Delhi. They founded a new city Indraprastha, and made it their capital. Hastinapur was the capital of

the Kaurvas. The righteous rule of the Pandavas soon made them popular and the splendour of their capital aroused the jealousy and cupidity of Duryodhana, the eldest son of Dhritrashtra. Yudhishthara—known throughout for his love for truth and justice—was challenged by Duryodhana to a game of dice. Yudhishthara lost his kingdom and had accordingly to live in forests for 12 years. The Pandavas had to pass one year inognito and if they were discovered, they had to pass 12 years in exile again.

The Pandavas carried out the terms of the agreement and when 13 years were over, wanted their kingdom back. Duryodhana refused to give even one inch of land. In spite of the advice of Shri Krishna, of Bhishma Pitamah, the grand-uncle of the parties – a great sage and indomitable warrior – and of Dronacharya, the preceptor of both the Kaurvas and Pandavas, Duryodhana proud of the strength of his army and of his generals, like, Karna, Bhishma and Dronacharya, became ready for a war to finish. The Pandavas had great generals and tough warriors as their allies. Arjuna, the great hero of the age, Bhima, Nakul and Sehdeva headed by Yudhishthara, the eldest brother, were helped in the Great War by Shri Krishna, the greatest of the strategists, who became the chariot driver of Arjuna.

When the two armies faced each other, Arjuna was overcome with sorrow and refused to fight. It was then that the message of the Gita was given.

Ultimately victory remained with the Pandavas; but the destruction wrought on the battle-field of Kurukshetra was terrible; Bhishama, Drona, Karna,

Duryodhana and his brothers were all killed. Terrible ruin followed. Great warriors and kings, and soldiers who fought on foot, on horseback, on elephants and in chariots on the side of the Pandavas, but had escaped destruction on the battle-field were murdered in a night attack by Ashvatthama – the son of Drona—while they were resting in their camps. The laws of war were thus broken.

The story of the Mahabharata is most thrilling. Speeches delivered before the War and on the battle – field show the great spirit of the Aryas. The knowledge and learning of Bhishma, who lay wounded on the battle-field for several days are disclosed in the Shantiparva, when the Pandavas approached him for receiving instruction in Niti Dharma (politics). Bhishma's discourses on various subjects are unique and display special mastery of political science which has extorted admiration from all those who have read those chapters with care.

Such indeed is the grandeur and sublimity of this great Epic that even after the passage of about 5000 years, Indians and foreigners alike have sung its praises, and have paid tributes to the great genius of its author, Veda – Vyasa.

Thus Dr. F.A. Hassler of America has in eloquent words praised the Mahabharata : “The Mahabharata has opened to me, as it were, a new world, and I have been surprised beyond measure at the wisdom, truth, knowledge, and love of the right which I have found displayed in its pages.”

The American ethnologist, Jeremiah Curtin says : “I have never obtained more pleasure from reading

any book in my life. The Mahabharata will open the eyes of the world to the true character and intellectual rank of the Aryas of India.”

Saint Hilaire Bartholemy thus speaks of the Mahabharata in the “Journal Des Savantes” of September, 1886 : “Vyasa, the reputed author of the Mahabharata, appeared greater than even Homer, and it required a very little indeed to induce people to place India above Greece It has not the less been admitted that this prodigious Hindu Epic is one of the grandest monuments of its kind of human intelligence and genius.”

Mr. Titus Munson Coan says : “The Hindu Epics have a nearer significance for us than anything in the Norse Mythology.”

Mon. A. Barth says : “Some portions of the Mahabharata may well compare with the purest and most beautiful productions of human genius.”

“Nothing,” says Professor Monier Williams, “can be more beautiful and touching than the picture of domestic and social happiness in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It is indeed in depicting scenes of domestic affection, and expressing those universal feelings and emotions which belong to human nature in all time and in all places, that Sanskrit Epic poetry is unrivalled.”

The main lesson of the Mahabharata is that virtue and truth must always be adhered to even at the risk of one’s life; that self-control is the means by which one should ascend to the higher life ; that self-indulgence is ruinous, and when kings and emperors

take to self-indulgence, they bring ruin not only to themselves, but to the people at large.

Both the great Epics praise the Vedas, regard them as of Divine origin, and counsel kings and sages, students and soldiers, in fact all mankind to study the Vedas, act up to their teachings and regard the Vedas as the most sacred writings full of precepts which should be followed in daily life.

The Epics—the Mahabharata and the Ramayana—should be carefully studied by our ambassadors who should make themselves fully acquainted with the ancient history of their country, if they wish to work in accordance with the dictates of Dharma or Righteousness. If there is any doubt, that doubt is removed after the perusal of these great works, that it is only righteousness that exalteth a nation.

It is a great pity that great many Shlokas have been interpolated in these Epics. But inspite of those later additions, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata remain the greatest Epics of the world.

CHAPTER VII

FABLES AND DRAMAS

Doubtless, the religious, metaphysical and philosophical thought of the whole world has been influenced by the great work which Arya sages had written. When India was at the zenith of its glory, men from all parts of the world congregated here in her universities, as well as in hermitages and Ashramas maintained by Indian sages. In later years scholars, Brahmans, and Acharyas went from India on missions of goodwill and peace to other countries and spread Vedic teachings throughout the world.

The vast Sanskrit literature both in prose and poetry, cannot be classified merely as religious or philosophical literature. There are dramas, poems, Kavyas, stories and fables. These have contributed to the richness and variety of our culture. These works in their turn inspired the scholars of other countries who have acknowledged their debt to India.

PANCHATANTRA AND HITOPADESHA

Two remarkable books – Panchatantra and Hitopadesha—have greatly influenced the stories and fables prevalent in the different parts of the world. Sisir Kumar Mitra says : “The Panchatantra and the Hitopadesha are among the oldest folk stories, which are woven into the fabric of European literature, the former having been translated into all the principal languages of the world, ancient and modern, including

Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, Russian, English, Spanish, Swedish, Dutch and even Icelandic." With the exception of the Bible, there is probably no other work which has been translated into so many languages as the Panchatantra.

Arthur Rhyder claimed that the Panchatantra contains the most widely known stories in the world. "If it were further declared that the Panchatantra is the best collection of stories in the world, the assertion could hardly be disproved."

These stories reached Asia Minor as far back as sixth century B. C., and were translated into Greek by Aesop who lived in the court of Croesus of Lydia. Some of them appear in Herodotus. A Latin version of them is ascribed to Phaedrus in the time of Tiberius and another Greek version to Babrius of Alexandria about 200 A. D.

The famous Indian story Shuka Saptati reached Europe in Persian form in the tenth century, as also the Arabian Nights which contains many Indian references, and the story of Sindbad the Sailor which is of Hindu origin. La Fontaine made use of the fables of the 'Indian Sage Pilpay,' which name is believed to be a corruption of Vidyapat or Vidyapati. Mr. Elphinstone remarks: "In the composition of tales and fables the Hindus appear to have been the instructors of mankind." ¹

Shri Har Bilas Sarda quotes Ferishta, the great historian of Persia, as saying: "Panchatantra was sent by the king of India to Nausherwan, King of

1. History of India.

Persia, with a chess board, when it was rendered into Pahlavi language by Buzoorjmehr, his vizier."

W. H. Hunter says : "The fables of animals, familiar to the Western world, from the time of Aesop downwards, had their original home in India The most ancient animal fables of India are at the present day the Nursery Stories of England and America."

Prof. Wilson remarks : "The fables of the Hindus are a sort of machinery to which there is no parallel in the fabling literature of Greece and Rome."

Count Bjornstjerna remarks : "The Thousand and One Nights, so universally known in Europe, is a Hindu original translated into Persian and thence into other languages. In Sanskrit the name is Vrihat Katha."

Lin Yutang writes : "It may also be a complete revelation to find that the fabulous Hindu mind is responsible for the genre of animal fables and many stories of the Arabian Nights type, in which Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature abounds."¹

H. G. Rawlinson opines: "Numerous European fairy stories, to be found in Grimm or Hans Andersen, including the magic mirror, the seven-leagued boots, Jack and the Beanstalk, and the purse of Fortunatua, have been traced to Indian sources. "Many of them are to be found in the Gesta Romanorum, the Decameron, and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales." The story of the Three Caskets, used in the Merchant of Venice, is found in the romance of Barlaam and Josaphat, which is too clearly the story of Buddha,

1. The Wisdom of India by Lin Yutang.

who was changed into a Christian garb, and later canonized as a Christian saint as St. Josaphat ! And everyone of course knows the story of the Milkmaid who dreamt of her wedding and overthrew the milk pail, now to be recognised in its original form as the story of the Brahman's Dream included in the selections from the Panchatantra."¹

Besides Panchatantra and Hitopadesha there were other books of stories and fables which are well-known. Katha Saritsagar and Vetala Panch Vansati have always been very popular and have been the sources of the stories and fables of several countries of the world. These stories were not only meant to amuse, but also to instruct the readers. They contain moral lessons which are likely to impress the minds of young people and thus help both in their mental and moral growth. Fables and stories of Indian origin have travelled far beyond the shores of India, and have helped in enriching this kind of literature of almost all the nations of the world.

The Hindu art and literature received a great impetus even in later years, when great sovereigns and kings patronised learning and offered rewards to poets and dramatists.

THE DRAMA

As regards the drama it must be remembered that it existed in the Treta Yuga. It had become fully developed. Scholars who maintain that the Indian drama was the result of the contact of the people

1. Article India in European Literature and thought in "The Legacy of India."

of this country with the Greeks are mistaken. This view cannot be sustained from the very fact that reference to Nataka or the drama occurs even in the Ramayana. Pandit Nehru is on safer grounds when he asserts: "It is now generally admitted that the Indian theatre was entirely independent in its origins, in the ideas which governed it and in its development. Its earliest beginnings can be traced back to the hymns and dialogues of the Rig Veda which have a certain dramatic character. There are references to Nataka or the drama in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It began to take shape in the songs and music and the dance of the Krishna legends."

The Natya Shastra, the great work of sage Bharata, a pre-Mahabharata writer, is a proof of the existence of the drama and of dramatic literature at a very remote period of Indian history. According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "a considerable literature must have preceded it and behind it must lie many centuries of gradual progress." The names of great Indian dramatists are well-known throughout this country. Bhasa, Asva Ghosha, Kalidasa, Shudraka, Bhava Bhuti are some of the well-known dramatists. Their dramas have been greatly admired throughout the world.

The Indian drama has inspired many a foreign writer; and its impress is undoubtedly to be seen in the writings of foreign scholars. Kalidasa's Shakuntala has been translated in English, German, French, Danish and Italian. Nehru remarks: "Goethe was powerfully impressed and he paid a magnificent tribute to Shakuntala (by Kalidasa). The idea of giving a prologue to 'Faust' is said to have originated from

Kalidasa's prologue, which was in accordance with the usual tradition of the Sanskrit drama."

SANSKRIT DRAMA EULOGISED

The American scholar Ryder (quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru) said : "That Kalidasa seized this truth is a magnificent tribute to his intellectual power, a quality quite as necessary to great poetry as perfection of form. Poetical fluency is not rare; intellectual grasp is not very uncommon; but the combination has not been found perhaps more than a dozen times since the world began. Because he possessed this harmonious combination, Kalidasa ranks not with Anacreon and Horace and Shelley but with Sophocles, Virgil, Milton."

"The Indian drama", says Prof. Sylvain Levi, "still retains the happiest invention of the Indian genius."

According to Prof. A.B. Ketih, "The Sanskrit drama may legitimately be regarded as the highest product of Indian poetry, and as summing up in itself the final conception of literary art achieved by the very self-conscious creators of Indian literature . . . The Brahmin, in fact, much abused as he has been in this as in other matters, was the source of the intellectual distinction of India. As he produced Indian philosophy, so by another effort of his intellect he evolved the subtle and effective form of the drama."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru writes : "An English translation of Shudraka's Mrichhakatika was staged in New York in 1924. Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, the

dramatic critic of the Nation, wrote of it as follows: 'Here, if anywhere, the spectator will be able to see a genuine example of that "pure art theatre" of which theorists talk, and here, too, he will be led to meditate upon that real wisdom of the East which lies not in esoteric doctrine but in a tenderness far deeper and truer than that of the traditional Christianity which has been so thoroughly corrupted by the hard righteousness of Hebraism . . . A play wholly artificial yet profoundly moving because it is not realistic but real Such a play can be produced only by a civilisation which has reached stability; when a civilisation has thought its way through all the problems it faces, it must come to rest upon something calm and naive like this. Macbeth and Othello, however great and stirring they might be are barbarous heroes because the passionate tumult of Shakespeare is the tumult produced by the conflict between a newly awakened sensibility and a series of ethical concepts inherited from the savage age. The realistic drama of our own time is a product of a like confusion; but when problems are settled, and when passions are reconciled with the decisions of an intellect, then form alone remains Nowhere in our European past do we find, this side the classics, a work more completely civilized.' ¹

Similarly, Schlegel, Prof. Heeren, Sir William Hunter, Von Humboldt have paid well-merited tributes to Kalidasa. The remarks of Prof. Wilson about Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti are well-worth quoting: "It is impossible to conceive language so beautifully musical or so magnificently grand as that of the verses of Bhavabhuti and Kalidasa."

1. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in *Discovery of India*.

All classes of people in India were interested in the drama. Plays were very popular in the towns and villages alike. People collected together to see popular plays being acted by persons who were well-up in music and the art of acting. "But apart from this high-class literary theatre, there has always been a popular theatre based on stories from Indian mythology and the Epics, themes well-known to the audience, and concerned more with display than with dramatic element." ¹ The drama here, however, had always a moral tone and the writers never forgot that the purpose of drama was didactic. Not only must the audience be amused, but it should also be impressed with high purpose of life.

BIOGRAPHIES AND HISTORIES

The Hindus excelled in the writing of biographies, Kavyas and histories. From the ancient-most times historical writing was a great feature of the Aryas' literature. The value of history was fully realised. Master minds devoted themselves to the writing of historical works. The historical writing was divided into 18 classes, some of them are :— 1. Itihas (History proper); 2. Purakalpa (ancient accounts); 3. Parkriya (ancient account of a single person); 4. Akhyah (a small historical story); 5. Upakhyan (story within a story); 6. Charita (biography); 7. Gatha (couplets about the deeds of heroes); 8. Narashnasi (songs in praise of charity and learning of great men); 9. Atihya (short histories); 10. Shasan (commandments of kings); 11. Anvakhyan (prologue); 12. Purana

1. Ibid.

(geonologies and creation, and dissolution accounts).
13. Vansha (family tables).¹

In government houses and kings' palaces arrangements were made to keep historical records. Separate files and records of historical events were kept in a chronological order. This fact was noticed by foreign writers and travellers. Huen Tsang gives many instances. The Buddhist work Manju Shrimula Kalpa is a great testimony of the existence of histories in the country.

The Rajatarangani is a famous work still extant. It gives very useful information about Kashmir.

It is wrong, therefore, to state that the Arya sages and Hindu scholars did not attach any importance to the writing of history. It is impossible that a people so gifted and so brilliant should have failed to keep a record of the achievements of their great heroes, writers, philosophers and thinkers. Not only there were written records, but there were court bards and singers who recited the histories of their kings and generals on every festive occasion. These bards used to accompany the armies when they were on march to meet the foreign invaders. They also chanted Vedic teachings, which were consistently followed and practised, and reminded the Kshatriyas of their duty to fight for the preservation of Dharma (righteousness) and the safety and security of the kingdom. Thus India has been able to preserve up to this day her vast treasures of culture, religion, history, literature and language.

1. Pandit Bhagavad Datta.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LOST LITERARY TREASURES OF INDIA

A brief reference to several important Sanskrit works which were produced by sages and Rishis in ancient India and which are completely lost to us now or which exist only in fragments is called for. Reference to them is made in the ancient books which are still extant. Several hundred of the ancient books, whose originals are lost, still exist only in translations in foreign countries. Many hundred thousands of Sanskrit manuscripts lie unread, undigested and unedited in several places.

BRAHMA'S WORKS

As already remarked, in the Satyuga (Golden Age) Maharishi Brahma wrote an important work on Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth and prosperity) and Kama (fulfilment of noble aspirations), which is now not traceable. Similarly, another work written by him was on Moksha or Emancipation—release from the bondage of birth and death after the Jiva or the soul had attained communion with God. There were several other works by Brahma and his colleagues, which are not traceable now.

There were several Up-Vedas which were written by other Indian sages. Dhanurveda was an important work on Military Science, which was written in Satyuga, of which there is no trace now. One Dhanurveda which appears to have been written by Kavya Ushna or the Chief Minister of the Daityas

has been referred to in the later literature. Another treatise on Military Science was written by Jamadagni, the father of the great warrior Parusharam, who lived in the middle of the Dwapara Age. There was a work on Military Science by Bharadavaja, father of Dronacharya written at the end of Dwapara. This Bharadavaja wrote a treatise on Ayurveda and another on aeroplanes. Reference to his works is to be found in later works. Vyuha Shastra or a work on Military Strategy is referred to in Mahabharata Bhishmaparva, Chapter 83, Verse 20.

70 TANTRAS AND 300 SHASTRAS

Prof. Bhagavad Datta maintains that there were fourteen branches of knowledge of which seventy works, called Tantras, were written and there were 300 Shastras or shorter works.¹

In Mahabharata Sabhaparva, Chapter V, verse 110, there is a reference to a Rathashastra, or a treatise on War Chariots. This Shastra is now not traceable. Nakula, one of the five Pandavas, wrote Asvashastra, a work on the Science and treatment of horses. This work is extant. There were several other writers who wrote on Asva-vidya (the art of training or management of horses). There were several ancient authors who wrote about elephants. Lomapada, a contemporary of Dashratha, and Buddha, an Indian Sage-king, wrote his work in the beginning of Tretayuga – a reference to which is made in Matsya Purana, Chapter 34, verse 2. Rajputra is another

1. See article on 'Our Lost Arya Books' by Pandit Bhagavad Datta Published in Kalyana (Culture Special Number), 1950.

writer on .Hastividya, Science of elephants. He has been quoted in Mallinath's commentary on Raghuvamsa.

VETERINARY SCIENCE

The ancient Hindus developed veterinary science. associated mainly with the name of Rishi Shalihotra. His work is referred to by Pandit Hemraj Sharma in his introduction to Kashyapa Samhita of Ayurveda. He has actually quoted verses from Shalihotra. Our Hindi word 'slotri' which means a veterinary surgeon, is derived from the name of Rishi Shalihotra.

There were works on machinery. Vishvakarma in the beginning of Tretayuga wrote a Yantrashastra which is referred to in the commentary by Jayamangala in Vatsyayana's Kamasutras. Machineries utilised for the purpose of working the wells, for warfare, and for the purpose of driving conveyances, were all dealt with.

AGRICULTURE

Similarly, works on different departments of agriculture were written by various authors. Krishishastra by Prashara, who flourished in the middle of Dwapara Age, is mentioned in the commentary on Kautilya's Arthashastra. Many books which dealt with painting, measurements, metals, gems and cookery are mentioned by Pandit Bhagavad Datta in his article on 'Our Lost Books' published in 'Kalyana' referred to above. There were several other books on engineering by important writers like Bhrigu, Atri, Vashishta, Vishvakarma, Narada, Nagnajit, Siva, Indra, Sanatkumar, Nandisha, Saunaka, Gargya, Vasudeva Krishna and his son Aniruddha, and by Shukra and Brihaspati. These books are not extant.

MANUSCRIPTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

However, we are informed that there are more than five lacs of manuscripts in the different libraries of the world. Several thousands of manuscripts were taken away from India, Nepal and Tibet by the Europeans ; and are now kept in the libraries of Berlin, Paris, British Museum, Bodlian Library of Oxford and other places. Similarly a large number of ancient manuscripts are preserved in the various libraries in India. Add to these a large number of manuscripts which still are to be found in the private houses of the people of India. If they are all collected and housed in one place and are properly read, digested and edited, they will form a great storehouse from which an estimate of the culture of the ancient Hindus could be formed.

Many manuscripts were taken away by the Chinese travellers to their country when there was intercourse between China and India. In his book 'Discovery of India' Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru refers to the visit of Huan-tsang, the Chinese traveller who came to India and stayed here for a long time. He says : "Huan-tsang himself remained in touch with India, exchanging letters with friends there and receiving manuscripts. Two interesting letters, originally written in Sanskrit, have been preserved in China. One of these was written in 654 A. C. by an Indian Buddhist scholar, Sthavira Prajnadeva, to Hsuan-tsang. After greetings and news about common friends and their literary works, he proceeds to say : 'We are sending you a pair of white clothes to show that we are not forgetful. The road is long. So do not mind the smallness of the present. We wish you may accept it.

As regards the Sutras and Shastras which you may require, please send us a list. We will copy them and send them to you.' Hsuan-tsang, in his reply says : 'I learnt from an ambassador who recently came back from India that the great teacher Shilabhadra was no more. This news overwhelmed me with grief that knew no bounds Among the Sutras and Shastras that I, Hsuan-tsang, had brought with me I have already translated the Yogacharya-Bhumi-Shastra and other works, *in all 30 volumes*. I should humbly let you know that while crossing the Indus I had *lost a load of sacred texts*. I now send you a list of the texts annexed to this letter. I request you to send them to me if you get the chance. I am sending some small articles as presents. Please accept them.'

"Similarly, I-tsing who studied at Nalanda University in India carried with him several hundred Sanskrit texts. Further during the political revolutions from the eleventh century A. C. onwards, crowds of Buddhist monks, carrying bundles of manuscripts, went to Nepal or crossed the Himalayas into Tibet. A considerable part of the old Indian literature thus, and previously, found its way to China and Tibet, and in recent years it has been discovered afresh there in original or, more frequently, in translations. Many Indian classics have been preserved in Chinese and Tibetan translations relating not only to Buddhism, but also to Brahminism, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, etc. There are supposed to be 8000 such works in the Sung-pao collection in China. Tibet is full of them."

The Hindu missionaries, who founded many colonies in all parts of the world, always carried manuscripts on philosophy, religion and other branches of learning

with them with the object of spreading their knowledge in those countries, where they settled. Those manuscripts are practically lost to us. It is also a well-known fact of history that the Mohammedan invaders burnt a very large number of Sanskrit books and manuscripts. References to these ravages occur in almost all histories written by impartial Mohammedan writers themselves. We do not intend to refer to them here, but in order to emphasise the point, which we are making, this fact has to be brought to the notice of the world.

It is quite possible, however, that if the Indian Government sends scholars to search for the lost ancient documents, a large number may still be recovered in translations. There are translations into the Dutch language of many ancient manuscripts which appear to have been taken away by the people of Holland from Java, Sumatra and other islands towards the east of India. We are practically certain that if an earnest search is made for the ancient Arya or Hindu works in other countries of the world, the efforts of the seekers of these treasures would not go in vain.

CHAPTER IX

CULTURAL CONQUEST OF THE WORLD

Our study of the recent histories written by scholars both of India and the West discloses one remarkable fact that the Hindus had built up an extensive cultural empire, the rival of which is difficult to find. These facts may seem incredible to those who are always out to run down Hindu culture, Hindu literature and Hindu thought, but the fact remains that there was no department of learning or human activity in which the ancient Aryas or Hindus did not make their contribution or were not the teachers of mankind.

The Aryas or Hindus considered it their foremost duty to spread their culture and literature, their sciences and arts, throughout the world; and hence in pursuance of this duty, which Vedic teachings had imposed on them, they went to the different parts of the world, teaching mankind the true way of life. They not only taught great religious and philosophical truths, but disclosed the means by which material prosperity could be attained. They thus became the pioneers of spreading in the world the science of medicine, mathematics, statecraft and the different arts, like painting, sculpture and music.

It has already been stated that the Aryas emigrated to different countries during all the four Yugas or epochs. It, however, appears that at the end of Satayuga or the beginning of Tretayuga, when war between Daityas (Assuras) or demons, and Adityas

(Devas) or gods, had commenced, the exodus of the Aryas to the different parts of the world also took place. A large number of Arya or Hindu colonists started by land-route to settle in North Europe and North America—a fact which is supported by reliable evidence.

LITHUNIA

Sisir Kumar Mitra, the author of 'The Vision of India,' says that "the relics of Hindu civilisation have been found in various parts of Russia and Siberia. There are also evidences that Aswamedha was celebrated in some parts of northern Europe. Lithuania observes even to this day many rites and customs of the Hindus. The names of the Lithunian rivers are undoubtedly Indian in their origin. Tapti is one such name which is the name of a river in the Punjab. (Tapti is the name of a river in the South West of India, not of any river in the Punjab); some of the others are Nemuna (Indian Yamuna), Srobati (Indian Saraswati), Narbudey (Indian Narmada). The tribal or clan names of the Lithuanians such as Kuru, Puru, Yadav, Sudav are distinctly Indian: so also are the names of their gods such as Indra, Varuna, Purakanya (the Vedic Parjanya). These are facts, however, incredible they may seem."

SCANDANAVIA

As regards Sweden and Norway, their very name Scandania is significant. Sanat Kumar otherwise called Skandha was a general of the Adityas. His descendants seem to have emigrated to parts of northern Europe and settled in Scandinavia. Their religious book is called Edda. Research scholars believe that Edda is derived from Veda. Count Bjornstjerna

remarks : "We can scarcely question the derivation of Edda (the religious book of ancient Scandinavia) from the Vedas.¹ Shri Har Bilas Sardar is inclined to the view that the principle on which the seven days of the week are named in India, is the same on which it has been done in Scandinavia.² Count Bjornstjerna is of the opinion that the myths of the Scandinavians were derived from those of the Hindus.³

GERMANY

With regard to the ancient Germans, the view of the scholars is that they also migrated from India into Germany. Tod in his work "Annals of Rajasthan," Vol. I, remarks : "The first habit of the Germans, says Tacitus, on rising was ablution, which Colonel Tod thinks must have been of Eastern origin and not of the cold climate of Germany, as also "the loose flowing robe, the long and braided hair tied in a knot at the top of the head so emblematic of the Brahmans." ⁴

BRITAIN

As regards the Druids in ancient Britain, the view of Colonel Tod expressed in his work 'Rajasthan' seems to be that they were Buddhist Brahmans. They believed in the pre-existence of the soul and its return to the realms of universal space. They believed in God as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, just as the Hindus believe. Just as amongst the Hindus the law was supreme and even the kings had to obey it, similarly

1. Vide Theogony of the Hindus by Count Bjornstjerna.
2. Har Bilas Sardar's Hindu Superiority, P. 136.
Ibid.
4. Sisir Kumar Mitra's Vision of India.

amongst the Druids the king had to bow before the law. According to Mr. Pococke, author of 'India in Greece' the word *hurrah* was the war-cry of the Rajputs of Britain, who seemed to have settled there having migrated from India to Europe. According to Humboldt, the Celtic race which established itself in Europe from the most ancient times came from India. Godfrey Higgins' book 'Celtic Druids' shows that the Druids were the priests of Hindu colonists who emigrated from India and settled in Britain.

COLONISATION OF AMERICA

With regard to America, Chaman Lal, a Punjabi Journalist and author, has written a book 'Hindu America' which shows that the Hindus colonised that country and there was intercourse between India and America for a long time. Humboldt's view is that Hindu customs were prevalent in America when the Britons first entered that land. It is significant that the first Europeans who settled in America called these Americans, Indians.

MEXICO

Sisir Kumar remarks : "There is a striking similarity between the life led by the people in Mexico and that led by the people in India. A sculptured representation of a typical elephant at Copan in Central America is held to be a representation of Indian elephant with Indian embellishments and additions of a symbolic import."

PERU

According to Sir William Jones. "The inhabitants of Peru in South America claim descent from solar

generation and were worshippers of Sun-god. The greatest of their festivals was called Rama-Sitoa." "The ancestors of the Peruvians," says Pococke, "were connected with the Indians. No wonder that the story of the Ramayana should be current among the Peruvians. The poetry of Peru bears the imprint of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata on each page. Ambassador Miles Poindexter of the United States who spent several years in Peru and made personal investigations from the descendants of the Inca rulers says that the founders of the Inca dynasty of South America were four 'Ayar (having phonological connection with Arya) Brahmins.' The Incas observed the caste-system and performed the sacred thread rite more or less exactly as it is performed by the Brahmins of India. The language of Peru has more than a thousand Sanskrit roots. Peruvian music is based on Hindu music." ¹ Chaman Lal in his book 'Hindu America' says : "The belief of these Americans in the four Hindu Yugas (epochs), their Gurukula scheme of education, Panchayat system, worship of Indra, Ganesha and other Hindu gods, practice of Hindu religious dances, and child-birth, marriage and death ceremonies including Sati, prove beyond doubt that the Hindus were the first to discover America."

AFGHANISTAN

We have already stated that the Daityas, or the descendants of Kashyapa from his wife Diti, settled in the territory now called the North-West Frontier Province and Afghanistan and in parts of Iran. They went as far as the banks of the river Oxus. They

1. Vision of India by Sisir Kumar Mitra.

spread towards the west. They were the forefathers of the Chaldeans, the Egyptians and the Assyrians. "The story of Manu's flood and other legends of India were current in ancient Babylon and Assyria," remarks Mr. Mitra, the Vedic influence is traced in the Babylonian theory of creation."

THE SUMMERIANS

The Summerians were emigrants from India. Dr. A. L. Waddel in his book 'Indo-Summerian Seals Deciphered' maintains that the Summerians were Aryans and that their names can be identified in the Vedas and the Puranas. Antiquities and monuments unearthed in Summeria are believed by him to be associated with Vedic kings and priests. The striking similarity between the central story of the Yahvist sections of the Pentateuch, Joshua and Samuel, and the Kurukshetra war of the Mahabharata has led some scholars to opine that the Semites of Judea were influenced by the Aryas of India. A similar view is held by scholars regarding the migration of the Indians to Assyria. (Vide—Vision of India).

In fact the traditions of the ancient people of Chaldea, Assyria and Egypt go to strengthen the view that they are the descendants of the Aryas of India. It appears that from the earliest times up to the beginning of the Christian era and even afterwards the stream of emigrants from India flowed to other countries. Thus Pococke remarks: "The mighty human tide that passed the barrier of the Punjab, rolled onward towards its destined channel in Europe and in Asia, to fulfil its beneficent office in the moral fertilization of the world." (Vide—'India in Greece').

Professor Heeren remarks : “How could such a thickly-peopled, and in some parts over-peopled country as India have disposed of her superabundant population except by planting colonies ?”

The Mahabharata as well as the Puranas mention the names of several tribes, who left India in order to settle in foreign countries. Amongst others the following tribes have been mentioned in these ancient books : The Yavanas, Kiratas, Gandharas, Chinas, Savaras, Varvaras, Shakas, Tusharas, Kankas, Puhlavas, Andhras, Madras, Paundras, Pulindas, Ramathas and Kambojas.

EGYPT

According to various writers, Egypt was a colony of the Hindus. In the Treta and Dwapara age some of the Hindu tribes left India and settled in Egypt. They carried with them their religion, their traditions and their culture. Ultimately they founded in Egypt an empire which seems to have influenced the West to a large extent. Colonel Alcott remarks : “India, eight thousand years ago sent a colony of emigrants who carried their arts and high civilisation into what is now known to us as Egypt.”

Mr. Pococke remarks : “I would now briefly recapitulate the leading evidences of the colonization of Africa from North-Western India and the Himalaya province. First from the Provinces or rivers deriving their names from great rivers of India ; secondly, from the towns and provinces of India or its northern frontiers ; thirdly, from the Ruling Chiefs styled Ramas (Rameses) etc. ; fourthly, similarity in the objects of sculpture ; fifthly, architectural skill and its grand and

gigantic character ; and sixthly, the power of translating words, imagined to be Egyptian, through the medium of a modified Sanskrit ” (‘India in Greece’).

Professor Heeren says that “there was great physical similarity in colour and in conformation of the head of the ancient Egyptians and the Hindus.” (‘Hindu Superiority’).

Mr. Pococke remarks : “The early civilisation, the early arts, the indubitably early literature of India are equally the civilisations, the arts and literature of Egypt and of Greece, for, geographical evidences, conjoined to historical facts and religious practices, now prove beyond all dispute that the two latter countries are the colonies of the former.” (‘India in Greece’).

ABYSSINIA

Similarly Ethiopia and Abyssinia were colonised by the Hindus. Sir William Jones remarks : “Ethiopia and Hindustan were possessed or colonised by the same extraordinary race.” (Asiatic Research, Vol. I. P. 426).

Professor Heeren maintains : “The Abyssinians migrated from the banks of Abuisin, a classical name for Indus, to Abyssinia.”

GREECE

The most important event, however, which influenced in later ages the civilisation and culture of the Western world was the colonization of Greece by the ancient Aryas. A careful study of the Mahabharata shows that the Yavanas are the descendants of the king

Yayati, famous in Indian history. Mr. Pococke remarks : "The whole of this state of society, civil and military, strikes every one as being eminently Asiatic, much of it specifically Indian. Such it undoubtedly is. And I shall demonstrate that these evidences were but the attendant tokens of an Indian colonization with its corresponding religion and language. I shall exhibit dynasties disappearing from Western India appear again in Greece ; clans, whose martial fame is still recorded in the faithful chronicles of North-Western India, as the gallant bands who fought upon the plains of Troy." ('India in Greece,' p. 12).

Greek thought bears distinct and definite impressions of the Vedic or Hindu culture. Socrates, Plato as well as Aristotle—the most famous ancient Greek philosophers—borrowed almost the whole of their ideas from the Indian Shastras. Says Hopkins, "Plato is full of Sankhyan thought worked out by him but taken from Pythagoras." Urwick believes that almost all of what Plato said in his Republic is only a restatement of Indian ideas. Plato's division of the ideal polity into Guardians, Auxiliaries, and Craftmen is nothing but the Hindu caste system in another garb. Scholars from Greece used to go and study in the Indian Universities. Similarly, Brahman missionaries and preachers were invited to teach in Alexandria, Persia and Asia Minor, which were at one time three important centres of learning and where scholars from different parts of the world congregated, in order to get their education in religion, science and philosophy.

Indian traders and commercial men also influenced the culture of countries towards the West. They

took with them not only Indian goods but also Indian Shastras, which enshrined Vedic ideas and ideals.

The existence of Indian Brahmans in Persia, Asia Minor and Alexandria is attested to by Greek and Persian traditions which are accepted by Max Muller, Garbe and Winternitz. This view is expressed by Sisir Kumar Mitra in his 'Vision of India.'

Buddhists were instrumental in spreading Indian culture in various countries of the world. But long before the Buddhists appeared on the scene, Arya missionaries had taken their culture to those very countries where afterwards Buddhism prevailed. Will Durant, an eminent American writer has in words that shall always thrill every Hindu says: "*India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe's languages; she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the mother of us all.*"

ASIA AND INDONESIA

Similarly China, Burma, the countries towards the east of India were greatly influenced by Vedic culture. Afterwards these countries accepted Buddhist religion.

It appears that when the Indians went towards America in their ships, some of them settled in those territories which are now named Indonesia. The mere name Indonesia should lead one to believe that the people of these islands are the descendants of the Indians.

Indian culture thus spread in Asia, Indonesia as well as in the Phillipines.

For several thousand years India sent her sons to different countries of Asia and helped in the growth and culture of those countries. Says Aurel Stein : "The vast extent of Indian culture influences, from Central Asia in the north to tropical Indonesia in the south, and from the border-lands of Persia to China and Japan, has shown that ancient India was the radiating centre of a civilisation which by its religious thought, its art and literature was destined to leave its deep mark on the races wholly diverse and scattered over the greater part of Asia."¹ Alfred C. Lyall in his paper on Natural Religion in India, says : "As from some high ridge or plateau the rivers rise and run down into distant lands, so from India there has been a large outflow of religious ideas over Asia. It has, of course, been the fountain-head of Buddhism, which has flooded, as I have said, all Eastern Asia; while I believe that the influence of Indian theosophy spread at the beginning of the Christian era as far as Alexandria and Antioch. I am told that it may be traceable later in the mysticism of the Persian Sufis. The religious thought of India has thus radiated out east and west across the Asiatic continent."²

CHINA

India's cultural intercourse with China is an event of outstanding importance in the history of Asian culture, as also in that of the expansion of Indian ideas in the East. The Manu Samhita mentions the Chinese as mixed Kshatriyas, and the Mahabharata

1. Quoted by Sisir Kumar Mitra in 'Vision of India.'

2. Ibid.

calls them allies of king Bhagadatta of Assam who fought against the Pandavas in the Kurukshetra War.

The First Indian scholars to arrive in China were Kashyapa, Matanga and Dharmaraksha of Scytho-Indian parentage. Indian influence in China is not confined to the sphere of religion alone. It is evident also in her arts and crafts, in her music and sciences. Inspiration from India is obvious in the stone sculptures and bas-reliefs of the Han period before which the art of China was generally in bronze, wood and jade.¹ Bengal Brahmans and missionaries gave the art of painting, astronomy and mathematics to the Chinese.

According to Hindu tradition parts of China adjoining Tibet, which formed a part of Aryavarta were called the 'Devabhumi'—the land of the Adityas. According to Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati, Aryas are the original inhabitants of India and their first home was Tibet which was a part of India or Aryavarta. The Devas or the Adityas spread into Burma, Assam, Kashmir, north India and towards the East while the Daityas or Asuras (so-called from the great physical strength they possessed) spread towards the West.

BURMA

Burma had always been a part of Aryavarta. During the Treta and Dwapara and early Kaliyuga it continued to be a part of India. It was the Suvarna-

1. Ibid.

—bhumi (the golden land) of the Aryas of India. The Buddhist religion spread in Burma, and the people of Burma are still Buddhists. Buddhism is only an off-shoot of Arya or Hindu religion. Its philosophic thought is Aryan. Burma was able to resist the onrush of Mohanmedan religion as Burma was a part of India. When the British conquered Burma, they rightly retained Burma as a part of this country.

Burma was separated by the British in 1935 due to their policy of creating divisions in India. Had Burma continued to be a part of India both the countries would have been greatly benefitted. Burma would have been saved from many of the troubles which have threatened the peace of that country since the day of its separation from India.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Cambodia, Champa (Annam), Java, Sumatra, Bali and Borneo—all these territories received their culture from India. Their language, their literature, their institutions both political and religious bear unmistakable marks of having received their ideas from this country. Their political thought developed along the lines pointed out by Kautalya's Arthashastra. Their temples were the replica of the temples of India. Their gods and goddesses were the same, which neo-Hinduism had introduced there. Shiva and Vishnu cults remained predominant for several centuries in the countries named above. Brahman Missionaries, Brahman-Kshatriya Kings of Hindu origin ruled these territories for several hundred years. While Hinduism and Hindu kings got submerged under Muslim domination in the mother country, these countries were carrying the Aryan

traditions of India in South-East Asia. Sanskrit language and literature flourished in this part of the world. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata remained the sources of their culture. The Puranas were widely read and the Kathas from these works were recited in towns and villages of Indonesia. The Vedic mantras were chanted on all ceremonial occasions. Oaths to the Kings were given in accordance with the Aryan law. Sisir Kumar Mitra remarks : "The Epics of the Hindus as well as many of their Puranas are still available in Java in Javanese versions. Some of the scientific and medical texts of India are among the literary remains of ancient Java."

