

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

AMERICAN SECTION.

Oriental Department.

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First.—To form a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, or color.

Second.—To promote the study of Aryan and other Eastern literatures, religions, and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.

Third.—To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

The matter in these pamphlets is furnished by the Sanskrit Pundit in the Indian Section who has accepted that position for the Oriental Department, and also by members in India. They are issued free to all Branches and members-at-large of the Theosophical Society in America in good standing, and to non-members upon payment of subscription of 10 cents per copy.

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NOTICE AND CAUTION.

The present issue of the Oriental Department brings to a close the translation of the *Yajnavalkya Samhita Upanishad*. Readers will observe the marked difference between the Hatha Yoga and Raj Yoga practices indicated by the sage. Hatha Yoga means the pursuit of physical practises consisting of postures and management of the breath, having for their object the waking up of dormant psychical currents and faculties through such purely physical means; Raj Yoga—or the highest Yoga—is the opposite of “Hatha” and is intended to train and develop the inner man and the mind first and foremost on a true philosophical basis. The present *Upanishad* is a combination of both these systems, and in so far as it prescribes Hatha Yoga practises it is dangerous. The danger is in the fact that these postures and regulation of the breathing, without a competent guide, actually do, as the editor knows from experiment and experience, bring about physiological changes, with a more or less sudden development and disturbances of astral currents in the practitioner, which destroy the balance necessary for the preservation of health and sanity. Furthermore, through

the desire to obtain psychic powers there is a temptation to the unthinking student to rashly attempt the postures and so on without at the same time pursuing the strict observance of all the virtues incessantly declared to be absolutely essential; and in addition there should ever be at hand a guide to prevent errors and adjust the progress of the disciple.

Once more, then, does the editor emphasize the dangers, and Prof. Dvivedi also confirms the warning from his point of view.

The gate is broad and the road seems easy, but the price is too heavy, for disease and madness lie that way.

These considerations naturally lead to the question whether any account of the matters referred to or any translations of these *Upanishads* should be given. This Department aims, however, at the furtherance of the second object of the Society, and, as Prof. Max Müller says, we cannot know about the Eastern literature nor can we rightly judge until we are in possession of a translation of it.

For these reasons these translations are given, since they form a part of a great mass of Oriental lore. The Department is a scientific one and deals with the facts of Oriental literature. It hopes, however, to so contrast the Hatha and Raj Yoga systems that there can no longer remain any doubt as to which of these is the higher and the better to follow. Those who desire permanent results will know that the Raj Yoga is the only certain, effective, and true system.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,
General Secretary American Section.

YAJNAVALKYA-SAMHITA.

Translated for the American Section T. S. by Prof. Manilal N. Dvivedi.

[CONCLUDED.]

UHE learned sage Yâjnavalkya having finished his course, his wife addressed him as follows in the midst of the assembly. How should one devoted to the course of Yoga perform all that is enjoined as religious duty, at the two twilights or even during all time? And explain also, oh lord! what is really meant by absolute freedom from the observance of such religious injunctions? Being thus asked, the Brâhmana, true knower of Brahman, directed his looks toward Gârgi and began as follows:

That which may be enjoined as religious duty to one devoted to Yoga may, oh beautiful one! be performed by him in his own

way, after the teaching of his philosophy. And this at both the twilights or during all time. Perform the sacrifice, for example,—by offering as oblation all that pertains to the mind, into the fire of Âtman, fanned into flame by regular prânâyâma. This constitutes for one devoted to Yoga that which is enjoined as Agnihotra to the followers of formal religion. To one who thus fully meets the proper intent of all ritual, there remains not anything yet to accrue in the form of ‘absolute freedom from the observance of religious injunctions’, for he is already free and happy, the distinction between jivâtma and paramâtmâ having vanished. The knowers of Brahman should at the beginning certainly attend to all formal observances, which however should be set aside as so many snares, as does he who is a Yogin, at the moment of final departure (*i. e.* death). The death of a true knower of Brahman while yet held fast in the chains of formal observances, is equal to his being actually led into hell,—whence it is plain that one devoted to Yoga should shake off all formal observances. Thus the Yogin, too, must attend to religious injunctions (in the manner aforesaid), and thou, too, oh Gârgi! must attend to all that goes under the name of formal religion. But when it is time for thee to depart, abandon everything, and uniting the soul (jivâtma) to the Great Soul (Paramâtmâ) rest in entire peace.

