

The Systems of Hindu Philosophy **By Laurie Pratt**

THE *Shad-Darshanas* or "six systems of Hindu Philosophy" as they are generally called, include the *astika-mata* or orthodox schools of Nyaya, Vaisesika, Yoga, Sankhya, Karma Mimamsa and Vedanta. These systems were originated, respectively, by Aksapada, Kanada, Patanjali, Kapila, Jaimini and Badarayana.

The word *darshana*, used in the sense of true philosophic knowledge, is first mentioned in the Vaisesika sutras of Kanada, but there is no mention in any of the ancient works of the *darshanas* being limited in number to six. The term *Shad* (six) *Darshanas* came into being in the post-Buddhistic period. There were six heterodox or non-Vedic schools of philosophy, chiefly Buddhism and Jainism, flourishing in Shankaracharya's time, and for this reason it is likely that the orthodox Hindu systems began to be called six in number as an exact contrast to the six non-theistic or heterodox schools.

In reality, the Hindu darshanas fall naturally into seven classes, and each one has a correspondence with one of the seven "planes of wisdom." The *darshana* which is usually omitted from separate consideration nowadays is *Daiva Mimamsa*, dealing with Bhakti or devotion.

14 Planes of Knowledge

The Vedas tell us that the foundation of *Atmajnana* (true knowledge of Self) is the knowledge of *Jnana Bhumi* (planes of wisdom). According to the *Dheesh Gita* and other shastric works, the planes are fourteen in number—seven of ignorance and seven of wisdom. The first seven are under the dominion of *Avidya Devi* (Lord of Darkness). The *jiva* (soul) in its evolutionary march toward perfection must pass through each one, step by step.

The first four planes embody the *chit-akasha* (inclusive consciousness) of, respectively, plants (*Udvijja*), the vapour-born or germs (*Swedaja*), the egg born creatures (*Andaja*) and sac-born animals (*Jarayuja*). The fifth stage of ignorance is that of the perfected animal, or man. In this state, he is an atheist and materialist. The *jiva* has here reached the *Adhama* (literally lowest) human state. The sixth and seventh stages of ignorance, *Madhyama* and *Uttama* (literally, middle and highest) sees man groping toward a dim comprehension of the nature of the soul and super-physical life.

The seven succeeding planes are those of wisdom, presided over by *Vidya Devi* (Lord of Light). The first of these planes is *Jnanada*. Here man, in his search after truth, exercises his power of reasoning to arrive at the conviction that the manifested universe could spring only from a divine Creator. The *Nyaya* system of philosophy corresponds to this plane of wisdom.

Dharma and Adharma

In the second state (*Sannyasada*), the subtle forces behind material forms are perceived, and man here gains some insight into *dharma* (cooperation with natural law) and *adharma* (harmful non-cooperation). The *Vaisesika* system of philosophy has correspondence here.

Yogoda1 is the third stage of wisdom. Here man gains control over the self through scientific spiritual exercises. In this state he glimpses the super-mundane spheres and subtler manifestations of the Eternal. The Yoga system of Patanjali is the corresponding philosophy.

Lilonmukti is the fourth state, where *Prakriti* (root-nature) is known, and *Maya* (illusion) overcome. *Sankhya* has correspondence here.

In *Satpada*, the fifth stage, man attains knowledge of the identity of *Ishwara* (Creator) and His creation; cause and effect are seen to be one. The corresponding philosophy is the *Karma Mimamsa* system.

Anandapada or Bliss Stage

When the sixth page of *Anandapada* is reached, man perceives in *Ishwara* all the insentient (*achetana*) world of *karma*, as well as the worlds of self and *Daiva* consciousness. Great bliss (*ananda*) characterizes this stage, which corresponds to the *Daiva Mimamsa* philosophy.

The last and highest stage is that of *Paratpara*, where the goal is reached and man is one with God. The Vedanta, "end," is the corresponding philosophical work.

The seven *darshanas* or philosophies are called the *Upangas* or "eyesight of the Vedas," since an understanding of these systems is essential to true knowledge.

Darshana has the meaning of "true philosophic knowledge" but another interpretation would be "demonstration" since each of the seven *darshanas* has a practical aspect and separately demonstrates its utility as a path to final emancipation.

Fundamental Agreements

Before the distinguishing differences of the seven *darshanas* are pointed out, it might be helpful first to enumerate some of the fundamental points of agreement among them.