The island of Bali upto this time retains its culture and civilisation which is Hindu in origin, which continues Hindu in development and which remains Hindu in both essence and form even up to the present day.

Similarly the islands of Phillipines were colonised by the Hindus. Their culture was likewise Hindu. The impress of this culture could still be traced in those territories.

Japan too received the impress of Indian or Hindu culture. This fact is admitted by several European and Japanese scholars.

Shri Har Bilas Sarda remarks : "The famous Chinese traveller I-Tsing, mentions more than ten colonies in farther India and the island of the Indian Archipelago, where Indian manners, customs, and religious practices prevailed together with Sanskrit learning. Shri Bhoja in Sumatra; Kalinga in Java; Mabasin in Borneo, and the islands of Bali, Bhojapara

and others all bearing Indian names were amongst such colonies.”¹

Dr. Taka Kusu, a distinguished Japanese scholar, remarks : “But I should like to emphasise the fact that the influence of India, material and intellectual, must have been greater in an earlier period than we at present consider to have been the case. There were for instance several Indians, whom the Kuroshiwo current washing almost the whole southern coast brought to the Japanese shore.” (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1905 – quoted by Shri Har Bilas Sarda).

There is reason to believe that the colonisation of these Eastern islands and other parts of the world began from the earliest times and continued with several interruptions upto 1500 A. D. and even after.

Thus we see Arya or Hindu culture spreading throughout the East and the West. The Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, especially the Rajputs of the solar-race – descendants of Manu, son of Vivaswan—the Vaishas – the Hindu merchants and traders, and even the Shudras went to distant lands for settling there. How and why they drifted away from the original culture of the Vedas of the Aryas is well described in the Mahabharata and the Puranas.

“Bahu, father of the famous King Sagara, was killed by the Haihyas. Sagara vowed vengeance. He killed most of the Haihayas and when he wanted to exterminate their allies – the Shakas, the Yavanas, Kambojas, Pradas and Pahlavas—they approached King Sagara’s purohit, the famous Vashishtha, who

1. ‘I-Tsing’ by Dr. Taka Kusu.

intervened on their behalf and said to the King Sagara : “You have done enough, my son, in the way of punishing these men, who are as good as dead. In order that your might be fulfilled, I have compelled them to abandon the duties of their caste and all associations with the twice born.”

“Agreeing to the proposal of his Guru, King Sagara compelled these tribes to alter their costume. He made the Yavanas shave their heads, the Shakas shave half their heads, the Paradas wear long hair and the Palavas their beards. These and other Kshatriyas, he deprived of the study of the Vedas and the Vashat Kara. In consequence of their abandonment of their proper duties and their desertion by the Brahmanas, they become Mlechhas.”¹

Does not the Pope of Rome in these days wish to adopt the same kind of punishment for the communists ? It has always been the practice of the rulers to deprive the wrong-doers the consolation which religion is meant to give to the believers.

We do not approve of this method of inflicting punishment on the wrong-doers. In our view the path followed by the ancient Rishis of India should always be followed. The Vedic teachings are meant even for the lowest of the low. This injunction is contained in the Vedas themselves. This Vedic injunction was followed in letter and in spirit by the Aryas of Tretayuga. Hence the Vedic culture was spread far and wide in America, in Europe, in Asia, and in the Islands which comprise the modern Indonesia.

1. Shri Har Bilas Sarda's 'Hindu Superiority.'

Vedic culture and civilisation was not brought from outside to India, but the Aryas — the original inhabitants of India — received the Vedas, developed and extended the Vedic culture, the Arya sages and Rishis spread it throughout the Indian peninsula and the neighbouring countries. Our scholars, missionaries, kings, kshatriyas and traders went fearlessly throughout the world laying the foundations of various cultures of the world.

Well may we with Monsier Delbos — the famous French writer — exclaim : “The influence of the civilisation worked out thousands of years ago in India is around and about us every day of our lives. It pervades every corner of the civilised world. Go to America, and you find there as in Europe, the influence of that civilisation which came originally from the banks of the Ganges.”

CHAPTER X

THE VEDAS AND BUDDHISM

For centuries India was the main source of the cultures and civilisations of the world. The different religions, therefore, bear an unmistakable impress of the culture and religion of the ancient Hindus or Aryas. Modern researches have been very enlightening on this point.

The religious thought of the Vedas to begin with and neo-Hinduism (termed Brahmanism by the Europeans) at a later period were the sources from which the ancient civilisations of the world, specially the Egyptian, the Chaldean, the Assyrian and the Persian drew inspiration. The Arabs got the principal idea of one God as preached by Prophet Mohammed from their contact with India. It is, therefore, essential to discuss briefly the story of the various religions.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism as preached by Sakyamuni Gautma was the old Aryas' path of wisdom. According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru : "Buddha's way was the Middle Path. This Middle Path was the Aryan eight-fold Path : Right belief, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right mindedness and right rapture 'Not even a god can change into defeat the victory of a man who has vanquished himself'. Buddhism preached nothing new. It simply systematised and popularised the teachings of Maharishi Kapila.

Sakyamuni Gautma left his home in order to find a cure for the ills to which human flesh was heir to. The sight of a decrepit old man and of a dead body inspired him with contempt for wordly riches and wordly glories. His soul revolted at the cruel sacrifices of men and animals at the time of Yajnas, which had become prevalent at the time when he lived, though these sacrifices were totally against the teachings of the Vedas. Sakyamuni followed the old path of austerity and penance, of concentration and meditation in order to find the way to happiness. Ultimately he realised that life of purity dedicated to the service of mankind as the old Rishis had done, was the proper method to realise emancipation, which he termed "Nirvana."

That there was nothing new in his teachings has been admitted even by foreign scholars who have tried to study both the systems—the Vedic as well as the Buddhist.

Mr. Vincent Smith says : "Both Buddhism and Jainism, which as systems known to us date from 500 B. C.¹ in round numbers, may be regarded as offshoots or sects of Hinduism."

Professor Rhys Davids contends : "Buddhism is essentially an Indian system. The Buddha himself was, throughout his career a characteristic Indian He was the greatest and wisest and best of Hindus," (of his time, of course).

Professor Weber writes : "Buddhism, in fact, may be regarded as a reformed phase of Hindu religion and

1. The date 500 B. C., is not accepted by modern scholars. Buddha lived and preached circa 1700 B. C. See Bhagavad Datta's *Bigger History of India*.

ethical activity.” About the teaching of Buddha, he observes : “This teaching contains in itself absolutely nothing new. On the contrary it is essentially identical with the corresponding Brahmanical doctrine : only the fashion in which Buddha proclaimed and disseminated it was something altogether novel and unwonted Buddhism with all its developments was only a re-statement, although from a new standpoint and with fresh terms, of intellectual definition and reasoning, of one side of its experience and it carried it thus changed in form but hardly in substance over all Asia and west-ward towards Europe.”

Buddha accepted, though in a modified form, the eighteen ancient doctrines of the Sankhyas. The word ‘Bhikshu’ was adopted from the school of Yajnavalkya and Bhikshu Punchshikha (the two famous Rishis, the last one being the Guru of the well-known King Janaka of the Upanishads). So popular and wide-spread was the appeal of Sakyamuni Gautama, that many learned men and ascetics accepted him as a great teacher.

In the time of Ashoka, Buddhism became almost a universal religion in India and in the countries close by. The universities of the period drew scholars from all over the known world. It is, however, very significant that in the universities, while the Buddhist scholars taught the Buddhist articles of faith, the Brahman Acharyas were engaged in teaching the Vedas. There was no clash between the two. The basic principles which Emperor Ashoka enforced were righteousness (Dharma) and the service of mankind at large—the two principles which Vedic texts also emphasised.

The main aim of Ashoka's policy was to work for the good of the people. "This Ruler," Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru says, "was no passive spectator of evils, lost in contemplation and self-improvement. He laboured hard at public business and declared that he was always ready for it : 'At all times and at all places whether in the dining or in ladies apartments, in my bedroom or in my closet, in my carriage or in my palace gardens, the official reporters should keep me informed of the people's business At any hour and at any place, work I must for the common weal.'"¹ How great was the insistence on a good and pious life dedicated to the service of mankind !

"Ashoka's messengers and ambassadors went to various countries of the world conveying the Emperor's greetings and message of the blessed Lord Buddha. They went to Syria, Egypt, Cyrene and Epirus, Ceylon Burma, Siam, etc. etc. This great king sent his son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghamitra to give the message of hope and piety to the people in the South."²

It is thus clear that the Vedic teachings—that the highest aim of an Arya's life is the service of mankind—was the predominant feature of Buddhism of the early days. The great missionaries by their life of piety, simplicity and austerity won the doubting world to Buddha's religion.

However, in course of time the purely ethical approach to human problems exposed the weaknesses, which existed in such teachings. In place of God – the creator, the sustainer and the dissolver of this universe – Buddha himself was deified; his images were made, and

(1) Discovery of India.

(2) Ibid.

were worshipped by his followers. Influenced by the example of the worshippers of Buddha, the common people in India started recognizing idols and images as gods and goddesses—which were originally meant as memorials of the great men of India or as mere representations of God's various powers. Thus idol worship became ingrained in the mind of the Hindus of that time.

It is a weakness of human nature that it finds it extremely difficult to worship the incorporeal. It, therefore, seeks to represent Him and His attributes and powers by idols and images made of stone, clay or metal. The Buddhist monks led the way and others followed in worshipping images and idols. In other ways also the high teachings of Sakyamuni Gautama were either degraded or forgotten.

Thus, for example, non-violence or Ahimsa became the creed of the people as a whole. The real meaning and purpose were misunderstood, and contrary to Buddha's teachings, the emphasis on non-violence became so great that it preached submission even to evil. Even the distinction between Sankalpi and Virodhi himsa was forgotten. Ahimsa, which was merely meant as a method of self-discipline for the Yogis and seekers of God, became the creed of the people who led lives of cowardice and sloth. The life of Kshatriya was condemned.

The basic weakness of Buddhism was not that it taught anything un-Aryan or un-Vedic but that it emphasised only certain virtues and rules of conduct which the Vedas had upheld. Buddhism failed to produce a balanced view of life. It emphasised only a part, forgetting the whole. It produced a lopsided

philosophy of life. On the other hand, the Vedas had maintained a proper balance by looking at life as a whole, surveying all the virtues and by maintaining a balance between the Kshatriya Dharma with Varnashrama as the basis, which Buddhism ignored altogether.

The teachings of Buddhism were utilised to escape from the worries, cares and burdens of the world. The number of Bhikshus—the monks and nuns—increased. They swarmed everywhere. The Monasteries were full of those, who were mechanically repeating the name of Buddha to seek Nirvana. The wealth of the monasteries was so great that life of ease became the order of the day. Buddhism began to have a complete deadening influence on the life of the people.

While Buddhism preached many of the noble virtues of the Aryas' way of life, it could not lay the same emphasis on those virtues, on account of the negative approach which the Buddhists made to the problems of life, which confronted every person in his day to day existence.

Similarly deterioration took place in all the countries which had accepted Buddhism. They denied God and exalted the idea of individual soul, which could achieve Nirvana or emancipation without the grace of God. It was, easy for the founders of the new religions, who accepted the Vedic ideal of belief in God, the creator of the universe, as the bedrock of their faiths. The Jews, the Christians and the Muslims who had borrowed some of the teachings of Buddha himself, were thus able to convert the people to the new faiths. The countries on the borders of India were conquered by the Muslims, who succeeded in converting the people

to Islam. In converting them, not merely persuasion and appeal to reason were utilised but fire, stake and sword were also employed to make them forsake the Buddhist faith.

In India, however, forcible conversions of Buddhists to Hinduism were not tolerated. The old method of winning people by arguments or by Shastrartha - open discussions in public - were utilised to convince the audience that the Vedic religion was far superior to Buddhism. The Indians could not accept atheism or denial of God, as their creed. In fact, a miracle took place in India. Buddhism, which had submerged the old Vedic religion was practically driven out from the Indian soil by the teachings of the Acharyas like Kumarila Bhatta, Udyotkara, Shankara and Ramanuja. By the power of their knowledge (vidya) and austerities (tapa) and the life dedicated to the service of the people, the Acharyas named above and their followers won the country to the old Vedic path. This remarkable fact has been practically ignored by the writers and scholars both Indian and Europeans. In any case, they have failed to give it the prominence which this fact deserves. It showed once more that the Vedic religion had a vitality which was unique. It further gives force to the argument that the bed-rock of Indian culture is and has always been the teachings of the Rishis and Maharishis of ancient times, whose explanations and commentaries of the Vedic texts were the sources of the Indian civilisation. This vitality of the oldest religion of the world has not exhausted even today, but is as fresh as ever.

CHAPTER XI

THE VEDAS AND OTHER RELIGIONS

Long before Christ appeared on the scene, Krishna worship had been prevalent in India. The Hindu missionaries preached the Krishna gospel and explained the purpose of Krishna's life. He had come to destroy unrighteousness and exalt righteousness. He was a physical manifestation of the supreme powers of God. This message caught the imagination of the ancient Chaldeans, Egyptians and the Jews. They adapted this idea of the neo-Hinduism to their own needs. Thus they readily borrowed the idea of incarnation of God from the teachings of the Hindu missionaries who had been working in different countries.

CHRISTIANITY

Lutovitch, a Russian, is stated to have discovered in a monastery in Tibet a manuscript on the basis of which he wrote a book called 'The Unknowu Life of Jesus Christ'. "This book", says Sisir Kumar Mitra, "fills up the gap of Christ's absence from Jerusalem for 12 years and describing his itinerary in northern India during that period, when he visited India's well-known cities and centres of learning – and her great saints and scholars." This discovery upset some of the Christian missionaries and they tried to prove this statement to be wrong. However Christ consciously or unconsciously came to believe that he was the favoured son of God with a special mission to the world. He adopted the role of a teacher and a Messiah and

was able to adapt the Buddhist and Hindu teachings to suit the needs of the people amongst whom he lived and worked. Christianity started to win converts from those lands where Jewish religion had prevailed and which previously had become imbued with Buddhist culture. Disciples of Christ went a step further and promised heaven to all those who would believe in the Master – the son of God, the great Redeemer – who would prevail upon his Father to give even the sinners absolution from their sins. Naturally it was an easy and attractive path to attain the kingdom of heaven. In this way, the Christian divines succeeded in converting most of the European countries to the gospel preached by Christ and his apostles.

In India, however, Christianity did not make any serious impression. It brought to the people no new hope, no easier way of salvation. The Brahmans preaching neo-Hinduism had already by their teachings made the path to heaven look very easy.

If Christianity succeeded in more recent times in India to make some converts, it was because it had from the earliest times used force in converting people, a fact adverted to by several European writers. When Christian powers of Europe succeeded in establishing their foothold as governments in various parts of India the task of the Christian missionaries became easier, as lure of power naturally attracted a number of people to accept the religion of the rulers.

It is true, that there were quite a good few who accepted Christ as their saviour, because their spiritual cravings were not satisfied by the superstitious beliefs and untenable doctrines which went under the name

of Hindu religion in those days. In the case of those, who were educated in Christian colleges and schools and were ignorant of the teachings of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita; Christian gospel made quite an effective appeal to them. Still it can be asserted with confidence that the mass of the people remained quite indifferent to the teachings of Christianity. The kathas of Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas which the Indian people had been accustomed to hear even in their childhood had left an indelible mark on their minds, which no amount of persuasion and exhortation of the foreign missionaries was able to efface. Moreover, in Northern India Christian missionaries could not stand before the learning and logic of Dayananda Saraswati and his followers – the Arya Samajists, who had always an easy victory over the Padaris in argument and debate. Thus it was, that Christianity did not create any serious diversion.

That Christ was greatly influenced by Buddhistic teaching has been well-explained by Professor Radhakrishnan, who remarks: “Both Buddha and Jesus bid their disciples lay up for themselves a treasure which neither moth nor rust would corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. ‘A man buries a treasure in a deep pit’, Buddha observed, ‘which, lying day after day concealed therein, profits him nothing But there is a treasure that man or woman may possess, a treasure laid up in the heart, a treasure of charity, piety, temperance, soberness. A treasure, secure, impregnable, that cannot pass away. When a man leaves the fleeting riches of this world, this he takes with him after death. A treasure unshared with others, a treasure that no thief can steal.

“Just as Buddha condemns the gloomy ascetic practices which prevailed in ancient India, Jesus goes beyond John the Baptist’s emphasis on observances and ascetic rites. Even as Buddha condemns ceremonial religion, emphasising baptism, Jesus insists less on sacraments and more on the opening of oneself in faith.

“To love one’s enemies, to bless them that curse, to do good to them that hate, to turn the other cheek, to leave the cloak with him who takes the coat, to give all to him who asks, which are the teachings of Jesus, are precepts not only taught but practised in their extreme rigour by the Buddha in his many lives, according to the Jatakas. Buddha revolted against the complexities of the sacrificial religion as Jesus did against Jewish legalism. Both Buddha and Christ, in the spirit of the Upanishads, demand the death or the sacrifice of the immediate natural existence as the condition of the new richer life.”

“The curious may find matter for reflection in these coincidences in the lives of the two teachers.

“Professor J. E. Carpenter writes : “The lives of the teachers do not essentially differ. It was the mission of both to awaken men out of a state of spiritual indifference, to kindle within them a love of righteousness, to comfort the sorrowful, to reprove as well as to redeem the guilty.”¹

People of India were quite familiar with these teachings. Hence there was nothing new for them to learn from the Christian preachers. Was not the old Arya way of life superior, more rationalistic when compared to the doctrines of Christianity ? When the

1. Eastern Religion and Western Thought by Radhakrishnan

call from India's sons, who sought to revive the teachings of the Vedas came. how could the people resist that call !

RELIGION OF THE JEWS

The influence of Vedic literature and teachings on the Jewish religion is evidenced by various research scholars. In fact, some scholars maintain that the name Moses was adapted from the name Manu. The Jewish ten commandments were borrowed and adapted from the ten Yamas and Niyamas (rules of self-control and conduct) of Manu and the Yogashastra. The psalms of Solomon were an imitation of some of the Vedic mantras of Sama-veda as interpreted by the Brahman priests of the later days. Similarly the theory of creation which the Shatapatha Brahmana propounded on the basis of Nasdiya Sukta (Hymn) of Rig-veda was accepted by the ancient Chaldeans and Egyptians with some verbal changes.

It is interesting to compare the theory of creation accepted by the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans with that of Shatapatha Brahmana and of the Vedic Hymn. The following is a quotation from Mr. E. A. Wallis Budge's 'Books on Egypt and Chaldea':

"There was a time when neither heaven nor earth existed and when nothing had been except the boundless primeval water which was however shrouded with dark thickness.

"At length the spirit of the primeval water felt the desire for creative activity.

"The next act of creation was the formation of a germ or an egg from which sprang Ra, the sun-god,

within whose shining form was embodied the almighty power of the divine spirit.”