Having said this much Yâjnavalkya, the treasure of austerities, turned to the sages assembled, and addressed to them the following words: “Oh ye sages! having performed the evening worship with due concentration, you may all depart for your hermitages.” The sages, all observers of absolute* vows, being thus permitted to depart, began to retire towards their respective abodes, after duly worshipping the sage Yâjnavalkya, and pronouncing blessings upon his wife Gârgi. Among these were Visvâmitra, Vasishtha, Gautama, Angiras, Agastya, Nârada, Vâlmiki, Bâdarâyana, Paili, Dirghotamas, Saunaka, Bhângava, Kasyapa, Bhardvâja, and many others, observers of great austerities, and learned in the *Vedas* and the *Vedângas* (= the six accessories of the *Veda*, *viz.* (1) the Science of Pronunciation, (2) the Book of Ritual, (3) Grammar, (4) Derivation, (5) Prosody, and (6) Astronomy). These having departed, Gârgi, full of austerities, laid herself prostrate at the feet of her lord and spoke as follows:

Oh Lord! the knower of all *Shastras*, beneficently inclined toward all beings, the best of Yogins, you certainly have described Yoga, the means of absolution; but this Yoga which, with

**i. e.*, not limited by conditions of time, place, etc. The vow, for example of not telling a falsehood at any time and any place is an absolute vow, called Mahân.

its eight parts, leads to Moksha, I for one have entirely forgotten while in your presence. Be pleased, therefore, my love! to impart to me the whole essence of Yoga in as concise a form as possible, and thus to save me from this terrible ocean of birth and death. The Brâhmana, full of the knowledge of Brahman, thus requested by his wife, equally conversant with the knowledge of Brahman, turned his gracious looks toward her and said with a smile, "Oh dear Gârgi! why dost thou, beautiful one! throw thyself on the ground? I shall impart to thee the essence of Yoga in a conveniently concise form".

CHAPTER XII.

Attend, oh Gârgi! to what I say. Press the ankle of the left foot * * * and meditate quietly upon the jet of the flame (within.) Prâna, the action whereof is so much waste of vitality, being thus stopped, flows up to the place of fire in the body. The fire, then, burns more bright on being made the subject of contemplation every morning, evening, and midnight. This practice should extend every time during ten days over a Muhurta (48 minutes), when, the vital air being thoroughly mastered, various psychic experiences will dawn spontaneously upon the inner consciousness of the ascetic. Foremost of these experiences, on the outward plane will be lightness of limb and body, glossiness of the skin, followed by keenness of appetite. The voice within will then begin to be heard, and if the practice is continued for six months or twelve, physiological processes will alter. If the course of study is prolonged to three years in the same manner, there remains indeed no reason to have fear from anything.

Then the ascetic must unite the vital air with the fire within by an effort of the will, and should enkindle the latter into a blaze by this method.

The Kundalini lying at the navel and not as yet sufficiently distended, will by this process be moved to give access to the vital air. In its normal condition the Kundalini winds itself around the central knot, and obstructs the upward course of the vital air through it, by its gagging its own mouth (the way of access) with the tail held fast in it. It lies like a sleeping serpent ever shining with its own light. Its place is at the navel, whether in birds, beasts, or men. This serpent-like Kundalini is, as it were, warmed with the fire fanned into flame, by the vital air taken to the place of its abode, in the manner aforesaid, and is thus forced to open its mouth, as it were, and give access to the vital air (prâna) with which it then becomes sufficiently inflated. Thus the serpent at the navel being awakened, the prâna courses through