According to the Nasadiya Hymn of Rig-veda, matter or Prakriti existed in an unknowable form. It was covered with darkness. There was no distinction between night and day, nor there was any distinction between death and life, as we know it on earth. God alone existed along with matter in the subtlest possible form and the souls which were subtler even than matter. When God thought of creating this universe, the matter was converted into *salil*, which some scholars have translated as primeval water and others subtler element • than even water. The next act of creation was the combination of Prakriti in its subtle form and the souls as well as God's Shakti or power, which took shape as Viratha or the energy (light), from which came into being the manifold creation in the Universe.

This Viratha purusha is the golden egg or the subtle matter surcharged with Divine energy or light, according to some of the ancient commentators of the Vedic hymn.

It would appear that the theory of creation thus propounded in the earliest scriptures was adapted by the religious leaders of ancient Egypt and Chaldea to fit in with their own view of life.

The Old Testament in its turn is indebted to the ancient Egyptian and Chaldean tradition for its teaching regarding the origin of creation.

Similarly ancient Chaldeans and the Jews accepted the Hindu view of life and went so far as to regard cow as a sacred animal, which was not to be killed under any circumstances. Cow, as remarked, elsewhere has

been described as *aghanya* (not to be killed) in the Vedas. The Hindus under the influence of Buddhism and Jainism had exalted vegetarianism as one of the fundamental principles of their religion. The followers of Christ as well as the Jews also accepted vegetarianism as one of their main religious principles. We find the following stated in the 'Indian Antiquity' Vol. XVIII, October 1859 : "The disciples of the Messiah are 72 in number ; besides whom 12 more had to be counted . . . of all the Christian monks, those of Egypt are the only ones who eat meat, because Mark permitted them to do so." Later the Jews and the Christians took to meat-eating on a large scale and their reverence for the cow also vanished. Clearly, therefore, the influence of the Vedic teachings on the Jewish religion to begin with was immense.

ISLAM

Coming to the influence of Vedic thought on Islam we rely upon the Hindu tradition which maintains that Arabia – the birth-place of Islam – was in the beginning populated by the descendants of Varuna and Bhrigu, two of the ancient-most Rishis of India, whose name is associated with commentaries on the Vedic mantras.

Several descendants of Maharishi Bhrigu are the seers of many mantras of Atharva Veda. There is a considerable similarity between some teachings of the Atharva Veda and of the Holy Quran. As the later-day Hindus utilised a few mantras of Atharva Veda as charms for keeping off evil-doers and evil influences, similarly following this practice several Ayats of Quran are even today utilised by Muslim priests as charms to keep off evil-doers and evil influences.

When the descendants of Bhrigu settled on the territory now known as Arabia, that part of the world was very green and fertile. At what period of time it became a desert and full of sand, it is difficult for us to state. But it is certain that at one time, it was like a garden full of trees and vegetation of all kinds. Mohammedan tradition also speaks of the valley of Arabia being as fertile and as green as the valley of Hind.

Several centuries after the occupation of Arabia by the Hindus or the descendants of Varuna and Bhrigu, intercourse between purely Arya India and Arabia ceased. Arabia was totally cut off from India. In course of several centuries evil practices and superstitions grew up in the land of the Arabs. The people became worshippers of idols, evil spirits, demons and jins. They were divided into tribes who followed their own tribal chiefs. There was no unity amongst them and they were constantly fighting between themselves. Rivalry between the different sections of the people constantly went on, so much so that even life became insecure.

Prophet Mohammed, when he appeared on the scene, once more preached the unity of God and declared Him as the creator of the whole universe including even the souls. The Prophet carried on propaganda against unrighteousness and exposed evils which existed amongst the Arabs. His whole life was practically spent in fighting against the tribes who were hostile to him. He was persecuted and was made to flee from his original home Mecca. It was, therefore, natural that his teachings should breathe a spirit of

hatred against his enemies, whom he denounced as Kafirs or non-believers. In spite of his persecution, Mohammed was anxious to attract as large a number of followers as possible and therefore he tried to make his religion fairly broad in outlook. Many of his beliefs were borrowed from the Jews and the Christians. "The Prophet's intention," says Andre Servier, "was to appropriate from other nations everything that seemed capable of strengthening his doctrine and attracting disciples. It was a liberal conception that might have made Islam the universal religion." Unfortunately, the Prophet died at a comparatively young age and his followers neither had the large vision, nor the stamina of the Prophet.

The teachings of Prophet Mohammed were misinterpreted and were utilised by the Muslim divines and Mullas, to make Islam a narrow creed. M. Andre Servier remarks: "By their action a blind fanaticism has replaced the liberal spirit of the Koran, and has killed any germ of progress in Islam. The immutability of its institutions had ended in moulding individuals and the whole nation. It is this, that explains how the Moslem nations have remained and still remain insensible and even hostile to Western civilisation Islam stands in this modern world like a mournful statue of the past."

One of the articles of faith propounded by the Muslims is Jihad or the Holy War. It was really meant to destroy or exterminate those who were evil-doers. But in the hands of the Muslim divines Jihad became a war against all those persons who did not believe in God as conceived in the Quran or Prophet Mohammed. "The Koran" says Andre Servier, "is

animated by a certain spirit of tolerance ; Islam, on the contrary, has become an intolerant religion that admits no ideas from the outer world, not even such as are outside the purely denominational sphere. The doctrine of Jihad has worked great mischief in the hands of the fanatical people."

Soon after the death of Prophet Mohammed, his followers inspired with the fanatical zeal, which characterises the followers of a new faith, sought to conquer the lands inhabited in the East by the Buddhists who were regarded as infidels. They soon conquered those territories, where Buddhism had its stronghold. Towards the West they were able to overcome the Jews and the Christians, whom they either converted or put to the sword. It was only in India that Islam received a rude shock and was halted on its onward march. This fact has been immortalised by the Muslim poet Hali. He says : "The fearless caravan of the religion of the Arabs left its mark in the world. It was stopped neither by the Caspian Sea nor by the Oxus river. It crossed over the seven seas but it found its watery grave in the mouth of the river Ganga."

No doubt, in several parts of this country, the Muslims became the rulers of the land, but they came in contact with a far superior civilisation in India and had to bend before it. Several Muslim writers and thinkers have paid tributes to the culture, literature and religious thought of India.

Al-Jahiz wrote in the 9th century : "The Hindus excel in astrology, mathematics, medicine and in various other sciences. They have developed to a perfection arts like sculpture, painting and architecture. They

have collections of poetry, philosophy, literature and science of morals. From India we received that book called Kalilah - wa - Dimnah. These people have judgment and are brave. They possess the virtues of cleanliness and purity. Contemplation has originated with them."

Similarly Yaqubi who lived in 9th century wrote : "The Hindus are superior to all other nations in intelligence and thoughtfulness. They are more exact in astronomy and astrology than any other people. The Siddhanta is a good proof of their intellectual powers; by this book the Greeks and the Persians have also profited. In medicine their opinion ranks first."

Al-Adrisi wrote in the 10th century : "The Hindus are by nature inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and faithfulness to their promises are well-known and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side."

Al-Beruni who spent thirteen years in India from 1017 A. D. to 1030 A. D. wrote : "The Hindus believe with regard to God that He is One, eternal, without beginning and acting by free-will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving; one who in his sovereignty is unique, beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that He does not resemble anything nor does any thing resemble Him."¹

Many Muslims in their search after Truth and God were attracted by the high and noble teachings of the ancient Hindu sages. They were so charmed by these teachings that they made India their home. Sisir

1, (Quoted by Sisir Kumar.)

Kumar Mitra gives the name of two well-known Mohammedans who resided in India and died here.

1. Al-Hujwiri came from Ghazna, settled in Lahore and died there in 1072 A. D. He was in truth and spirit a Vedantist, i. e. his teachings are the same as those given in the Vedanta Shastras.

2. Muin-ud-din lived at Pushkar in Ajmer. It is stated that he attracted a number of people as his followers, who are termed as Husaini Brahmans.

In India itself the teachings of the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita and Vedanta made a profound impression on rulers like Akbar, Jahangir and Emperor Shahjahan's son Dara Shikoh. Had the Hindus of those days been liberal in their outlook they would have permitted the conversion of the non-Hindus to the Vedic religion. But at that time, the religious leaders of Hindus and Brahmans had a very narrow outlook and had started the theory that a person who had left the Hindu fold could not be reconverted.

In spite of such injunctions, India remained for the outside Muslims a paradise on earth. Thus Abdullah Wassaf wrote in the 14th century in his history *Tazjiyat-ul-Amsar* : "India, according to the concurrent opinion of all writers, is the most agreeable abode on earth and the most pleasant quarter of the world. Its dust is purer than air and its air purer than purity itself. Its delightful plains resemble the garden of paradise.

If it is asserted that Paradise is in India,
Be not surprised, because Paradise itself is not
comparable to it .¹"

1. Quoted by Shri Harbilas Sarda in his book "Hindu Superiority."

However the fanatical bigotry on one side and a spirit of narrowness displayed by the Hindus in later ages on the other side, created an unbridgeable gulf between the religion of the Vedas and Islam, which gulf has been going on increasing in the course of time.

Obviously, the idea of God and His adoration is taken by various religions of the world from the Vedas, the oldest and the noblest scriptures which give a clear conception of God. We are certain that in order to fully appreciate and understand the fundamental truths of religion, one shall have to devote himself to the study of the teachings of the Vedas and the Vedic Shastras, i. e., the commentaries which explain the meanings of the Vedic texts. It is only by discarding prejudice and by an impartial study of these great scriptures that people will be able to understand the meaning and significance of their own religious teachings as well.

There is and there should not be any conflict between the true believers, whether they are Aryas, Christians, Jews or Mohammadens. The spirit of intolerance and bigotry are the worst hindrances in man's search after truth.

No man can be saved by merely believing in the dogmas of a religion. "As you sow, so shall you reap," is the lesson taught by the Vedic Rishis. This in reality is the theory of Karma, preached in the Vedas and explained by the Arya teachers. It is gaining ground all over the world, and is being preached now in different ways by the various philosophers and thinkers, both of the East and of the West. Righteousness as explained and interpreted by the Vedic Rishis should

be the basis of all human undertakings. The governments of the various nations of the world should have for their aim, the propagation of righteousness or Dharma. The Vedic teachings are very clear that in order to enjoy supreme bliss or Ananda, one has to control his evil passions like lust, anger, greed and pride. The service of mankind undertaken in a liberal spirit is the true aim of the Aryas.

The modern times, therefore, call for a serious searching of their hearts by earnest and devout Christian leaders, and teachers of other religions who would do well to seriously undertake the study of the Vedas and the ancient Arya Shastras *in the manner pointed out by the ancient Rishis and modern Yogis*, like Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati and Shri Aurobindo, in order to find the true remedy for the problems which threaten the peace of the modern world.

CHAPTER XII

MATERIAL PROSPERITY

We have seen that the philosophic thought of the Aryas (Hindus) drew its substance from the Vedic teachings, and that the other nations of the world were indebted to India for their advancement in philosophic thought.

It is said, that though in philosophy and speculative thought the Aryas (Hindus) had attained high degree of eminence; in matters that pertain to material comfort, their achievements were negligible. This view is contrary to facts. In all the important branches of knowledge, the Aryas achieved great eminence and were the benefactors of mankind to a very large extent.

The Vedas attach great importance to material prosperity. Their teachings are concerned with every department of human life. Though man's main aim, and perhaps the sole aim in life here on earth, is to secure supreme Ananda (joy) by realising God and by attaining Moksha (emancipation), this can, according to the Vedic teachings, only be achieved by leading pure and righteous lives dedicated to the worship of God and the service of humanity. In order, however, to achieve this end, a person must enjoy good health and attain long life.

MEDICAL SCIENCE

The Vedas declare that a person devoid of health and strength can hardly realise God. Therefore, he

must perfect his bodily powers by Brahmacharya (celibacy). Since mortals cannot be free from disease, the Vedic Mantras lay down rules how diseases are to be avoided and cured. Atharva Veda to a great extent and Rig Veda to some extent prescribe cures for various ailments. The mantras dealing with long-life, physical health and ailments led the Vedic scholars to develop Ayura Veda (science of life). The Rishis produced great works on medical science. Both medicine and surgery were developed and the Aryas gave the medical science to the world as has been admitted by several scholars of the West who have studied this matter carefully. They have not been slow to recognise the debt which the modern world owes to India and the Indian authors on medical science. The Indian sages who wrote works on Ayura Veda are the following amongst others :—

Atreya, Dhanwantari, Bharadvaja, Agnivesa, Vaishampayana, Charaka, Sushruta, Bheda, Jatukarna, Parasara, Harita, Ksharapani, Krishnatreya, Auddalaki, Svetaketu and Kankayana. Ayura Veda (science of life) was one of the Upvedas.

Out of about a hundred and fifty authentic ancient works on Ayura Veda; only two completely and two others in fragments have been preserved, others being either lost or destroyed. In spite of this fact, what remains is sufficient to show the great aptitude of the Aryas (Hindus) for medical science.

MEDICINE AND SURGERY

It is not disputed by modern historians, that medical science was given to the world by India. Sir William Hunter remarks : “Indian medicine dealt with

the whole area of the science. It described the structure of the body, its organs, ligaments, muscles, vessels and tissues. The *Materia Medica* of the Hindus embraces a vast collection of drugs belonging to the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, many of which have now been adopted by European physicians."

Mr. Weber says : "In surgery, too, the Indians seem to have attained a special proficiency, and in this department, European surgeons might, perhaps, even at the present day still learn something from them."

Mr. Elphinstone says : "Their surgery is as remarkable as their medicine."

Lord Amptill at one time the Governor of Madras said : "I am not sure whether it is generally known that the science of medicine originated in India, but this is the case, and the science was first exported from India to Arabia and thence to Europe."

Sisir Kumar Mitra says in his 'Vision of India' : "Dr. Royle has shown that Hyppocrates, the father of the Western medicine, borrowed his *materia medica* from India. 'In the time of Alexander' says Garrison, 'Hindu physicians and surgeons enjoyed a well deserved reputation for superior knowledge and skill and even Aristotle is believed by some authorities to have been indebted to them.'"

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his book 'Discovery of India' remarks : "Many Indian physicians were invited by Arab rulers to their country During the illness of Harun-ul-Rashid, a physician named Manak, was sent for from India. Manak settled down in Baghdad and was appointed the head of a large hospital there. Arab writers mention six other

Indian physicians living in Baghdad at that time besides Manak."

In Baghdad especially Brahman scholars were invited to teach medicine, mathematics and astronomy as well as philosophy to the students, who collected in that city when it had assumed great importance as a well-known centre of learning in the time of the Khalifs. Its importance as a famous seat of learning came to an end in 1258, when Hulagu captured it. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru says: "Crowds of scholars with their books fled from Baghdad to Cairo and Spain and a renaissance of the art of learning took place there." Thus it was, that the Arabs became the teachers of the Europeans, in medicine, mathematics and astronomy. In other words, Indian culture and learning passed through the Arabs to Europe.

Not only medicine but nature cure system was well-known to the ancient Indian physicians. Great importance was attached to the use of sun, air and water for the curing of various diseases.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru says: "The idea of ceremonial purity has been extraordinarily strong amongst the Hindus Daily bath has always been an essential feature of a Hindu's family It was from India that this habit spread to England and elsewhere The average Hindu and even the poorest peasant takes some pride in his shining pots and pans."

PURITY OF FOOD

In order to attain long and healthy life, there is great insistence both in the Vedas and in the Vedic Shastras on the purity of food. Vegetarian diet,

therefore, has been preferred to non-vegetarian one. The slaughter of cows and the eating of beef are strictly forbidden. It is strange that our educated people should have accepted a wrong statement made by some historians through ignorance or otherwise that the ancient Hindus ate beef. As a matter of fact, the Vedas declare cow to be 'aghanya'. Aghanya literally means that which is not to be killed. This word is used for the cow.

The ancient countries had not only accepted Vedic culture and religion, but like the Aryas of India regarded cow as 'aghanya'. Herodotus in his history of Greece, Volume I, page 73 says : "From Egypt as far as Lake Tritonis . . . cow's flesh, none of the tribes ever tasted but abstained from it for the same reason as the Egyptians Even at Cyrene, the women think it wrong to eat the flesh of the cow."

Mr. W. Robertson in his book "The Religion of the Semites" remarks : "Man in his state of innocence lived in peace with all animals eating the spontaneous fruit of the earth." According to him, "In the golden age man was vegetarian and subsisted on such fruits as the earth yielded spontaneously."

In Satayuga the Rishis, the sages and kings alike lived on milk and on fruits and vegetables, which the earth yielded in plenty. Of course, there was no prohibition against meat eating for the purposes of saving life or when prescribed by the physicians for the cure of a disease. It is said that Svetaketu son of sage Aruna who lived in the beginning of Tretayuga got the disease of white leprosy. The two Ashvins - well-known physicians - prescribed for him honey and meat

as his diet. Svetaketu said : "I am a celibate, a Brahmachari, how can I take honey and meat?" The Ashvins replied : "A man lives so long as soul resides in the body and he thinks 'I do good deeds.' Therefore, let the man protect his life by every means."¹

However, the main point which we wish to emphasise at this place is, that the science of medicine both curative and preventive as well as the science of surgery which spread to Europe and other parts of the world later on through the Parsis, the Arabs, the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans originated in India.

Great works were written by the Indian sages after exploring and discovering the secrets of nature which helped in rooting out diseases of various kinds. These works dealt with the properties of various herbs, metals and minerals which were utilised for preparing various kinds of medicines.

During the wars between the Adityas and Daityas, which lasted for over 300 years, the science of surgery was greatly developed. Wounds could be treated with various medicines. Surgical operations were performed with delicate instruments. Tonics which were prepared with great care helped in rejuvenating persons, who used them. It is important to note that there were several Rishis and warriors in the Mahabharata age who lived up to 200 years. It is recorded that during the great war of Mahabharata, warriors who were above the age of 150 years were fighting on the battle-field of Kurukshetra on one side or the other. Ayurveda of the ancient Aryas was a fully developed science and secrets of healthy living and

1 Vide Indian Antiquary, Vol. XVIII, October 1889.

long life were fully known to the Indian sages. These secrets of Ayurveda must be recovered for the benefit of mankind at large. India should once more take the lead in this matter.

MUSIC

Intimately connected with man's well-being is his mental health. Music has always played a great part in maintaining mental equilibrium. Music has also been utilised to give expression to one's devotion to God. The Rishis and sages of India used to sing Sama Veda mantras and recited them with great devotional fervour. Hence they developed the science of music and wrote works on music. A special class of persons called the Gandharvas adopted music as their profession.

The advancement made by the Aryas in the science of music was marvellous; and foreigners have not been slow to recognise the greatness of the Aryas (Hindus) in this respect.

Strabo says : "Some of the Greeks attribute to that country (India) the invention of nearly all the sciences of music."

Anne C. Wilson says : "It must, therefore, be a secret source of pride to them (the Hindus) to know that their system of music, as a written science, is the oldest in the world. Its principal features were given long ago in Vedic writings"

Mr. Arthur Whitten remarks : "But I have yet to observe that while our system of notation admits of no sound of less than half a tone, the Hindus have quarter tones, thus rendering it most difficult of imitation by Europeans."

“The science of music was systematised in India many centuries before it could be called a science in other countries,” says Sisir Kumar Mitra. “Wagner is said to have got familiar with Hindu music through Latin translations and is indebted to it for his principal idea or leading motive.”