it into the whole body, with the (electric) fire thus produced, even like threads which pass through the length and breadth of a cloth. Having thus got hold of the place of this serpent, the ascetic devoted to absorbing contemplation, should draw the apâna up towards the point of the navel. Oh innocent one! when the vital air passes along with the said fire, beyond the navel and pervades the whole body, all diseases disappear, fresh vitality and vigor are imparted to the whole system, and the body shines with supreme beauty. When the vital air enters with the said fire, into the Brahmarandhra, the ascetic should meditate upon the brilliant jet of light which immediately appears in the heart. The air thus held in the heart by this process of meditation enters the thousand-petalled lotus (in the head) and turns its face upside down. In the lotus of the heart called, oh Gârghi! (in the *Upanishads*) the "city of Brahman", thus made to bloom in full, the prâna appears like numerous suns shining simultaneously in the morning. The fire extending from the center of the heart to the opening of the sushumnâ appears like an unbroken streak of lightening in clouds charged with water. The fire having been brought into the full-blown lotus of the heart, and the vital air being, as it were, burnt into it, external signs in the form of great learning and supreme knowledge of Brahman manifest themselves. The ascetic should then fuse the vital air into the vital fire, repeating all the while the word of glory with the point over it (AUM), and contemplate on the new moon in the middle of the forehead as bright as the moon. Then the prâna may be fixed with the fire in the middle of the eyebrows, and the Yogin should get absorbed in the âtman within. In that "city of Brahman" oh Gârghi! all Jnâna, shines Jiva alone, independent of Mahat and others. In the heart, at the navel, and between the eyebrows, there burns a constant jet (of the fire of âtman) entirely unseen; try oh Gârghi! by all means to realize this, all light and bliss. He who meditates upon the light in the center of his heart, or in the middle of his eyebrows, comes to see the Sakti (*i. e.* Kundalini) bristling with light, like the jet of a lamp, and realizes Brahman at the same time. When the mind is entirely lost in the middle of the eyebrows, then indeed is the whole of âtman seen at that point by ascetics. Not only this, but they experience a kind of gentle shock in the head which opens the way to a condition akin to clairvoyance, bringing within view gods, celestial scenes, stars, moons, the Rishis, the siddhas, gandharvas, and the like.

After the practice whereby the mind becomes lost in the abode of Vishnu (*i. e.* the middle of the eyebrows, or at the navel), is carried on for some time, the Yogin must concentrate his atten-

tion on the internal cavity of the head, locating in it an image of the full moon for purposes of contemplation. The vital air being held fast in the abode of Vishnu, and the jiva being absorbed into immortality at that point, the mind too becomes completely annihilated, and approach is made to real absolution, as those say who know. The prâna being held fast in the abode of Vishnu, and the âtman * being seen in the pure light of sattva, supreme ecstasy and joy ensue;—oh Gârghi! try with pure heart to reach that condition. The ascetic keeping all the Observances and Forbearances set forth at the beginning, and observing strict temperance in everything, should go on with this practice, and obtain the highest joy ever concealed (from laymen) in the deepest well;—indeed this passage to the “city of Brahman” is absolution

But what is meant by the “city of Brahman”? “That from which, oh pure one! all things emanate, that wherein they are sustained, and that whereunto they finally return, is Brahman”, the formless, as described in the *Upanishads*. It is also described in the *Srîiti* which says “It is ever immutable and one, situate in the âkâsa pervading the lotus of the heart, all light, all bliss, and imperceptible, being thus as it were, enshrouded in a cave”. “It is minuter than the minutest, and greater than the greatest, ever present, as in a cave, within every being, ever free from evil and misery.” † Realize this extraordinary essence even on the death-bed. Remove the vital air with the vital fire to the crown of the head by force of will, and then go through the head in the manner indicated by a competent teacher, and fuse the individual prâna with the cosmic prâna, repeating the word of glory all the while. If, oh dear friend! thou wishest to know how one can give up the body at will, I describe the process to thee. Repeat mentally the word of glory, and send out the internal prâna through the crown of the head, broken open for the purpose, thus becoming one with âtman and casting away the useless body.

Having in private said this much, the real key of the whole science, the surest way to absolution, the pith of the whole of Yoga, the means of destroying bondage—the holy god, oh best of Brâhmanas! fell into ecstasy. Having with proper words and salutations duly worshipped the sage, explaining this secret knowledge, the treasure of learning, the best among knowers of Brahman, the wisest of the wise,—the holy lady found the greatest bliss (within herself). She applied herself in private to Yoga, the

* The word âtman here stands for the Sâṅkhya purusha (jiva-soul) and not for Brahman, whence it is called the âtman.

† This and the two quotations given before are actual texts from the *Upanishad*.

path of absolution, and abandoning the world sought out a secret retreat in some remote forest. She there found within her heart that son of Vasudeva* of and from whom is the whole world of experience, who is the source of all knowledge of every description, who is ever one, unmanifest, unthinkable, without parts, to be inferred only from the existence of experience, but itself not amenable to any instrument of knowledge.

This holy and supreme Yoga with all its subdivisions, the essence of all knowledge, is taught by Yâjñavalkya. That best of mortals who hears this daily becomes free from all sin, and obtains real jñâna without lapse of time. If any learned man full of faith explains this to others, he becomes immediately free from the sins of all his previous incarnations. He who hears this explained, be it even once, is at once relieved of all sin born of ignorance. Those who practice this yoga with proper jñâna, attract even the gods to their presence by their purity and application. Therefore, oh Gârgi! everyone afraid of the miseries of this world should, until death, attend either to his or her daily duties with proper Jñâna, or to the proper study and practice of Yoga.

IDOL-WORSHIP.

THE theme has been worn almost threadbare here in India; but the arguments on both sides have mainly turned on the presence or absence of the sanction of the *Veda* to the worship of idols. I have known of an educated citizen of Bombay who for at least five continuous years announced a prize of Rs. 5,000 to any Pundit who could demonstrate on the authority of scriptural texts the existence of idol-worship in Vedic times. The challenge passed unanswered, and for obvious reasons. It is open to any one to conveniently dispute the genuineness of any Vedic text; and further, there are many ways in which every single phrase could be interpreted under the not very definite rules of Vedic grammar. True, there is the Bhâshyakâra, Sâyana, (to mediate as umpire), but anyhow some such reasons as given above have not allowed a definite settlement of the subject. It may be that the *Veda* supported no idolatry whatever, but the value of this assumption we have yet to discover. While the great Dayânand lived it was usual to hear of learned meetings having been held at bay by the great Vedic scholar in regard to this one point; but it was unfortunately not unusual for almost the very next mail to contradict the report by notifying broadly

* *i. e.* Krishna, the highest Logos, Brahman.

that the Pandit had to give in at, or even run away from, such and such a place.

Oriental scholarship in the West has sought for an explanation of idol-worship in pure ignorance and barbarism, idolatry being regarded as but the next stage after Fetichism. It is believed, it would appear, on *a priori* grounds, that the last and highest form of philosophy or religion is the recognition and worship of an extra-cosmic personal god. Christian missionaries echoed the sentiment here in India, and a few of the advanced natives took up the cry and abjured idol-worship, denouncing it as irrational, impious, and unauthorized by the *Veda*.

This is a brief history of the question, and though it continues to supply a stock of so-called arguments to the Christian missionaries, and fertile themes of rhetoric to sentimental native "reformers" (as they are called) of tender years and impressionable judgment, the great temples and churches continue to enjoy the crores of income that they used to, and untold millions of pilgrims flock as ever, on every occasion, to render service at the shrines of the national gods. Nay, it is a poor result of labors extending over a century, that the missionaries are unable to place a finger on at least half a dozen names of genuine high-class Hindûs in the list of converts to the *true* religion of God.

The strength of idolatry must necessarily lie in something beyond the surface. The subject deserves to be approached from an entirely different point of view. And indeed the lessons of western education and of the revival of Sanskrit studies, would be entirely thrown away, the beacon of Theosophical light fired by the inspiring soul of our revered H. P. B. would be lighted in vain, if we could not at least mark out the lines along which a rational solution of the problem may be obtained. We all know that the foundation of the whole of the fabric of Indian philosophy, religion, and society, lies deep in the *Veda*. It may be said at once and without hesitation that idol-worship in the modern sense of the word is not present in Vedic times. But this is only a part of the whole truth. The question has yet another aspect which closely affiliates idol-worship to Vedic usages, and even to the philosophical *Upanishads*. Through idols and their worship lies a, if not *the*, way to the higher *gnosis*, the recognition of the unity of self and not-self. And this is so, not without reason. But to this we shall return after a short digression.

The subject-matter of the *Veda* is generally supposed to be divided into *Karma* (formal religion), *Ûpâsanâ* (particular devotion), and *Jñâna* (Gnosis); and *Smriti* writers are not agreed as to whether one should confess to Jñâna, the end, necessarily through