The works of Narada, Tumburu, Bharata and others discuss the theory of music in an extremely scientific manner. There were bards in India who recited the deeds of Hindu heroes, famous in war and peace, and stirred Indian armies to deeds of valour unsurpassed in the annals of the world. The Ramayana and Mahabharata were and are often sung by Brahmans to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The Sama Veda still is learnt by heart and chanted by them in sacrifices or yajnas even today. The very word Psalm mentioned in the Old Testament is taken from the Sama Veda, and is pronounced in the same way as Sama – P being silent.

The Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the ancient peoples of Egypt, Chaldea, and Syria, became the teachers of mankind, after having learnt the science of music from the Aryas. Thus Indian music is the source of the science of music in the world.

MATHEMATICS

The science of mathematics originated with the Aryas. The different branches of mathematics, namely, Geometry (Euclid of the Greeks), Arithmetic, Algebra and Astronomy were developed by them as far back as Satayuga or the Golden Age. It was recognised that the performance of Yajnas according to the Vedic rules helped in the growth of Geometry.

Dayanand Saraswati quotes Yajur Veda (XVIII, 24-25) to show that the roots of mathematics must be traced to the Vedas.

The names of ancient Indian mathematicians Baudhayana, Apastamba, Katyayana, Aryabhata-Brahma Gupta, Varaha Miraha, Bhaskar and several others who wrote books on different branches of mathematics are well-known to the scholars who have studied this subject. A German Professor writes that the Pythagorean theories were known to the Indians in 1300 B. C.

It appears that the Arabs learnt the various branches of mathematics from the Indians. Indian emigrants to other countries also took the science of mathematics with them. Times out of number the Arabs came to India, and studied in the Indian universities and learnt not only philosophy and politics, but also algebra, astronomy, geometry and arithmetic. The Arabs in their turn became the teachers of other nations of the West.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru says : "In the eighth century, during the reign of the Khalif Al-Mansur (753-774), a number of Indian scholars went to Baghdad, and among the books they took with them were works on mathematics and astronomy. Probably even earlier than this, Indian numerals had reached Baghdad, but this was the first systematic approach and Aryabhata's and other books were translated into Arabic." He further remarks : "A hundred and fifty years ago, during Napoleon's time, La Place wrote : 'It is India that gave us the ingenuous method of expressing all numbers by means of ten symbols, each symbol receiving

a value of position, as well as an absolute value; a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now that we ignore its true merit, but its very simplicity, the great ease which it has lent to all computations, puts our arithmetic in the first rank of useful inventions; and we shall appreciate the grandeur of this achievement when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes and Apollonius, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity. The origins of geometry, arithmetic and algebra in India go back to remote periods." The very word *Hindsa* used by the Arabs for the numerals indicates that these numerals were borrowed from Hind (India) by them.

Similarly European writers and scholars have acknowledged the debt which Europe owes to India in the matter of learning mathematics and astronomy from the Hindus.

Professor Macdonnel says : "In science, too, the debt of Europe to India has been considerable. There is, in the first place, the great fact that the Indians invented the numerical figures used all over the world. The influence which the decimal system of reckoning dependent on those figures has had not only on mathematics but on the progress of civilisation in general can hardly be over-estimated."

Sir M. Monier William says : "From them (Hindus) the Arabs received not only their first conceptions of algebric analysis, but also those numerical symbols and decimal notations now current everywhere in Europe, and which have rendered untold service to the progress of arithmetical science."

Sir W.W. Hunter was of the opinion that the Hindus attained a very high proficiency in arithmetic and algebra independently of foreign influence.

Professor Weber says : “The fame of Hindu astronomers spread to the West, and the Andubarius (or probably Ardubarius), whom the Chronicon Paschale places in primeval times as the earliest Indian astronomer, is doubtless none other than Aryabhatta, the rival of Pulisa, and who is likewise extolled by the Arabs under the name of Arjabahar.”

Professor Wilson says : “The originality of Hindu astronomy is at once established, but it is also proved by intrinsic evidence, and although there are some remarkable coincidences between the Hindu and other systems their methods are their own.” Mr. Elphinstone says : “In the more advanced stages, where they are more likely to have borrowed, not only is their mode of proceedings peculiar to themselves but it is often founded on principles, with which no other ancient people were acquainted, and showed a knowledge of discoveries not made even in Europe till within the course of the last two centuries.”

It is clear that the Arya sages wrote learned treatises on different branches of mathematics, taught them to their students, and through them various nations of the world learnt the science of mathematics from the Hindus.

ARCHITECTURE

The Aryas (Hindus) were the first people in the world to design cities or towns. Their contribution to the world in architecture is unsurpassed. Manu, son of Vivasvan built the first city in the world—

Ayodhya in the Treta Yuga (Silver Age) more than 9000 years ago. Ayodhya is in the heart of Uttra Pradesh. Ramayana of Valmiki gives a description of this wonderful city ; of its buildings, shops, temples, parks, roads, lanes, tanks, wells and the moat which ran round the city in the time of king Dashratha.

The Artha Shastras give directions as to how towns, cities and villages are to be planned ; how gardens are to be planted ; parks to be laid ; tanks to be made and wells to be sunk. The art of erecting beautiful buildings was greatly developed. Palaces, temples, forts and monastries in the various caves of India, which have endured through centuries were built by the Hindus. These buildings have won the admiration of the later generations.

The beginning of the architecture, however, must be sought somewhere in the period which intervened between the Satyuga and Tretayuga, that is, during the period when there was a long-drawn war between Adityas (Devas) and Daityas (Asuras), which lasted for over three hundred years. During this period, the art of making forts, towers, moats running round the cities, was greatly developed.

Several works on engineering called Vastushastras were written. Hydraulic engineers who were called Jala sutra-dharas carried on their duties with great efficiency. How dams were to be built and utilised and how bridges should be erected over the rivers, were subjects which were clearly and lucidly explained by the Indian engineers. One has only to look at the temples, the old palaces and the forts with which the country is studded to realise the sublimity and grandeur of the Indian art.

Mrs. Manning says : “ Ancient architecture of India is so amazing that the first European observers could not find terms sufficiently intense to express their wonder and admiration.”

Mr. Thornton remarks: “The ancient Indians erected buildings the solidity of which has not been overcome by the revolution of thousands of years.”

Coleman says : “The remains of their architectural art might furnish the architects of Europe with new ideas of beauty and sublimity.”

According to the Vedas, God is Vishvakarma, i.e. the architect of the whole universe. Even to-day the carpenters and in some places the masons call themselves the descendants of Vishvakarma. In later years several great architects appeared on the Indian scene. They called themselves Vishvakarma. The beginning of architecture is to be traced to the ancient Aryan villages & towns founded in the north by the descendants of Manu son of Vivasvan, who called themselves Manavas.

The Vishvakarmas or master architects wrote many Silpa Shastras which dealt with the building of houses, forts, tanks etc. and also with the designing of villages and towns. Mr. Havell gives an interesting description of the old Aryan village in his book ‘History of Aryan Rule in India’ : “The planning of the village and the religious symbolism connected with it are recorded in the Silpa-Shastras, and were reproduced in the enclosure of the Hindu temple of medieval and modern times. . . . There were four subsidiary gates near the corners of the village enclosure, so that the whole circumference of the walls or palisade was divided into eight—‘the Eightfold Path’. The longest of the two

main streets, which ran east and west, was known as the King's Street-Rajapatha ; the shorter one was called Mahakala or Vamana, signifying Broad Street or Short Street. These two streets, wider than the rest and planted with trees, were the two main lines of communication linking village with village and forming the military and commercial routes maintained either at the charge of the king's treasury or by the co-operation of groups of villages and at their joint expense. The centre of the village, at the intersection of the crossways, was the meeting place of the elders, and there, on a mound faced with stone or brick which served as a platform, grew the Council Tree—the Bodhi Tree or Tree of Wisdom—under the shade of which the affairs of the village were discussed. In the larger villages a more substantial Council House might be found in the form of a pillared pavilion built of wood, brick, or stone attached to the shrine of the patron deity of the community, which was open on all four sides to symbolise his guardianship of the four quarters. This was the position assigned in the Silpa Shastras to the temple of Brahma as Creator and Protector of the Universe. To express his attributes of world-dominion and his guardianship of the crossways he was popularly represented as having four heads, though Aryan religious teachers discountenanced the ritualistic use of the images.

“A wide path which intervened between the outer blocks and the boundry walls or fences, was known as the Mangala vithi, the path of Blessing or Auspiciousness, as it was the path by which the Kshatriya or Brahman householders circumambulated the village in the immemorial rite of Pradakshina, reciting mantras to invoke the favours of the gods and to keep off evil

spirits. This path was dedicated to the War-god, Kartikeya, one of whose epithets is Mangala, on account of its use in the military defence of the village ”

According to Havell there were Gopurams or cattle-forts also which were attached to the village. “The sites of villages were carefully chosen according to principles, ritualistic and sanitary, observed in the traditions of the Indo-Aryan Master-builder. They were generally on the bank of a river, by the sea-shore or the side of the lake, so that ample bathing facilities were easily accessible.”

In the towns, however, great importance was attached to the building of magnificent temples. They were the houses of God who was sought to be represented by visual representations made in stone, clay or metal. Thus architecture and sculpture were closely connected. Naturally kings and richmen gave a good portion of their wealth for the building of temples with many gates, high domes and minarets, thus glorifying God in various ways. It is a significant feature of the Aryan culture that the churches and mosques in imitation of the temples of the Aryas, were built as superb structures. There is not the least doubt that the idea that God’s house should be built in an elegant and grand manner was spread throughout the world by ancient Aryas.

Similarly, the building of forts, towers and the moat round the town for defensive purposes was an Arya conception adopted by the world at large.

“To the poetic imagination of the Arab tribesmen,” says Havell, “India, with its gorgeous temples and monasteries carved in the living rock, its

palace-fortresses and magnificent irrigation works of massive masonry, must have seemed a land of wonders, of djinns and great magicians. In all the arts of peace, India then stood at the pinnacle of her greatness. The Arab conquered with his sword, *but came to learn at the Mother's feet the wisdom which had inspired his own great Prophet...* The Indian craftsmen were as indispensable to Muslim city-builders as they had been to the Indo-Aryan kings. The dome of the temple mandapam, shorn of its exuberant symbolism, which was so offensive to the unsophisticated mentality of the Arab—because the things it spoke of were beyond the range of his philosophy—became the dome of the Muslim mosque and tomb. The simplified symbolism of Muslim ritual was all borrowed from India. The pointed arch of the prayer carpet and *mihrab* — afterwards a characteristic feature of Saracenic architecture — was the symbolic arch of the Buddhist and Hindu shrine. The ‘horseshoe’ arch was the sun-window of Buddhist chaitya halls and Hindu temples. The cathedral mosques of Muslim royalty were oriented like the Vishnu temple, and their entrances corresponded to the temple gopurams and the gates of the Indo-Aryan village. The minars of the mosque were adaptations of Indian Towers of Victory, which were an elaboration of Indo-Aryan royal standards. Finally, under Turkish domination, the ensign of Islam became the crescent moon, Siva's bow, which had been the symbol of India—‘the Land of the moon’—or of India's holy land, — Aryavarta, ages before the Prophet of Mecca was born.”

Pandit Nehru says : “From the first century of the Christian era onwards wave after wave of Indian colonists

spread east and south-east reaching Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Siam, Cambodia and Indo-China. Some of them managed to reach Formosa, the Philippine Islands and Celebes. Even as far as Madagascar the current language is Indonesian with a mixture of Sanskrit words." Indian art was also taken to these distant countries by these colonists. Revival of Indian civilisation in these countries was the natural result of Indian colonists' efforts. Thus an impetus was given to the building of temples, forts, richmen's houses and prince's palaces in these territories on the Indian model. Indian architecture thus influenced the architecture of other countries.

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

Sculpture is also an old Indian art. Says E. B. Havell, the author of 'Indian Sculpture and Painting': "It is *prima facie* incredible that a highly developed civilization, spreading over thousands of years and over a vast area like India, which has produced a splendid literature and expressed lofty ideals in building materials, should have lacked the capacity or found no occasion, for giving them expression in sculpture and painting." The origin of these arts must be sought in the desire of the Indian artists to explain the Vedic conception of God by representing it in visual form. "Indian Art", says, Havell, "is essentially idealistic, mystic, symbolic, and transcendental. The artist is both priest and poet." It is impossible, however, to make a visible representation of God by any effort on the part of human beings. "Hindu philosophy", says Havell, "thus clearly recognises the impossibility of human art realising the form of God. It, therefore, creates in Indian painting and sculpture a symbolical

representation of those, milder, humanised, but still superhuman, divine appearances which mortal eyes can bear to look upon. A figure with three heads and four, six, or eight arms seems to a European a barbaric conception, though it is not less physiologically impossible than the wings growing from the human scapula in the European representations of angles – an idea probably borrowed from the East. But it is altogether foolish to condemn such artistic allegories *a priori*, because they may not conform to the canons of the classic art of Europe. All art is suggestion and convention, and if Indian artists by their conventions, can suggest divine attributes to Indian people with Indian culture, they have fulfilled the purpose of their art. It is the unfortunate tendency of modern European education to reduce art to mere rules of logic or technique, anatomy or perspective, style or fashion, so the creative faculty on which the vitality of art depends is drowned in empty formularies of no intellectual, moral, or aesthetic value.”

Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy remarks in his work ‘The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon’: “The Hindus do not regard the religious, aesthetic, and scientific standpoints as necessarily conflicting, and in all their finest work, whether musical, literary, or plastic, these points of view, nowadays so sharply distinguished, are inseparably united.

“This synthesis is no where better realised than in the image of Nataraja, “Lord of the Dance,” a form of Shiva, as Overlord, Ishvara. From references to Nataraja in the contemporary hymns we learn the precise significance of the images, and gather that this significance must have been quite familiar to the images

themselves and to the worshippers. In these images, Shiva has four arms ; his braided locks whirl in the dance.....The interpretation of the dance is as follows : “In the Night of Brahma, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Shiva wills it : He rises from his stillness, and dancing, sends through matter pulsing waves of awakening sound, proceeding from the drum : then Nature also dances, appearing about him as a glory. Then in the fulness of time, still dancing, He destroys all Names and Forms by Fire and there is new rest. Thus Time and the Timeless are reconciled by the conception of phase alternations extending over vast areas of space and great tracts of time. The orderly dance of the spheres, the perpetual movement of atoms, evolution and involution, are conceptions that have at all times recurred to man’s minds ; but to represent them in the visible form of Nataraja’s Dance is a unique and magnificent achievement of the Indians.

“If the dancing figure stands for evolution, the everlasting becoming, the Yogi type of the seated Buddha is an equally dramatic image of withdrawal, of complete independence, of involution.

“It is well to remember that this pose does not represent any sort of mortification of the flesh : it is simply that position which has been immemorially adopted by Indian thinkers, as most convenient for meditation, because the body remains self-supported without effort, and on the other hand without any tendency to sleep.

“How little this stillness is related to inertia appears in the familiar simile : “the likeness of the seated yogi is a lamp in a windless place that flickers not”

(Bhagavad Gita, vi. 19). It is just this likeness that we must look for in the Buddha image, and this only."

We have given these quotations from Havell and Coomaraswamy to show how the origin of architecture and painting must be traced to the religious ideals of the Hindus. In the Vishvakarma Sukta and Purusha Sukta of the Vedas (two Vedic hymns) the description of God with innumerable heads, innumerable eyes, feet and arms, facing all sides, which is merely symbolic to show God as omniscient, all-powerful, creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe, is sought to be visualised. Thus idols and images were made to represent God as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In later years God's power as Mother Shakti was sought to be represented in the image of Goddess Kali. God as destroyer of the universe, withdrawing the whole creation within himself and later on by His thought manifesting Himself first in energy, was sought to be represented by a visible form of Shiva's dance. It is always difficult to convey spiritual ideas to the canvass or to express them in stone or metal.

It redounds to the glory of our ancient fore-fathers that they made efforts to glorify God in various ways, and convey an impression of His greatness, vastness and limitlessness in their art. They thus laid the foundation of sculpture and painting in this country.

Pandit Nehru has perhaps tried to express this idea in the following words : "For in Indian art there is always a religious urge, a looking beyond, such as probably inspired the builders of the great cathedrals of Europe. Beauty is conceived as subjective, not objective ; it is a thing of the spirit, though it may

also take lovely shape in form or matter. The Greeks loved beauty for its own sake and found not only joy but truth in it ; the ancient Indians loved beauty also but always they sought to put some deeper significance in their work, some vision of the inner truth as they saw it. In the supreme examples of their creative work they extort admiration, even though one may not understand what they were aiming at or the ideas that governed them."

Similarly, Sir John Marshall (quoted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru) says : "To know Indian art in India alone, is to know but half its story. To apprehend it to the full, we must follow it in the wake of Buddhism, to Central Asia, China and Japan; we must watch it assuming new forms and breaking into new beauties as it spreads over Tibet and Burma and Siam ; we must gaze in awe at the unexampled grandeur of its creations in Cambodia and Java. In each of these countries, Indian art encounters a different racial genius, a different local environment, and under their modifying influence it takes on a different garb. "

Brahman priests and Acharyas and Buddhist monks became the inspirers of our sculptors and painters and gave to the world the results of their efforts in Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta some of the grandest productions of human art. Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta art has permanent value for mankind. It furnished models for other countries to follow. Thus Havell remarks : "The best Indian sculpture touched a deeper note of feeling and finer sentiments than the best Greek." Again he says : "Rembrandt's pen and ink studies collected in the British Museum,

the Louvre and elsewhere, a number have been identified as copies or adaptations of Indian miniatures."

Col. Tod, the author of 'Annals of Rajasthan' says : "We are perhaps now for the first time impressed with the beauty of Hindu sculpture."

Mr. Griffith's remarks regarding the Ajanta paintings are worth quoting : "The artists who painted them were giants in execution The Chinese School owed their inspiration originally to the art of India."

That the influence of the Indian art was far-reaching is testified to by Mr. Sisir Kumar Mitra in the following words : "In the art relics of Central Asia, China, Japan, Java, Cambodia – those distant outposts of Indian culture – unmistakable proofs are found of the far – reaching influence of the art of Ajanta."

Shri Aurobindo is of the same view, and has written of the art of Ajanta in glowing terms, interpreting the meaning of the artists for the benefit of the uninitiated.

The Hindus thus can claim to be teachers of mankind in the arts of Sculpture and Painting.

CHAPTER XIII

TRADE & COMMERCE IN ANCIENT INDIA

Western historians and writers have been telling the world at large that the ancient Indians were religious minded people, whose sole concern was with the other world, and that they did not care to look after the things that matter most in this world. The main concern of the Indians being spiritual, they generally ignored material progress and material comforts. This view has found favour with most of our educated people, who have mainly drawn their inspiration from the teachings of these prejudiced European writers and thinkers.

Fortunately there is such reliable evidence, that it would not be difficult to show that the view which has been propagated by these writers is wrong. The ancient Indians were remarkable for their multifarious activities, not the least important was their activity in the domain of trade and commerce. The Vedic injunctions are very clear. The Vedas attach great importance to material prosperity. Indian civilisation drew its inspiration from the Vedas, and from the earliest times the Aryas always endeavoured to seek and produce wealth, though not at the cost of righteousness. Says the Rigveda :—

“O ! Lord Indra, bestow on us the choicest of riches, the spirit of ability and fortune, increase of wealth, soundness of body, sweetness of speech and fairness of days.” Rig. II, 21, 6.

“Grant us endless wealth with children and

strength. And, O Agni, grant us splendid heroic courage, exalted and exhaustless." Rig. III, 13, 7.