the other two, or even directly and at once. Anyhow the distinction is clear, as is equally clear the point that Jñāna is the end of all philosophy and religion. This Jñāna is not mere knowledge, it is a synthesis of knowledge, belief and experience, and consists in that condition wherein the part realizes itself as in and of the whole, and therefore free from all conventions, all rules of formal religion. In fact these do not exist for the Jñānī. Such a one is himself Brahman (the All), the highest conception of Vedic philosophy, nay of all philosophy from Plato to Hegel. Whatever the *Veda* lays down, whatever the *Smritis* explain and enjoin, whatever the *Purānas* weave into brilliant tales and myths—the object in all these, one way or another, is to reach the end, the realization of Jñāna, Brahman, the impersonal All. Thus Karma* is but the first stage in which the mind is gradually trained for Upāsana (particular devotion), which is a mental exercise in that it is a process of generating mental energy sufficient to command the favor or service of any elemental or force of nature. And though this may be hard for the digestion of physiological psychologists, yet those who know that mind is apart from, and powerful enough to exercise influence upon, matter, will readily concede the possibility and utility of the practice. Upāsana being complete, the road to Jñāna is within easy reach if the student takes care not to level himself to mundane things likely to thwart the strength and velocity of the new psychic current. Psychic development once gained, the pupil should direct the current towards the realization of the unity of the Cosmos; and it is a rule of psychic dynamics, if such a term can be used, that one *becomes* what he *thinks*, that is to say thinks *with force*. The careful reader will note the point of the argument. Psychic development is the chief thing, no matter how you attain it for rightful ends.

The subject of psychic development is the whole of what goes under the name of yoga; for yoga is but the practical side of the philosophy of the *Upanishads*. Now, contemplation, concentration, abstraction, trance, are the means of bringing the mind to a point, and promoting psychic development. You can certainly not *begin* to contemplate on mere vacuum; you must have something concrete to fix the eyes and attention upon. The higher processes of pure abstraction and ecstasy require mental powers of a highly superior order, which can be attained only after considerable training and education. What better device, for it is no more—as will shortly appear—could be found to engage the attention and help psychic development than the worship of concrete idols, the images of certain deities named in the *Vedas*? And does

* Mark the meaning of the word as explained at the head of this paragraph.

the *Veda* not speak times out of number, in the most unmistakable manner, of the head of one god and the hands of another, of the coat of mail worn by a third or the weapons of a fourth, and so on? This is all imagination, poetry, it is true, but does there not exist sufficient material for the formation of idols, and indeed even for the origin of the idea of making idols, when the exigencies of Karma and Upâsanâ require more concrete objects of worship? But of this later on. The device as I call it would serve a double purpose. To the initiated the idol will serve as a symbol of some truth of nature embodied in the Suktas of the *Veda*, and also as something upon which to fix attention and with which to practice yoga; whereas to the uninitiated it will take the place of a tangible god, in worshipping whom with faith and devotion, he will be learning the first lessons of initiation. The idols thus perpetuate a philosophy and religion the most sublime that the human mind has ever conceived, by, on the one hand, not only not allowing the ignorant to slip into the treacherous mire of atheism or into the meshes of non-vedic snares, but also by preparing for them a way to the higher planes of knowledge and development; and on the other, by supplying the initiated with a something which, while sufficient to impress forcibly their example on those who want it, is of use to them for private self-development. The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* says "whatever the learned do, this the unlearned imitate; whatever they recognize, these follow"; and enjoins "the learned should, while carrying out their own development, apparently keep themselves in touch with ordinary usages".

And it is a mistake, than which none in the field of Oriental research could be greater, to suppose that an idol is ever regarded by any one as the whole of his article of faith, or anything more than a mere sign, a symbol, of that which is everywhere,—in fact, the impersonal All. Nor should it be imagined that idol-worship, though useful and important, is an essential and integral part of the ultimate form of Hindû religion. For it is only a thing to be dismissed along with everything else when Jñâna is realized. Says the *Brihadâraṇyaka*: "Knowing it (Brahman), the knower should become it and dismiss the word from his memory, for it is only so much waste of breath". The term "word" is used here to imply the *Vedas* and all subordinate *Shâstras* as well as all that is taught by them in the matter of Karma and Upâsanâ. I have indeed heard of a great Sâdhu who used to worship an idol Shiva which was made at times to do service as a stone for pounding pepper, etc., for his daily food.

The question may well be asked, is not this kind of idol-worship, in some manner, countenanced by the *Veda* itself? An affirma-

tive reply will not be far from truth; for, do not the Suktas themselves point to the worship of Agni, Indra, Varuna, Sûrya, and other gods, by way of Upâsanâ? The *Veda*, certainly is not a prayer-book, nor a book of poems, to be used in hours of devotion or recreation. It is a book of formulæ to be used in carrying out the various parts of the grand process called Yajna (Sacrifice). Yajna is the chief end and use of the Vedic Suktas, it is the Nârâyana (Brahman); and even the highest Jñâna is symbolized by that Yajna in which the initiate has sacrificed himself and all. No Sukta taken by itself has any meaning. What is called its viniyoga (use) must be well understood, and this in all cases is none other than that of being employed as a word of invitation to some god, or of offering oblation to another, or of praying for the blessings of a third, and so on. The reason and reasoning of almost all the various viniyogas forms the subject of the second part of the *Veda*, viz. the *Brâhmana*, which often includes the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads* as well. That the *Veda* does not in any sense countenance idol-worship is an idea which has its root in the mistake, of imagining the *Samhitâ* portion alone as the whole of *Veda*, thus neglecting the *Brâhmana i. e.* the practical portion of it. Orthodox interpreters of the *Veda*, define the term as "that which is made up of Mantra (*i. e.* the *Samhitâ*, wrongly called *Veda* by Orientalists) and *Brâhmana*". Thus it is plain that looking to the viniyoga of the Mantras, it is not difficult to find some sort of idol-worship even in the *Veda* itself. And we have already seen how the very words used suggest some such thing. Nay even the Yajna, which is the chief burden of all Vedic hymns, is a great idol which is worshipped in the "person" of the material fire placed on the altar. Moreover it may be noted from the well-known *Purûsha-sukta*, for example, that the viniyoga of all its verses is for the raising and sanctifying of the idol, this verse being recited while the god whom the idol is meant to represent is invited to fix his abode in it, that is, to worship it, and so on.

This kind of idol-worship is called pratika-pûjâ in the *Upanishads*. The opening pages of the *Chhândogya* are full of it. Pratikâ-pûjâ means representative worship, and consists in taking any particular thing to be a representative of the formless Brahman, or any aspect of it, and worshipping it by way of Upâsanâ. It is difficult to see what harm there will be in such idol-worship after the foregoing explanation of its nature and use. The insinuation proceeding even from those who ought to and who do know better, that the Hindûs worship a multitude of gods, and being polytheists have no conception of the oneness of the Deity; or that other, that they are unable to conceive God in any other shape

than mere ugly images of wood, stone or metal, is, to say the least, utterly false and full of complete misrepresentation. Any Christian missionary, European orientalist, or government official, who could induce a native to lay open his whole heart before him, will be able to elicit from the stupidest heathen some such expression of his opinion in regard to idol-worship as is expressed in the well-known couplet of the *Bhāgavata*:

“As rivers all flow to the one ocean, devotion in whatever form, to whomsoever rendered, reaches the Great One;” (i. e., Brahman, the formless All, called Keshava in the exoteric text). This ought to be conclusive as against the said flippant criticism.

Idols may be made of anything; almost anything could be used as one. The Parsees worship fire, the Mohamedans the kaaba, the Christians the cross. The *Agni-Purāna* declares “the all-pervading may be worshipped in anything: water, fire, the heart, the sun, the sacrificial altar, an idol”. In dealing with explanations of Vedic Suktas it is always well to bear the Paurānika Kathās in mind, for the *Purānas* are, in the main, nothing but broad clear commentaries of the *Veda*. All Paurānika Kathās, as I have occasion elsewhere* to explain, are symbolic of several cosmic processes and natural laws, thus revealing on the one hand, to those who can read between the lines, the true substance of the Secret Doctrine of old; and, on the other, leading those who are yet in the infancy of knowledge to the path of faith, religion, psychic development, and progress. It is impossible to point with pride and admiration to a greater monument of human genius than the much ridiculed Kathās of the *Purānas*. The thirty-three gods of the *Veda* have been multiplied into gods without number under the influence of Paurānika symbology. When we consider the influence of Tāntrika-worship, and hero-worship, not often unaccompanied, especially among the lower masses, by the worship of lower elementaries, it is not difficult to account for the countless objects of worship included in the indefinite Indian Pantheon. But all the same, the one god is everywhere and formless, and these are but the means to the end.

The *Purānas* moreover have a natural position of their own in the historical development of Indian thought. It is distinctly understood that in the first (Krita Yuga) age of the world there was no idol-worship, nor in the second (Treta). It was only in the Dvāpara-yuga, as would appear from the presence of idol-worship in the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, that the great Vyāsa was obliged to distribute the whole of the *Veda* over four parts, and compile the *Purānas*, for explanation and preservation of the true

* *Lucifer*, April and May, 1891.

Vedic religion, in a form suitable to the declining reason of the age, but always capable of yielding the true doctrine to the keen intelligence of an Initiate. This age of declining reason (Buddhi, Higher Self) is the Kali Yuga and it would be no exaggeration to say that but for the *Purânas* and idol-worship on which they lay stress, one of the sublimest philosophies of the world would have already been wiped out of existence.