"Do not give us up to poverty, nor want of heroic sons, nor, O mighty Lord, to lack of cattle, nor to calumny. Drive away malignity." Rig. III, 16, 5.

"We call on Thee for prosperity, to be free from sin and full of wealth, leading to happiness day by day." Rig. VI, 56, 6.

"My hymns, go forth like messengers with earnest prayers, proceeding from my heart and moving His heart. Vouchsafe us mighty and resplendent riches." Rig X, 7, 47. (Dr. Narang's 'Message of the Vedas')

"O Lord Agni, lead us to wealth by righteous paths Thou Lord, who knowest every sacred duty. Remove the sin that makes us stray and wander. We bring Thee most ample adoration." Yaj. V, 36.

"O Lord, may there be born in the kingdom Brahmans distinguished for religious knowledge; Kshatriyas, heroic, skilled marksmen, piercing with shafts mighty warriors; the cows giving abundant milk, oxen good at carrying, swift horses, industrious women. May the clouds send rain according to our desire, may our fruit-trees ripen, may acquisition and preservation of property be secured to us." Yaj. XXII, 22.

"May our business be profitable, may interchange of merchandise enrich us." Ath. III, 15, 4,

The Ramayana portrays in glowing terms the material prosperity enjoyed by the Aryas in the time of King

Dashratha and his sons. The descriptions of various kingdoms and their capital cities with well laid out gardens, parks, trading centres and shops full of every kind of merchandise, would show that proper value was attached to material goods. Similarly, the Mahabharata gives an equally vivid picture of the wealth of India of much later period, which was to be found in the different towns and villages of this country.

ROADS

Even from the ancient-most times, the utility of well-laid out roads was recognised. India had developed a unique road system which was utilised for trade purposes. Similarly rivers were utilised for conveying goods from one part of the country to the other. Indian ships sailed the great seas and oceans of the world and India carried on her trade with far off and distant countries. Remarkable testimony exists on these points both in the Indian shastras as well as in the works written by foreign scholars.

Consider for example, the edict of Asoka : "On the roads I have had banyan trees planted to give shade for man and beast : I have had groves of mango trees planted ; and at every half *kos* I have had wells dug; rest-houses have been erected ; and numerous watering places have been prepared here and there, for the enjoyment of man and beast."

Strabo—the Greek historian states that India had considerable trade roads in all directions, with mile-stones, and was provided with inns for travellers.

Professor Heeren remarks : "These roads were planted with trees and flowers." (Historical Researches, Vol. II).

Sri Har Bilas Sarda remarks : "Royal roads were constructed all over the country from east to west and from north to south, in addition to the numberless rivers, along the banks of which considerable commerce was carried on." – (Hindu Superiority). He quotes Periplus as saying that "the Ganges and its tributary streams were the grand commercial routes of northern India The rivers of southern Peninsula also were navigated."

Ain-i-Akbari mentions that about 4,000 vessels were employed in the commerce of the Indus. Alexander was able to seize, hire or purchase this fleet for the purpose of his invasion. Ujjain was one of the chief marts for internal traffic, and supplied the neighbouring country with all kinds of merchandise. It also became the emporium of foreign commerce. It was a celebrated depot of the produce of more distant and northern countries.

SHIPS

Ships were built in India and they were classified according to their sizes and shapes, according to the Yuktialpataru. India traded with Phoenicia. Babylon and Assyria. Silk was very largely exported from India to ancient Rome, to Egypt and to Greece. "It so allured the Roman ladies," says a writer, "that it sold for its weight in gold." (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XI)

Radha Kumud Mookerji in his book 'Indian Shipping' remarks : "The most valuable of the exports of India was silk, which under the Persian Empire is said to have been exchanged by weight in gold." Pliny, a Roman historian writes : "There was

no year in which India did not drain the Roman Empire of a hundred million sesterces (£ 1,000,000) . . . so dearly do we pay for our luxury and our women.”

India like-wise traded with Arabia, China and the countries of south-east Asia. Thus J. Takakusa says : “That there was communication or trade between India and China from about 400 A. D. down to 800 A. D. is a proven fact. Not to speak of any doubtful records we read in the Chinese and Japanese books, Buddhist or otherwise, of Indian merchant ships appearing in the China Sea ; we know definitely that Fahien (399-415 A. D.) returned to China via Java by an Indian boat . . . and further in the Tang dynasty, an eye witness tells us that there were in 750 A. D. many Brahman ships in the Canton river.”

Even so late as 1666 A. D. India traded with various countries and her ships went from Masulipatam. Tavernier in 1666 A. D. said : “Masulipatam is the only place in the Bay of Bengal from which vessels sailed eastwards for Bengal, Arrakan, Pegu, Siam, Sumatra, Cochin China and the Manillas and west to Harmuz Makha and Madagascar.”

Silk, ivory, sandal-wood, gold, silver, precious stones, iron, cloth of various kinds, spices were exported from India to other countries. Professor Heeren remarks : “India is the mother-country of spices, and from the most ancient times she supplied the whole Western world with that article.”¹

The prosperity and wealth of India attracted people of other countries who came and settled here.

1. Quotations taken from “Hindu Superiority”

Mr. Vincent Smith says : “There is good reason to believe that considerable colonies of Roman subjects engaged in trade were settled in southern India during the first two centuries of our era.”

A large number of Arabs settled in Sind as well as in some parts of south India. Many Greeks were attracted and came for trade to this country. Along with their merchants also came philosophers, who were greatly impressed by the culture and civilisation of this country.

Trade was carried on even with Australia. As a matter of fact researches will disclose that the Aryas went as far as America and various countries of Europe for the purpose of trade and commerce and along with them they took their culture as well.

We could produce more abundant testimony from the writings of impartial foreign writers that India was at one time a great country commercially and industrially. The sources of India's wealth were:

1. *Her Agriculture:* The fertility of Indian soil is well-known. It always was a fertile country from times immemorial. The Indians had developed the science of agriculture to a remarkable extent.

2. *Her Industry:* India had a well-developed industrial system. The Indians built ships and produced arms of various kinds, Medical and surgical instruments of the most delicate nature were made in India.

3. *Her Iron Industry:* The melting of iron was well-known. The famous Qutab-ki-Lat or the Iron Pillar, it is now well-ascertained, was the work of the

Arya or Hindu craftsmen. It is a standing monument to their knowledge as to how iron was to be smelted. According to Havell, Samudragupta's son, Chandragupta II after having adopted the title of Vikramaditya erected this Iron-Pillar. He says: "The celebrated Iron Pillar now standing in the courtyard of Qutb-uddin's mosque at Delhi is a dhawaja-stambha or imperial standard, similar to those of Asoka with the imperial symbol of Vishnu's blue lotus flower at the top, which was set up by Vikramaditya to record his campaigns in Bengal and the Panjab." The ancient Indians also knew the use of electricity which was employed for productive purposes.

4. *Her Cottage Industry* : Ancient India also had developed small cottage industries. There were guilds of craftsmen and unions of various artisans.

5. *Her Trade*: As already remarked, India traded with almost all the known countries of the world.

It was indeed the great wealth of India which excited the cupidity of foreign nations and led to the large number of invasions of India from the west through the Khyber pass. Wealth and riches of India attracted also the Europeans, viz., the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English to trade with India during the time of Mughal Emperors. They came to this country one after the other. They settled in India as merchants, built their factories, and sought concessions from the Mughal Emperors and Hindu princes. In their struggle for political power, fortune favoured the British who, taking advantage of the disunion which existed between the Hindus and the Mohammedans and between the Indian princes, were

able to establish their Indian empire.

However, that is all gone and past. India, is now, one of the poorest countries of the world, but she has become master of her own destiny. The Indians would do well to take a lesson from their past history and should try to be leaders in commerce and trade. At the same time they should remain alert and watchful, never permitting selfishness to get the better of their patriotic and religious impulses. They should never forget that even in the acquisition of wealth and material goods, righteousness or Dharma should not be sacrificed.

A good portion of their wealth should always be earmarked to help the needy and the deserving and to serve their nation's needs. Similarly they should help in organising cultural missions to foreign countries as well as in establishing Colleges for the study of Sanskrit for the preservation of their ancient culture.

CHAPTER XIV

THE VEDIC POLITY

It was with the Aryas of India that the science of sociology originated. The Vedas contain a large number of Mantras on the science of sociology. These Mantras describe how society is to be formed; what sort of rulers people should elect to govern them; and what kind of Assemblies and Councils should be organised to help the Ruler in the discharge of his duties as a protector of the kingdom.

RULE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The main idea underlying the science of politics and statecraft was that righteousness (Dharma) was to be the rule of conduct for both the rulers and the ruled. The highest value was attached to truthfulness. There are a large number of Mantras which lay down that truth should never be sacrificed; that truth is the highest law and that men should be truthful in thought, word and deed. Relying upon the Vedic injunctions the ancient sages and Rishis placed truth or truthfulness above all other virtues. Says the Mahabharata: "Better than a hundred wells is a tank, and superior to a hundred tanks is a sacrifice. Better than a hundred sacrifices is a son but Truth is preferable even to a hundred sons." (Adiparva 99, 30).

"There is no righteousness equal to Truthfulness and there is nothing which can surpass it, and there is no sin more fearful than untruth." (Adiparva 99, 33).

"Truth is Righteousness, Truth is power, Truth is

spiritual discipline and Truth is the Eternal Brahma. Truth is the highest act of Righteousness and everything is established in Truth." "Dharma is protected by Truthfulness, learning is protected by application, complexion is preserved by ablutions and family honour by good behaviour."¹

Many more shlokas from Mahabharata could be quoted in support of the assertion that truthfulness was given the highest place amongst all the virtues.

Similarly Manusmriti lays great emphasis on truthfulness. "As the Brahman, knower of Brahma, (God) is superior among men, as the sun is the most lustrous of all the luminaries in the planetary region and as the head is the most important of all the parts of the body, so is Truthfulness the greatest type of righteousness."

:"There is no righteousness surpassing Truthfulness and there is no sin greater than untruth, especially in the conduct of a witness. Hence Truthfulness is the greatest (of all virtues)."

"Truth is one without a second. A man speaking it will, therefore, never be confounded (as to what to say and how to say it at any time), Truth is the ladder to supreme bliss and like a boat carries one safe beyond to emancipation."². (quoted by Bhumanand in his 'Anthology of the Vedic Hymns').

It was the duty of the King or the President of the State to act righteously in the discharge of

1. Mahabharat : Adiparva and Shantiparva.
2. Manusmriti: quoted by S. Bhumanand in his book "Anthology of the Vedic Hymns."

his duties and to deal even-handed justice to the subjects of the State.

ANCIENT WORKS ON POLITICS

In Satyuga, Brahma Maharishi composed an extensive treatise on statecraft and other allied subjects. His work consisted of one-hundred thousand lessons. It dealt with Dharma (righteousness), Artha (material prosperity) and Kama (noble desires). In the Shantiparva of Mahabharata a brief account of this voluminous treatise is given. We are told that it was abridged by the later Arya sage Shiva; and in still later years Indra reduced it still further. Lastly Brihaspati Minister of the Adityas or Devas made it still smaller; and Shukracharya, the Minister of Daityas or Asuras reduced it still further, so that everybody might be able to read and profit by it.

Arthashastras were written in the Mahabharata age by Bhishma, Drona Bhardvaja and Uddhava. The well-known Arthashastra of Kautilya (the Chief Minister of Chandragupta Maurya) which has come down to us was based on merely the fragments of the ancient Arthashastras, the originals of which have not been recovered. It is necessary that we should make careful researches into the origin of the science of sociology. If that be done it would be found that the world owed a debt of gratitude to the Vedic Samhitas admittedly the oldest books of mankind and to the Vedic Rishis who wrote extensively on politics or Niti.

The Vedas place before mankind the ideal of one government for the whole world. For this purpose there should be one common aim before all individuals

and nations, otherwise there could be no peace and happiness in the world. People anxious to achieve co-operation and goodwill amongst the different peoples would do well to act upon the injunctions contained in the Vedas. It would be impossible otherwise to bring peace and happiness to a world torn by factions and dissensions, at the present time. Divine injunctions as given in the Vedas are summed up in the following Mantras :-

“I make you free from hatred, united in heart and mind. Love one another as cow loveth the new-born calf.” (Atharva Veda, III, 30, 1).

“Live together, deliberate together. Let your minds be full of common knowledge. As your predecessors (learned men) realising God through knowledge (Gyan) worshipped Him (so you should).”

“May your Mantra (code of conduct) be common, common the assembly and common the mind. Let your hearts be united. I place before you the common code (the Vedas). I endow you with common offering for worship.” (Rigveda X, 191, 3).

“Common be your aim. Let your hearts be united and also your mind so that you may prosper together.” (Rigveda X, 191, 4).

Sisir Kumar Mitra in his book ‘Vision of India’ says : “The Vedas exhort man to be united with all in heart, in aim and in work, to be friendly with all and to pray so that all may be friendly with him.”

Moreover the Aryas loved freedom and they were anxious to maintain a free society. In the Mantras repeated in the daily prayers (Sandhya) an Arya always

prayed for a life of hundred years or more but this life was to be the life of a free man and not of a dependent. Similarly there are Mantras in the Rig Veda which show that great value is to be attached to freedom :-

“May we be free from every bondage O Lord, a tower of strength among gods and men. Winning, may we win the Friend of friends, the Almighty (Varuna); and living, may we live (rich, powerful and distinguished). ” (Rig Veda VII, 52, 1). Similarly Atharva Veda says : “May Brihaspati (God) protect us from behind and from above and from below, from wrong-doers. May Indra grant us rule and freedom as a friend of friends from all sides.” (Atharva Veda XX, 17.11).

Mr. Havell quotes Kautalya's Arthashastra as saying : “*Never shall an Arya be subjected to slavery.* This was the charter of the race even under the rule of the Mauryan emperors.” The idea of freedom for a citizen has been spread throughout the world by Arya political philosophers and thinkers of India. Slavery is foreign to Hindu or Arya ideals.

FEARLESSNESS

Freedom implies a fearless life. Therefore, the Aryas in their prayers always prayed that they should not be afraid of anything in the world. The following prayers from the Atharva Veda will make this point clear :-

“As heaven and earth are not afraid and never suffer loss or harm, even so my spirit fear not thou.

“As day and night are not afraid, nor suffer loss or harm, even so my spirit fear not thou.

“As sun and moon are not afraid, nor ever suffer loss or harm, even so my spirit fear not thou.

“As Brahmanhood and princely power are not afraid, nor even suffer loss or harm, even so my spirit fear not thou. “As what hath been and what shall be fear not, nor ever suffer loss or harm, even so my spirit fear not thou. (Atharva Veda-15, 1 to 6)

“May we be fearless from whom we know and whom we know not, fearless in the night and fearless in the daytime. May all the directions be friendly to us.” (Atharva Veda, XIX, 15, 6).

The greatest value therefore, was attached to fearlessness. The society that the ancient Aryas built was thus organised on the basis of noble social virtues. The Arya Society, therefore, endured for thousands of years.

THE ARYA STATE

The smallest unit of the State was the Grama or village. The village was a small republic owing common pastures, common assembly halls, common places of worship, common tanks and wells and common means of production. Several villages formed a small kingdom. The king or the president of the kingdom was elected. He was helped by different councils.

The small kingdoms were part of a larger kingdom over whom ruled a Chakravarti Raja. All authority was centred in the king or the president, helped by the three Councils. This feature of Aryan rule based upon righteousness, justice and individual freedom which was co-ordinated with State authority, was imitated later on by all those who ruled India. It was copied either in its entirety or with certain

modifications by all those nations which came under the influence of Arya culture.

Mr. Havell remarks : "The Aryan system was a scientific organisation based upon sanitary laws and inspired by high ethical and social ideals. It was a scheme of communal village life, worked out by the practical philosophy of one of the most highly gifted of the races of mankind, in which each section of the community and each individual member of it took their allotted shares of work for the common weal, not under the compulsion of an autocrat or of a ruling caste, but by a clear perception of mutual advantage and a voluntary recognition of superior intellectual leadership."

ELECTED RULERS

The Arya kings were elected. There are Vedic mantras which enjoin upon the people to elect the best of men to be their king or leader. Thus, Dayananda Saraswati quotes certain Mantras from the Vedas and says : "We anoint as our king and universal ruler this most noble person who is fit to fill the position of the ruler of a world—wide kingdom, able to protect and achieve the best enjoyments, a brilliant statesmen, shining with the light of such qualities as true knowledge, able to protect the self—governing State."

The leader thus elected was to be given large powers and the State assemblies which were to help the king were also to be filled with learned and righteous men. "Let the learned and the righteous men of the State assemblies always work for the happiness of the good men among the subjects and deal gently by them

and adopt a stern attitude towards the wicked. The duties of the king have a two-fold aspect, i. e. mild and forbearing ; and stern and terrible. Some times, owing to the exigencies of time, place and the subject in hand they have to be tolerant ; at others, they have to be otherwise and have to visit the wicked persons with severe punishment. The Kshatra or statecraft consists in bringing happiness to the doers of good deeds, and in inflicting pain on the wicked and in the possession of an army of the most valiant soldiers.¹

The king, however, was not to be above the law. The law was to be supreme. The laws were made by assemblies consisting of persons who were not entrusted with executive powers, and therefore, there was no danger of the laws being made by men from interested motives.

The importance of following the law, is emphasized in the Vedas :-

“Easy is the path for him who seeks the law. O Lord, for me there is naught to give offence to Thee.” (Rig. I, 41, 4).

“True to law, born in law, the upholders of law, possessed of great mind, haters of falsehood in the protection of our benevolent and all-prevading God which is the best defence, may we people and princes dwell.” (Rig. VI, 68, 13).

THE LAW CODE OF MANU

The Code of Manu is well-known throughout the

1. “Riga-Vedadi-Bhashya-Bhumika” by Swami Dyananda Saraswati (English translation by Ghasi Ram.)

world. We are informed that this Code was prepared in circa 9000 B.C. and consisted of one-hundred-thousand Shalokas. Many of the Shalokas had for their basis the teachings of the Vedas and of the Artha shastra written by Maharishi Brahma dealing with the three subjects already mentioned, viz. Dharma, Artha, and Kama. The present Manusmriti contains only 2700 shalokas. Research scholars maintain that only 2000 shalokas are from the original Manusmriti, while 700 or so are later interpolations.

According to Manu, the law was above the king. Manu prescribes even death for the king, who would infringe the law or Dharma. E. B. Havell, author of 'The History of Aryan Rule in India' remarks : "But in Arya polity the divine right of kings was never recognised as a personal attribute of the monarch, belonging to himself and his family. He had no right except that which was conferred upon him by Aryan law, and he could be fined or deposed by the general Assembly of freemen, or by the Council of Ministers, if he neglected his duties as king or offended against that law."

The Manusmriti remains the Code of the Hindus even up to this day. There were undoubtedly many Smritis or Codes written by various other sages. Under the British rule these Smrities were also consulted for expounding the Hindu law by the judges in British Indian courts. The Arya or Hindu law has been copied sometimes verbatim and sometimes with modifications by law givers of other countries. The ancient legal system of India has greatly influenced the legal systems of many countries of the world. Roman law is considered

to be the foundation of almost all the legal systems of Europe. Mr. Sisir Kumar Mitra quotes Thoreau the famous author of "Walden" making the following remarks about Manu's Dharmashastra: "I cannot read a sentence in the book of the Hindus without being elevated." Similarly, Mr. Mitra says: "The eminent jurist Maine has shown that the old Brehon laws of Ireland are derived from the Vedic laws of India."

Shri Har Bilas Sarda remarks: "The English derived their laws from the Romans, who in their turn, derived them from Greece . . . Greece seems to have been indebted to India for its laws." Sir W. Jones says: "Although perhaps Manu was never in Crete, yet, some of his institutions may well have been adopted in that island, whence Lycargus a century or two after may have imported them into Sparta."

The author of 'The Bible in India' M. Jacolliot, says that, the Manusmriti was the foundation upon which the Egyptian, the Persian, the Grecian and the Roman codes of law were built and that the influence of Manu was still felt in Europe. Professor Wilson says: "The Hindus had a code of laws adapted to a great variety of relations which could not have existed except in an advanced condition of social organisation." Coleman says: "The style of it (Manu) has a certain austere majesty that sounds like the language of legislation and extorts a respectful awe." It would thus be clear that the source of the legal systems of the world directly or indirectly can be traced to the Vedas and Vedic Shastras.

Though the people were to be governed according to law, yet it was recognised that everybody should

have freedom of thought and expression. The highest pursuit in a man's life was the pursuit of truth as already stated and truth could not be attained unless there was complete freedom of discussion and expression of opinion. Hence there was no prohibition against religious, philosophical and political discussions. Thus E. B. Havell remarks: "There was no subject more freely debated by Aryan thinker than the great problems of human existence; provided that his theory conformed to accepted laws of logic and stood the test of debate, anyone could obtain a hearing in the public disputations which took place under the village council tree, in the temple porch, or in the palace of the king, so that new sects and schools of philosophy grew almost spontaneously on Indian soil, though few survived the struggle for existence."

The Aryas had thus built up a system which ensured full freedom to the individual. At the same time it was recognised that the authority of the State must not be weakened. It must be strong enough to put down all those who tried to hinder the chief end of the State, which was a moral one, namely to ensure to all the citizens the right to grow and progress both in knowledge and in material wealth. Thus liberty and freedom existed side by side with good government. It was recognised by our political writers and thinkers that freedom was the very breath of Arya society.

THE STATE ASSEMBLIES.

The Aryas from the earliest time recognised that a king or the president of the state should not be autocratic. He must, therefore, be helped by good and virtuous men. Hence State Assemblies were constituted

to help the king in ruling over territories under his jurisdiction impartially and without fear and favour.

There were three kinds of assemblies. First, there was the Executive or the Administrative Council which was called Arya Raj Sabha. The second Assembly was called the Arya Vidya Sabha, whose main function was to supervise education and learning. Every subject of the State was entitled to be educated. Hence the Brahmans, the Acharyas and the Rishis taught not only the rudiment of learning to the subjects of the State, but there was free education upto the highest standard. The third Sabha was the Dharma Sabha. This Assembly was meant to promote virtue, morality and righteousness. These Assemblies were to work in co-operation with one other. They were to promulgate the laws that were to govern the State. The Vedic injunction is stated by Dayananda Saraswati in the Rigaveda-Adi-Bhashya Bhumika in the following words :—

“Yajur Veda declares ‘O learned members of the State Assemblies ! discharge with glory, the noble functions of government in your present kingdom which is free from enemies and disturbances with the object of making its government matchless, establishing all business on the basis of the highest knowledge, exercising sovereign authority among the learned, shedding the light of justice and dispelling the darkness of injustice like the sun-light and rendering the people as happy as possible. You should also know that among the members versed in the Vedas such a person alone could be the king after his election to the presidentship of the assemblies who was endowed with gentle qualities and versed in all the sciences. O members !

promulgate this order among the common people that such a member as well the laws passed by the administrative assembly of the State (the Rajsabha) is the ruler yours as well as ours. We, therefore, anoint and elect as the president of the State assemblies such and such person the son of such and such well-known father and mother. ”¹

In all affairs Dharma or righteousness was considered to be the supreme rule of life. Says Shri Aurobindo : “A greater sovereign than the king was the Dharma, the religious, ethical, social, political, juridic and customary law organically governing the life of the people. This impersonal authority was considered sacred and eternal in its spirit and the totality of its body, always characteristically the same, the changes organically and spontaneously brought about in its actual form by the evolution of the society being constantly incorporated in it, regional, family and other customs forming a sort of attendant and subordinate body capable of change only from within, and with the Dharma no secular authority had any right of autocratic interference.”²

It is a fact beyond dispute that the religious liberty of the common people was fully safeguarded and it could not be infringed by any secular authority. There were therefore, no religious persecutions which have disfigured the pages of the history of other people. Undoubtedly the main aim of this organised society was the attainment of Moksha, i. e. the liberated spiritual existence. Shri Aurobindo remarks : “The master idea that governed the life, culture, social ideals of the

1. English translation by Ghasi Ram, pp. 311-12.

2. The Spirit and Form of Indian polity by Shri Aurobindo.

Indian people has been the seeking of man for his true spiritual self and the use of life – subject to a necessary evolution first of his lower physical, vital and mental nature – as a frame and means for that discovery and for man's ascent from the ignorant natural into the spiritual existence. This dominant idea has never been quite forgotten even under the stress and material exigencies and the externalities of political and social construction." It would, indeed, be a fatal day for India if her people forgot the chief aim of man's existence on earth.

MILITARY SCIENCE

In order to guard a State and to preserve its internal peace, it is necessary that there should be a class of Kshatriyas, namely, of those persons whose main duty is to help in the preservation of law and order, and to save the kingdom from external invasion.

The Vedas declare that the role of a Kshatriya is very important. In the Purusha Sukta of Yajur Veda human society is compared to a living organism and Kshatriyas are called the arms of this society. Just as in human body the arms have to perform certain functions, in the same way in a well-organised society the Kshatriyas have to play the part of soldiers, sailors and airmen in order to save it from external and internal dangers, which are likely to disturb the peace of a State.

Explaining the Vedic mantras which deal with the duties of a Kshatriya, the Indian Rishis and sages wrote works dealing with Military Science. These works were called Dhanurveda. Some of the ancient works on this science were Dhanurveda of Shiva, who was a leader of the Adityas or Devas and Dhanurveda

of Kavya Ushna. Similarly, Jamadagni Rishi and later on Vyasa composed works on military science, which were likewise called Dhanurveda. These ancient Shastras or Dhanurvedas have been lost. But references to them are to be found in the existing works. Dhanurvedas dealt with Viman Vidya (aeroplanes) and ships, navigation on the seas, the organisation of the land armies as well as a description of the various kinds of weapons which were used during the war for both offensive and defensive purposes.

AEROPLANES

The Rig Veda (I, 35, 11) declares ; “O Lord (Savita) ! whatever paths are there in the sky (Antariksha) existing from olden times without dust and well-made, by these paths may we travel. Protect us and guide us.” Similarly, Atharva Veda (III, 15, 2) says : “May our celestial conveyances (Devayana) move about between heaven and earth ; be well-provided with eatables like milk and butter so that we may be able to earn wealth through commerce.”

Similarly, Shatapatha Brahmana makes reference to navigation in the air. The Viman Vidya is thus mentioned in the Vedas. Dayananda Saraswati quotes Rigveda (VIII, 8) in support of air travel. He says : “Ye men, in the ocean full of water and in the *upper regions* where there is no means of support for hand, where none can stand—you should travel for success in your undertakings by building ships and aerial cars.” In the Ramayana, there are references to the use of aeroplanes by Shri Rama, son of Dashratha. It appears, however, that the use of the aerial cars was on a limited scale. The Mahabharata, makes no mention of aero-

planes. It appears that by the time of Dvapara age the knowledge of navigating the air was lost. European writers, have also recognised that Viman Vidya or aerial navigation was known to the Aryas. Thus Colonel Alcott says : "The ancient Hindus could navigate the air and not only navigate it, but fight battles in it."

SHIP-BUILDING AND THE USE OF BOATS

The Vedas mention both the ships and the aeroplanes in Rigveda. Thus, Rig Veda (I, 25, 7) says : "Lord Varuna knows the place of aeroplanes descending from the sky. He knows the boats of the sea." (quoted by Shri Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya in his 'Vedic Culture'). The learned author gives several mantras which have reference to boats and ships. Rig Veda (I, 56, 2) : "Like wealth-seeking merchants in the sea." "By means of conveyances self-owned moving in the sky and on the surface of water" (Rig Veda I, 16, 3). "A hundred-oared ship in the sea" (Rig Veda I, 16, 5). Yajur Veda likewise mentions that these ships and conveyances were used for carrying goods for trade.

Manu mentions navigation to have been known to the Aryas from times immemorial. Manusmriti describes various methods and means of naval warfare. This has been well recognised by European authors as well.

Strabo, the Greek Historian, mentions that a naval department existed in addition to the other departments in the Indian army. Col. Tod's view is that the Hindus of remote ages possessed great naval power. Mr. Elphinstone says : "The Hindus navigated the ocean as early as the age of Manu's Code, because we read in it of men well acquainted with sea voyages." According to

Professor Max Duncker, ship-building was known in ancient India as far back as 2000 B.C. It is thus clear that the Hindus navigated the ocean from the earliest times, and that they carried on trade on an extensive scale with all the important nations of the world.

“The Rajavalliya says that the ship in which King Sinhaba of Bengal sent Prince Vijaya, accommodated full 700 passengers, and the ship in which Vijaya’s Pandyan bride was brought over to Ceylon carried 800 passengers on board. The ship in which Buddha in the Supparaka Bodhisat incarnation made his voyages from Bharukachha (Broach) to the sea of the seven gems carried 700 merchants besides himself. The Samudda Vanija Jataka mentions a ship which accommodated one thousand carpenters.¹

“With Phoenicia and Babylon, the Indians enjoyed trade from the earliest times. Dr. Sayce, the famous Assyriologist, says that the Indians traded by sea with Babylon as early as 3000 B.C. when Ur Bagas, the first king of United Babylonia, ruled in Ur of the Chaldees.²

The Ramayana mentions Mahanavikas or the great captains of the ships which sailed in the seas and the oceans. These ships are distinguished from Navikas or ordinary boats which plied in the rivers. Ramayana likewise mentions the use of boats. The Puranas also strengthen the view that navigation was fully known to the ancient Hindus. India carried on commerce with several countries, by means of ships and boats.

1. Turnour’s Mahavans and Hardy’s manual of Buddhism quoted in ‘Hindu Superiority.’
2. Hibbert’s lectures; Ibid.

Ship-building was also well-known. Naturally, therefore, many States in India maintained their naval departments.

ARMIES

Similarly ancient Aryas, were fully conversant with the art of war on land. There were foot-armies, soldiers fought on the horse back, on the elephants and in the chariots. Great warriors were called Maharathis. The two Epics as well as the Puranas definitely mention the names of great military commanders both of the past and of their own times. The great commanders of the armies such as Skandha (Sanat Kumar), Indra and Vishnu are mentioned as the leaders of the Adityas or Devas. The Greek historian Herodotus describes twelve gods or Devas who commanded the armies of the Adityas. Similarly, Hiranya-Kashipu and Prahlada were the leaders of Daityas and Danavas. Kings like Sagara, Raghu, Shri Ram (son of Dashratha), were great warriors. Arjuna, Karna, Dronacharya, Ashvathama, Bhimsen, Shalya and Bhishma were known as maharathis or great warriors in the Mahabharat war.

WEAPONS

The ancient Aryas had developed various kinds of weapons and arms. Two well known weapons, besides about 80 more astras, Agni-astras and Brahma-astras have been mentioned very frequently in the ancient books of Indian history. These weapons were of great potency and caused destruction on a large scale. The Indian Rishis and Law-givers recognised that Mahayantras (great destructive machines) and great astras (weapons) should not be used in warfare as they

cause destruction on a large scale. Manu also prohibits their use. But it is certain that weapons of great destructive power were known to the sages and the Indian generals and were occasionally employed. The great generals whom we have named above were fully conversant with these formidable weapons. Later historians have stated that even at the time when Alexander invaded India, weapons of great potency were known to Indians.

Thus Halhed, the author of the Code of Gentoo (Hindu) Laws remarks : “Among several extraordinary properties of this weapon, one was that after it had taken its flight, it divided into several separate streams of flame, each of which took effect and which when once kindled, could not be extinguished ; but this kind of Agniastra is now lost. He adds : “A cannon is called ‘Shataghni’ or the weapon that kills one hundred men at once, and that the Purana Shastras ascribe the invention of these destructive engines to Visvakarma, the Vulcan of the Hindus.”

Col. Alcott remarks : “Ashtur Vidya, a science of which our modern professors have not even an inkling enabled its proficient to completely destroy an invading army, by enveloping it in an atmosphere of poisonous gases, filled with awe-striking shadowy shapes and with awful sounds.”

A French writer Mlangois says that these fire arms appeared to have belonged to the Bhargavas, the families of Bhrigu.

“Rockets” says Prof. Wilson, “appear to be of Indian invention and had long been used in native

armies when Europeans came first in contact with them.”

“Ctesias, Elian and Philostratus all speak of an oil manufactured by Hindus and used by them in warfare for destroying the walls and battlements of towns that...” and that “it was inextinguishable and insatiable, burning both arms and fighting men.”¹ “Hindu Shastras also tell us about weapons of great potency which could cause destruction on a large scale. It appears that in later years the use of these weapons of great potency was discontinued. Perhaps, the science of making these weapons was no longer available. It, therefore, would be quite correct to state that the ancient Indians were the originators of military science. It must, however, be recognised that the two cardinal principles by which the ancient Aryas lived, were the rules of righteousness and justice, and therefore they never waged war with the mere object of aggrandizement. The great sage Vyasa in the Bhishma Parva mentions that the Vedas condemn killing on a large scale. The Greek traveller Megasthenes in later years recognised that the Hindus never waged aggressive wars. Military Science and strategy were developed during the war between Daityas, descendents of Kashyap from his wife Diti and Adityas descendants of Kashyap from Aditi. Adityas and Daityas were not gods and demons of the fables ; but were men who resided in Arya Varta or Arya Desha. During these wars as already remarked medical science also was greatly developed.

The Epics—Ramayana and Mahabharata uphold the waging of a righteous war. Defending one's country or

1. Quotations taken from Shri Harbilas Sarda's 'Hindu Superiority'

kingdom or one's family and tribe is an act of righteousness. After having recovered his wife Sita, Rama the hero of Ramayana gave the kingdom of Lanka to Ravana's brother. He did not annex it to his own kingdom.

Buddhism with its negative approach to the problems of life was the cause of India's downfall in later ages. Had India kept in view the teachings of the Vedas, she could never have fallen a prey to foreigners. Ahimsa or non-violence should be given its proper place; but it cannot become the creed of a nation for all times. India therefore must keep her defence forces ready and her powder dry in order to meet foreign aggression. But she should not wage war for the purpose of extending her trade or conquering other people's territory.

CHAPTER XV

THE ORGANISATION OF ARYA SOCIETY

The Vedas declare that there are two kinds of men in the world — Aryas (noblemen) and Dasyus (ignoble men). This division is not based on colour, race or religion, but on the actions and qualifications of an individual. The main aim of human life according to the Vedic texts is to attain perfection here on earth. Such a state is declared to be Moksha or emancipation from the cycle of births and deaths. This can only follow, if a person follows the path of Dharma or righteousness. Dharma is a part of the eternal moral and physical laws. These are termed Rita and Sata. They govern the whole Universe. Men must follow the moral laws, if they seek true happiness. The society which the Arya built up was based upon the fundamental laws of morality.

Pandit Jawaharlal remarks: “The central idea of old Indian civilisation, or Indo-Aryan culture was that of Dharma, which was something much more than religion or creed. It was a conception of obligations, of the discharge of one’s duties to oneself and to others. This Dharma itself was part of Rita, the fundamental moral law governing the functioning of the universe and all it contained. If there was such an order then man was supposed to fit into it and he should function in such a way as to remain in harmony with it. If man did his duty and was ethically right in his action, the right consequences would inevitably follow. Rights as such were not emphasized. That, to some extent, was

the old outlook everywhere. It stands out in marked contrast with the modern assertion of rights, rights of individuals, of groups, of nations."¹

The Arya Society was, therefore, so organised and ordered that every person belonging to it enjoyed full opportunity for self improvement, for practising Dharma (righteousness), for acquiring prosperity (Artha) and for securing the achievement of Kama (noble desires). It was divided into four major classes, namely: the Brahmans; the Kshatriyas; the Vaishas and the Shudras. Breakers of the Arya law such as robbers, dacoits, thieves and other persons of evil deeds constituted the fifth class of persons who were regarded outside the pale of Arya society.

THE BRAHMANS

Preachers, teachers, councillors, Acharyas, Gurus, sages, Rishis, scientists, philosophers and other persons of like avocations fall within the category of Brahmans. "That person", says Dayananda Saraswati, "is entitled to the position of a Brahman who knows the Vedas, worships God and is endowed with noble qualities."

Rigveda declares that a Brahman must be calm, free from evil thoughts, a man of austerity, who should be able to preach the Vedic truths to the world. He should keep nothing secret and he should be endowed with eloquence. Obviously, therefore, the main duty of a Brahman is to undertake education and instruction of the people at large and spread light and knowledge everywhere. Yajur-veda mentions that people should seek the company of a Brahman who is a sage and has

1. "Discovery of India."

been educated by noble parents and Rishis. According to Manusmriti a Brahman should be above the lust for power and desire for praise. Praise should be like poison to him. The ancient Brahmans followed these precepts and tried to spread knowledge in various ways. They established their own Ashramas or hermitages in the forests or outside the towns and villages. Students came there and got instructions from them.

In later ages, a number of universities were founded by the State and rich-men, which drew scholars from all parts of the world. Such universities in comparatively recent times existed in Takshila (Western Punjab), Nalanda (Magadha), and Vikramashila (frontier of Bengal). Banaras was another seat of learning established from times immemorial. In the universities the students led a corporate life. The sons of the princes and the peasants alike received education. Great tribute is paid by foreign scholars and travellers to the teachers of these universities. There was an earnest desire on the part of the students to acquire knowledge of all descriptions. The teachers were likewise devoted to their students. The teaching of the Vedas occupied the first place. Itihasa and Purana, *i.e.* history; Vyakarna or Grammar; Rasi or the Science of Numbers; Nidhi or Minerology; Vakovakya or the Science of Logic; and Niti *i.e.* Ethics and Politics; Brahma-vidya or the knowledge relating to God; and subjects like Military Science, Mathematics, Medicine and fine arts were taught in these universities. In fact, every branch of learning was well-organised. The teachers and the students co-operated with one another fully in order to get the best out of student life.

Another method by which the people were enlightened and instructed was the system of open debates carried on under the patronage of great Rishis and Kings. A typical example of these debates is mentioned by Radha Kumud Mookerji in his work, 'Hindu Civilisation.' A conference was organised by King Janaka to which all the learned men of Kuru Panchala were invited. "The sage Yajnavalkya was the leading personality to whom questions were put by the leading philosophers of those times." Radha Kumud Mookerji mentions the names of several persons who took part in this conference.

Some of the kings were well-read in the Vedas and were equal to the Rishis in knowledge. Several times the sages themselves would come to these kings to resolve their doubts. The students took the vow of Brahmacharya, underwent Tapa *i.e.* led austere lives and devoted themselves to the acquisition of knowledge. They controlled their passions and thus were able to prepare themselves for achieving the highest end of human existence.

Brahman missionaries carried the message of the Vedas to distant lands. They braved every danger and suffered every hardship in order to teach the high lessons contained in the Vedas and Vedic Shastras.

The Brahmans were not prohibited from taking part in battles or wars of the country. At the time of need, a Brahman was to bear arms in defence of Dharma (righteousness) and the Rashtra (the country).