But there is yet a deeper reason for the numerous idols and temples one meets with in India. With the decline of Vedic influences, and even while the *Vedas* still held supreme sway, there sprang up a class of Sûdras and Nishâdas, who not having the right to be initiated in the higher mysteries, had to be provided with something calculated to meet their spiritual wants, and capable of leading them at last to a glimpse of the real truth. The Tantras owe their origin to some such reason, and it may even be that they are the result of Phœnician and Assyrian influences on the religions of the *Vedas*. The Tantras deal mainly with Upâsanâ, good, bad and indifferent, including black magic and spiritualism, always ending with exhortations to follow no other path than that of Râja-Yoga. It is a part of Tantra-works to explain cosmic processes and cosmic laws, and this they do by employing a number of mathematical symbols in which the point, the circle, the triangle, the square and the like, play a very important part. The triangle is called the Yoni; the point the Linga; and the well-known Linga which is worshipped as an emblem of Shiva, the Vedic Rudra, all over India, is a Tântrika symbol of spirit in inseparable union with matter (the Yoni in which the Linga is always placed or fixed) for purposes of differentiation into the universe and its forms. It is in this sense not different from the Egyptian Tau, the Christian Cross, or the Jaina Svastika. Many Yantras (diagrams) are formed by the interlacing of a number of triangles around a central point, and are supposed to possess occult powers of various degrees. Yantras, in fact, form a middle step between the Pratika-pûjâ of the *Upanishads* and the idolatry of the *Purânas*, and even to this day hardly a single ancient family of true Brâhmanas (Brahmins) does not include some Yantra in the object of daily worship. The power and potency attributed to these Yantras may well be imagined from the circumstance that though idols came to be formed and worshipped, not a single one was supposed to be consecrated to the god it was meant to represent, until it was fixed upon the Yantra connected with that deity. The subject has been touched upon at some length in another place*, and these general hints are sufficient to explain the bear-

* *Lucifer*, April and May, 1891

ing of the Tantras on the origin and multiplication of idols and their worship.

It thus appears that idol-worship rightly considered is not at all a novel institution, nor at all derogatory to the high and sublime philosophy of the Hindû religion. It is not inconsistent with belief in the oneness of the Cosmos in and through that ineffable and formless something called Brahman (the All).

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THE ÇHARPATAPANJARĀ.*

(OF SHREE SANKARACHARYA.)

By M. N. Dvivedi.



THE following piece is one of the many extempore compositions of the celebrated Sankarâchârya. These pieces are generally meant for the edification of laymen who cannot find time or command intelligence enough to enter deep into the philosophical writings. The poem under consideration is the most familiar of all, and very widely known to all true Brâhmanas (Brahmins) throughout India; with many it forms part of their daily prayers. This composition has a short history of its own. The sage was, once upon a time, descending the steps leading down to the waters of the Ganges at Benares, obviously for the purpose of taking a bath in the holy stream, when he saw an old Brâhmana (Brahmin) repeating aloud, in the attempt to commit it to memory, the phrase "dokrin karane". This is a line occurring in the *Siddhânta Kamaudi*, a work on Panini's Grammar, and it means "the root Kri means to do". From this circumstance it appeared to the sage that the Brâhmana (Brahmin) had recently commenced the study of Sanskrit grammar, even at such an advanced age. That, thought the sage, was certainly no time for beginning the very alphabets of the language, even if it were with the view of finding access to the philosophical treasures within reach of higher students. And learning with a view to worldly benefits or distinctions was entirely out of question, inasmuch as the declining years of life must be devoted to contempla-

*This word might be rendered "the small cage for the bird," implying that the uninitiated and unenlightened ignorant bird wandering in the mazes of this world of misery is asked to enter the happy cage of true knowledge as set forth in the following poem. It has, however, yet another meaning. The soul (jiva) confined in the cage of the body, and the poem is addressed to the bird with the object of showing the illusive character of the body and its own identity with the all (Brahman.)

tion of the Truth and to nothing else. And indeed it mattered little whether the truth dawned upon one's intelligence through a crack in the wall or the largest window. Hence, the Sage taking compassion on the poor man before him, addressed him the following verses:—

(1) Oh thou of stupid intellect, learn the name of Govinda*, indeed of Govinda, and of no one else. At the approach of death "dokrin karane" will not help thee a whit.—Oh thou, etc.