"The Brahmans bear irresistible arms and use them. These arms never miss their aim. They pierce the

enemies even from afar as they are directed by persons of austerities.”¹

As warriors, Sanat Kumar, Parshuram, Dronacharya, and Kirpacharya are names famous in ancient Indian History. So great was the esteem in which the Brahmans and Rishis were held that the kings and the princes readily permitted their daughters to marry them in preference to wealthy monarchs. For example, Lopamudra married Agastya Muni, Sukanya the daughter of king Sharyati married Chyavana Rishi.

THE KSHATRIYAS

The second in order of precedence are the Kshatriyas, who maintain law and order for the preservation of peace, so that men may lead lives of righteousness. Kings, rulers, commanders of the armies and of the naval and air forces, and humbler persons belonging to these fighting forces fall within the category of Kshatriyas. The aim of these Kshatriyas, however, as already stated was in ancient times to work for righteousness. Shri Rama, son of King Dashratha speaking to Lakshmana his younger brother, thus sums up the duties of a Kshatriya : “I wear arms for the sake of truth. It is not difficult for me to gain the whole world, but I desire not even the sovereignty of the heaven, if it is to be got through unrighteousness.”

The Vedas enjoin upon the Kshatriyas not to be afraid of death; Kshatriya is to bear arms for the defence of Dharma. Atharva Veda says : “O friends, follow this hero, who is the conqueror of the foes, who is a strong winner in battle and who conquers his

1. Atharva-Veda Chapter V, Sukta 18, Mantra 9.

enemies by unrivalled valour. Therefore, following such a person you should seek your own happiness."

The Kshatriyas were likewise directed to study the Vedas. In fact, the education of a king or Kshatriya was not complete unless he had studied the Vedas very carefully. Very often powerful kings gave up their throne and became dwellers in the forest. They attained the rank of Brahmans, Rishis, and Sages.

THE VAISHAS

The third class consists of people engaged in the production of wealth, like agriculturists, bankers, industrialists, business men and traders. They form the Vaishas of the Arya society. They are to engage in the exploitation of natural resources and in the earning and accumulation of wealth. But they are not to depart from the recognised principle of Dharma or righteousness. They must always be honest and truthful. In addition, their business must always be so conducted that may serve the needs of society and of mankind. Their wealth is not for self-indulgence, but they must be prepared to give a good part of it for works of public utility. The Rig Veda mentions : "God gives all kinds of wealth to him who is a donor and not merely a hoarder of wealth." The Vaisha must rise above the lust for wealth or gold, just as the Kshatriya is to rise above the lust for power. If wealth becomes the sole aim of a person's life, then it generally leads to such evils as drunkenness, gambling and self-indulgence. A branch of this order of the Vaishas was founded by a son of Manu named Nabhadhist. The Vaishas likewise are enjoined upon to study the Vedas. Several Vaishas were the seers of the Vedic hymns and enjoyed the status of Rishis.

THE SHUDRAS

The last class is that of the Shudras, who on account of dullness of intelligence are unable to profit by education. The outlet of their energies is to be sought in the service of other classes. It does not mean that a person who is born of Shudra parents cannot become a Brahman or a Kshatriya. History gives instances where many Shudra-born persons attained the ranks of Brahmans and Rishis. They are upto this time venerated by all the Hindus on account of their learning and piety. They were not regarded as Shudras but were and are venerated as Rishis and as teachers of mankind. Untouchability is not sanctioned by the Vedas. This is a later growth and has been condemned by every Arya reformer.

It is remarkable that in India slavery was not recognised. There were a small number of domestic servants, whose duty was to serve the higher classes. But it was always open even to the lowest of the low to rise to the topmost place. The basis of Arya society was not birth or caste as understood today. The Arya society was organised on the basis of what had been described as Guna (qualifications), Karma (actions), and Swabhava (temperament). The organisation of the people into four classes was imitated by people outside India, namely, by the Iranians as well as by the Greeks. It must, however, be re-emphasised that the Vedas or the divine knowledge was not to be the monopoly of the higher classes only, but people as a whole were directed to study these scriptures and to mould their lives in accordance with their teachings.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ARYA PATH OF LIFE

Just as the Arya Society was divided into four classes, so was the life of an individual divided into four stages or Ashramas. A person in order to get the best out of life had to undergo the discipline of the four Ashramas. It was understood that the least span of life was of one hundred years. Each Ashram, therefore, covered a period of twenty five years. These four stages or Ashramas are:- (1) Brahmacharya Ashrama or the period of studenthood (2) Grihasth Ashrama or the period of a house-holder. (3) Banaprasth, or a period of 25 years, wherein a person has to live a detached life and lastly the Sanyas Ashram where a person has to lead a life of complete renunciation.

BRAHMACHARYA ASHRAMA

Brahmachari must remain celibate and pure, must perfect his bodily powers by practising self-control, must seek to acquire knowledge of the Vedas and Shastras and attain proficiency in various sciences under the tutorship of eminent sages or Rishis. Brahmacharya also means 'the path which leads to Brahma or God'.

Even after the period of studentship a person must exercise full control over his animal and sexual passions, because self-control is the very basis of a happy and healthy life. Whether a person is a student or a householder or has become a *Banaprasthi* and afterwards a *Sanyasi*, self-control of the kind mentioned above is necessary for a healthy and pure life.

A person is a Brahmachari if his main object in going to his wife is merely procreation. He must follow the natural laws. *Retas* or *Virya* is semen. Its waste is prohibited. *Virya* is strength. It is life. It builds up strong body, strong mind and strong *prana*, which ultimately results in giving strength to the soul. *Virya* gets converted into *ojas* or a very fine substance which is utilised by the soul in its approach to God. The Vedas declare: "O Lord, thou art *ojas*; grant me *ojas*."

Shri Aurobindo says: "The fundamental physical unit is the *retas*, in which the *tejas*, the heat and light and electricity in a man, is involved and hidden. All energy is thus latent in the *retas*. This energy may be either expended physically or conserved. All passion, lust, and desire waste the energy by pouring it, either in the gross form or a subtle form, out of the body. On the other hand, all self-control conserves the energies in the *retas*, and conservation always brings with it increase. But the needs of the physical body are limited and the excess of energy must create a surplus which has to turn itself to some use other than the physical. According to the ancient theory, *retas* is *jala* or water, full of light and heat and electricity, in one word *tejas*. The excess of the *retas* turns first into heat or *tapas* which stimulates the whole system, and it is for this reason that all forms of self-control and austerity are called *tapas* or *tapasya*, because they generate the heat or stimulus which is a source of powerful action and success; secondly, it turns to *tejas* proper, the light, the energy which is at the source of all knowledge; thirdly, it turns to *vidyut* or electricity, which is at the basis of all full action whether intellectual or physical. In the *vidyut* again is involved the *ojas*, or *prana-shakti*,

the primal energy which proceeds from ether. The *retas*, refining from *jala*, to *tapas*, *tejas* and *vidyut* and from *vidyut* to *ojas*, fill the system with physical strength, energy and brain-power and in its last form of *ojas* rises to the brain and informs it with that primal energy which is the most refined form of matter and nearest to spirit. It is *ojas* that creates a spiritual force or *virya*, by which a man attains to spiritual knowledge, spiritual love and faith, spiritual strength. It follows that the more we can by Brahmacharya increase the store of *tapas*, *tejas*, *vidyut* and *ojas*, the more we shall fill ourselves with utter energy for the works of the body, heart, mind and spirit."

GRIHASTHA ASHRAMA

The second Ashrama is that of a householder or a *Grihasthi*. At the age of 25 years at least, after having completed his education, a Brahmachari should enter the life of a householder which should last 25 years. This period is not meant for self-indulgence and enjoyment. A householder may earn wealth and obtain every kind of material prosperity. However, the sole aim of his life should not be the acquisition of wealth.

BANAPRASTHA AND SANYAS

In the Banaprasth stage, a person may retire to a lonely place like a forest, to practise the virtue of non-attachment or he may live in his own house but should no longer be entangled in the affairs of the family. Non-attachment is necessary in order to prepare oneself for the last Ashrama namely, the *Sanyas*, wherein one renounces one's family, home and wealth, mainly with the object of dedicating the rest of his life to the preaching of the noble truths enshrined in the Vedas for the good of

mankind. A Sanyasi is not a *recluse* cut off from the world, or given merely to a life of contemplation and of comparative ease. The Sanyasi is regarded as the noblest of all persons, because he is above fear, attachment, greed, ignorance and physical ailments. He is to devote himself to work for the good of his fellow beings. After having realised God, the Sanyasi enjoys supreme bliss or joy. Nothing upsets him. Friends and foes alike are to benefit by his teachings. He becomes the source of light (*gyan*) and *vidya* (knowledge). Only a very few can attain this perfection. The Sanyas Ashrama is the very acme of human progress. A Sanyasi is a superman. By his personal example he leads mankind to the highest path.

In order, however, to attain individual perfection, the Rishis have laid down certain rules of conduct (Niyamas) and of self-control (Yamas,) which persons desirous of perfecting their physical, mental and spiritual powers must follow. These rules and aids to self-advancement are good for all times. It is significant that their value is being realised by all the aspirants to high and noble life even in these days.

THE YAMAS AND NIYAMAS

The Vedas and other Shastras lay down rules of conduct which a person must follow in order to realise supreme bliss or *Ananda*. In order to realise God and have intimate contact with Him, an individual must have full, complete and all-absorbing faith in Him. If doubt clouds his mind and a person hesitates to accept God as the ultimate reality, he cannot achieve communion with Him. The Vedas proclaim that a weak person cannot realise God. Therefore, one should always

promote and retain bodily vigour by leading pure and chaste life.

The ancient sages and seers, especially Maharishi Patanjali, have laid down rules of self-control and good conduct, which are helpful in the practices which lead ultimately to communion with God. These are Yamas (rules of self-control) and Niyamas (rules of good conduct). The Yamas are as follows :—

1. *Ahimsa* (non-injury). A man must never try to harm other persons either by thought, word or deed. He must never think ill of others.

2. *Satya* (truth). One should not live a life of duplicity but must always be ready to live a life of truthfulness, honesty and integrity.

3. *Asteya* (non-stealing). A person should abstain from appropriating the property of others.

4. *Brahmacharya*, namely celibacy or purity.

5. *Aprigraha*, namely non-possession. In other words, a person must give up attachment to material things such as wealth, houses and lands etc. He must be ready to give these up if and when necessary, and when called upon to do so.

The Niyamas are :—

1. *Shauch* (purity). A person must purify his body with water. He must purify his mind by truth and his soul by self-control.

2. *Santosh* (contentment). At all times and under all circumstances one should cultivate the habit of contentment.

3. *Tapas*: A life of austerity and self-control and simple living. A person must be able to bear all the hardships of life without feeling discomfort.

4. *Swadhyaya*: Regular study of good and holy books, the best being the Vedas and their commentaries by the Sages

5. *Ishwar Pranidhan*: Surrender to the will of God. Reliance on Him and His will at all times, while doing one's utmost for achieving noble objects is insisted upon. One must not be afraid of failures. There must be constant efforts to attain a life of Dharma or righteousness.

These Yamas and Niyamas are meant to be acted upon. A person must make his best effort to conduct himself as a good Arya or a good Hindu by practising these Yamas and Niyamas to the best of his ability.

ADDITIONAL STEPS

There are in addition, the following further steps which a person must practise in order to control one's mind and secure purity:

1. *Pranayama* or the control of breath for which rules have been laid down. Pranayama must be learnt from an accomplished adept. Beginners trying to practise Pranayama without proper guidance are likely to harm themselves.

2. *Pratyahara*, namely the withdrawal from the objects of the senses. Thus by practising Pranayama and Pratyahara a man becomes able to concentrate on any subject. His mind becomes one pointed. It leads to great mental discipline. This practice is called

Dharna. Dharna leads to *Dhyana* (meditation.) *Dhayana* leads to *Samadhi* or Union with God.

In order to seek union with God one must first of all realise the distinction between his material or perishable part namely his body, mind and intellect on the one hand and his imperishable or permanent part namely his Self or Atma. It is only by constant meditation and contemplation and by following Yamas and Niyamas spoken of above, that a person is able to tread the path of Gyan-yoga (knowledge), Bhakti-yoga (devotion) and Karma-yoga (non-attachment to action). The method laid down by the Vedas and Shastras for the soul to enjoy communion with God is by means of *stuti* (adoration), *prarthana* (prayer) and *upasana* (nearness) to God. God according to the Vedas is subtler than even the soul. He pervades the soul just as He pervades the whole universe. Therefore, He is to be worshiped in the temple of one's heart. The joy of this realisation or communion, the Vedas declare to be beyond description.

Is a person after having attained this supreme joy to become a recluse cut off from the world and intent upon only his individual welfare? No, say the Vedas. He must instruct humanity in all the noble virtues. He must not sit idle. He may resort to a lonely place, but only for spiritual exercises in order to gather spiritual strength. By contact with the Universal Spirit or Supreme Soul one gets such vitality which is really astonishing. He becomes free from fear. Nothing can daunt him or keep him back from serving humanity at large. He rises above the pair of opposites such as success and failure; joy and sorrow. He then does not require temples, mosques, churches for worship and for the practice of religious rites. He always enjoys the

supreme bliss or peace that passeth understanding. The ancient Sages and Rishis were able to bring the whole world under their influence by the purity of their conduct and by the power of their austerities, and they were able to win the doubters to the noble path preached by these most ancient texts—the Vedas.

CHAPTER XVII

CHARACTER OF THE ARYAS

The Aryas attached the highest importance to truthfulness, honesty, purity of life and worship of God. Therefore, in all educational institutions great emphasis was laid on these virtues. The Vedas teach man to be free from fear; and to be bold and valiant. A soldier must face death fighting for the preservation and protection of Dharma rather than fly from the battle-field.

During the Satyuga people lived happily and in pursuit of peace, devoting themselves to the highest kind of life. In the Tretayuga, though there was decline of Dharma as compared to Satyuga, yet Shri Ramachandra, his brother Lakshmana, and his wife Sita, testified to the excellence of the Vedic teachings by their own lives.

There was, however, great deterioration in the morals of the people in Dvapara Yuga and wicked men like Duryodhana and his uncle Shakuni were to be found in fairly large numbers; yet Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, was regarded as an exemplar of the Arya way of life. Even in the beginning of Kaliyuga, upto the time when the Mohammedans invaded India, foreign travellers who visited this country were unanimous in praising the Indians for their bravery, honesty and truthfulness. They regarded the Hindus, far in advance in moral virtues, as compared to the other nations of the world. Strabo, the Greek historian, remarks : "They are so honest as neither to require

locks to their doors nor writings to bind their agreements." Arrian, another Greek historian, remarks : "No Indian was ever known to tell an untruth."

Megasthenes noted that there was no slavery in India. The women were chaste and men valiant. Sober, industrious, skilful artisans and good farmers—they seldom went to law courts for the settlement of their disputes.

Huan-Tsang says : "That Indians are distinguished by the straightforwardness and the honesty of their character. They never take anything unjustly. Straightforwardness is the leading feature of their administration."

Mohammedan writers and travellers too paid glowing tributes to the character of the Hindus. Shamsuddin observed : "The Indians are free from deceit and violence. They fear neither death nor life."

Abul Fazal says : "The Hindus are admirers of truth and of unbounded fidelity in all their dealings."

Marco Polo an Italian traveller who visited India in the 13th century stated : "You must know that these Brahmans are the best merchants in the world and the most truthful, for they will not tell a lie for anything on this earth."

Professor Max Muller says : "It was love of truth that struck all the people who came in contact with India as the prominent feature in the national character of its inhabitants. No one ever accused them of falsehood."

Professor Monier William was of the opinion that he found "no people in Europe more religious, nor more

patiently persevering in common duties than were the Hindus of India."

Referring to their bravery on the battle-fields foreign writers have paid well-deserved tributes to the Hindus. "Have we anything in European chivalry", exclaims Mr. Edward Thomas, author of the 'Chronicles of Pathan Kings of Delhi', "to compare with the act of the Suktawat chief, who is related to have voluntarily submitted himself for impalement on the spikes of the gate of a beleagured town, to enable his own elephant to force an entry?"

Of Rana Raj Singh, the great opponent of Aurangzeb, Colonel Tod says: "As a skilful general and gallant soldier, in the defence of his country, he is above all praise. As a chivalrous Rajput, his braving all consequences when called upon to save the honour of a noble female of his race, he is without parallel." "The son of Rana Pratap, Umra, the foe of Jehangir", says Colonel Tod, "was a character of whom the proudest nation might be vain."¹

Even about the Indians of the present day, Mr. Elphinstone says: "They often display bravery unsurpassed by the most warlike nations, and will always throw away their lives for any consideration of religion or honour."

Mr. Bailie Fraser, author of the military memoirs of Lt. Col. James Skinner says: "But if we seek for a picture of chivalrous gallantry, unswerving fidelity, and fearless self-devotion, we have only to turn to the chivalry of the Rajput States; and particularly to that

1. Quotation from 'Hindu Superiority' by Har Bilas Sarda.

of the Rathors. We shall there find acts of resolute heroism that have not been surpassed by the troops of any age or country."

The defence of Chittor in the time of Akbar by a handful of the Rajputs led by Maharana Pratap Singh extorted admiration not only from Emperor Akbar himself and his Generals, but from foreigners as well. Maharana Pratap Singh and his followers have shed an undying lustre on the names of the Rajputs of India. The Rajputs have become as famous in the Indian history as the brave Greeks who defended the pass of Thermoplea in Greece against the Persians hordes.

The deeds of valour were confined not only to the Rajputs, but equally glorious were the exploits of the Marhatta followers of Shivaji, and the Punjabi followers of Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Bairagi. Recently, the British Generals have ungrudgingly praised the bravery of the Indians in the two Great Wars (1914-1918, and 1939-1945). During the great disturbances caused on account of the partition of the country into India and Pakistan, many a young Hindu met his end smilingly defending the honour of his womenfolk.

The Indian defence forces have won an undying glory in their campaign in Kashmir. Fighting against odds in the early days of the war in Kashmir, a handful of Indian soldiers successfully met the tribal hordes and never yielded an inch of ground. It is, therefore, clear that in the display of bravery and unswerving loyalty to their country, the Indian armed forces will always rank very high in the estimation of the people. The example of sacrifice and devotion in the country's cause shown by our defence soldiers should be

followed by everyone. For the causes of the downfall of the Aryas, (Indians) which led to the conquest of India by foreigners in the past, we must find some other reasons. But so far as bravery and courage are concerned, the Indians are in no way inferior to any other great people of the world. If the history of India teaches us any lesson, it is this that the people and the princes failed to present a united front when the country was threatened at the time of its invasion by the foreign people. It is proper, therefore, that our present day politicians should place the country's welfare above everything else. India does not lack men of intelligence, or men of courage. But it has been almost impossible for the leaders of groups or parties to close their ranks and fight the common foe. At the time of national danger, no importance should be attached to party divisions. The National Government should be whole-heartedly supported by every citizen.

The world is at the present time in a topsyturvy state. The forces of destruction and evil are rampant every where. Though the leaders of the various nations talk of peace, yet their hearts are full of venom and hostility towards one another. India's role as a peace-maker could only be successful, if the Indians on their part could give up their petty quarrels and could combine together to give a lead to other nations of the world, who should prize human happiness above everything else. We should arouse in the minds of our people enthusiasm for building up the country's future on the basis of righteousness, and truthfulness.

“Satyameva Jayete na anritam.”

Truth always conquers not untruth.

२०६ १२

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