(2) Childhood spent in sport led into youth wasted in the pleasures of wife and family; which youth again ripened into age eaten up with cares and anxieties. Thus didst thou spend thy time, never attending even for a minute to Brahman.—Oh thou, etc.

(3) The body is a mere wreck, the head is all covered with grey hairs, the mouth has not a single tooth left in it, age drags its dead carcass along the way on the support of a staff;—the sweets of hope continue still to delude.—Oh thou, etc.

(4) Death follows birth, and the womb is the surest road to birth again! "oh Govinda! save me from this ocean of misery, difficult to swim across"—let this be the form of thy constant prayer.—Oh thou, etc.

(5) Night follows day, evening morning, and the seasons roll on in due time one after the other—thus does time play with the lives of men, who still do not try to free themselves from the wheel of hope.—Oh thou, etc.

(6) One wanders about with a heap of matted hair over his head, while a second goes with his head shaved clean, and a third takes pride in uprooting the hair entirely from the head*. There are many more who don orange robes, and enact the part of ascetics and holy mendicants. But all this trouble these endure merely for the sake of this accursed belly. People though wide awake do not appear to perceive the Truth.—Oh thou, etc.

(7) What is love after youth has faded into old age? What is the lake after the water has dried up? Where is the family when fortune has turned her back? So indeed where is the world when the Truth is realized!—Oh thou, etc.

(8) By day he warms his front at the blaze of some hospitable fire, his back in the heat of the sun, and by night he coils himself

*The word ordinarily means Shrikrishna, and indeed to an ignoramus nothing more than Upâsanâ (devotion to Govinda or some other god) can be safely taught. But the word has a deeper meaning. "Go" means the senses, and "vinda" means one who controls them, he of whom they exist and act; whence Govinda means the self-illuminated consciousness pervading all things (*i. e.* Brahman).

*Thus a reference is made to the three orders of common so-called Yogins, Sannyâsins, and Jaina Yatis.

up into as small a compass as possible to ward off the pinching cold. He lives upon morsels obtained by begging, and has his abode under a tree. The pleasure the fool finds in these enjoyments does not allow him to abandon hope.—Oh thou, etc.

(9) Friends and relations flocked around the man while he was able to earn and give; but the same man being disabled by age, no one in the family condescends even to talk to him!—Oh thou, etc.

(10) Why should he grieve who has for dress merely the rags picked up in some street, whose way is not impeded by considerations of pious merit or demerit, and who has fully realized the illusiveness of *meum* and *tuum* and the whole of this world?—Oh thou, etc.

(11) Constantly fix firm in thy mind the conviction that the breast and thighs of woman, the great points of attraction in beauty, are mere lumps of flesh and fat.—Oh thou, etc.

(12) The *Bhagavad-Gitā* as also the thousand names* (of the nameless) ought to be constantly repeated, the form of the Lord of Lakshmi (Vishnu, Govinda) should constantly be contemplated upon, the mind should ever be led to attend to the words of wise men, and the only rule of life ought to be unqualified Charity.—Oh thou, etc.

(13) Yama (*i. e.* death) does nothing to him who has studied the *Bhagavad-Gitā* even partially, has taken in a few drops of the holy waters of the Ganges, and has worshipped the God Murāri (*i. e.* Govinda, the enemy or destroyer of the demon Mura).—Oh thou, etc.

(14) Who is the “I”? who the “thou”? whence have these come? who is the mother and who the father? Think of these things in a rational manner, and casting away the whole of this train of thought like the phantom of a dream, know the whole to be all illusion pure and simple.—Oh thou, etc.

(15) What is your wife? and what your son? The whole of the world of names and forms is its bewildering enigma. Oh brother! think out for yourself in accord with right reason, whose you are and whence you came.—Oh thou, etc.

(16) Oh the sweets of entire renunciation! To whom does renunciation (of the world) not prove supremely blissful! Habitation under some pleasant tree on the banks of the river of the Gods (*i. e.* the Ganges), the ground for bed, the skin of the antelope for dress—thus renouncing all delusions born of giving and of taking!—Oh thou, etc.

*There is a small work called *Vishnusahasranāma*, one thousand synonyms of Vishnu. It is used as a book of common prayer by all followers of Vishnu. The names are all capable of a higher interpretation, such as is explained in the case of the name Govinda.