All the *darshanas* start with the same inquiry—"What is the way to attain bliss or liberation (*moksha*)?" "What is that, knowing which, I shall know all?" "What is that, obtaining which, all is obtained?" Knowledge, or the removal of ignorance, is declared by all systems to be the only means of deliverance from the wheel of rebirth. The endeavor of all philosophies is thus to point out what such knowledge is.

The aim or goal of all *darshanas* is the same, though the means or methods differ, in conformance with the various types of minds and various stages of evolution to which they have correspondence.

Karma and Rebirth

Secondly, all systems agree on *Karma* and rebirth as the cause of the inequalities of mind and fortune among men on this earth.

Thirdly, the doctrine of *Mukti* or final emancipation is held in common by all systems. *Karma* and rebirth were not conceived of as endless and eternal.

Fourthly, all the philosophies agreed as to the existence of a permanent entity or soul (*atman, purusa* or *jiva*). In this respect, the *darshanas* differed sharply from several heterodox schools, notably Buddhism.

Fifthly, complete agreement is found in all systems regarding the ethical basis (*sadhana*, "means for the attainment of the goal") on which all subsequent spiritual achievement must rest. Self-control, non-injury to others, and indifference to worldly pleasures were required of all *darshanic* followers. After moral elevation, the aspirant was expected to purify and steady his mind before further progress could be attained, and for this purpose all the *darshanas* accepted the guidance of the Yoga system.

Thus, in their aims and their practical *sadhana* as well as in many of their fundamental conceptions, the seven systems of Indian Philosophy had the strength of unity.

Nyaya Philosophy

The *Nyaya darshana* which, as we have seen, has a certain correspondence with and utility for man in the first stage of wisdom (*vidya*) is chiefly devoted to the science of logic. The four original books of the *Nyaya sutras* were written by Aksapada (also called Gautama, but this name does not refer to Gautama the Buddha), and later supplemented by the commentaries of many sages.

The word *Nyaya* is derived from the root *ni* which refers to the correct interpretation of words. A broader application of *Nyaya* brought all beings, their thoughts and actions, within the scope of its logical scrutiny and thus justified the claim of commentators that "*Nyaya* is like light illumining all sciences." Its analytical method, applied to metaphysics, was put forth as sufficient for the attainment of Supreme Knowledge and *Nisreyasa* (the Highest Good).

The *nyaya sutras* begin with an elaborate exposition of the art of debate or disputations, in which sixteen topics are discussed. These are means of right knowledge (*pramana*), object of right knowledge (*prameya*), doubt (*samshaya*), motive (*prayojana*), illustration (*drishtanta*), accepted truth (*siddhanta*), syllogistic premisses (*avayava*), argumentation (*tarka*), ascertainment or decision (*nirnaya*), debate or discussion (*vada*), disputation (*jalpa*), destructive criticism (*vitanda*), fallacy (*hetvabhasa*), quibble (*chala*), refutation (*jati*) and confutation or points of opponent's defeat (*nigrahasthana*).

Four Methods of Proof

Nyaya gives the means of proof as the four *pramanas* of perception (*pratyaksa*), inference (*anumana*), analogy (*upamana*) and testimony (*sabda*). These methods are explained in great detail.

Nyaya holds that emancipation is attainable through the elimination of false knowledge (*mithyajnana*), defects (*dosa*), desire for activity (*pravritti*) and birth (*janma*).

The last two of the four *Nyaya* works are metaphysical in scope. The proofs for the existence of Self or *atman* are examined. The nature of *buddhi* (intelligence) and *manas* (mind) are exhaustively inquired into. Salvation (*apavarga*) is pointed out as possible through the permanent separation of *manas* from the *atman* through the destruction of *karma*. Yoga is referred to as a means to right knowledge.

The *Nyaya* philosophy is full of profound and subtle reasoning and embodies a masterly examination of abstruse metaphysical points. One of its valuable teachings is that false knowledge can be overcome through a determined consideration of its opposite (*pratipaksabhavana*) or the right estimate of things. Thus, when our mind is drawn

toward pleasure, if we reflect how all worldly joys terminate or come to an end and are thus but pain in disguise, we have arrived at the right knowledge about the matter. With the elimination of false knowledge, attachment to things and ignorance of their real nature are also eliminated, and *mukti* finally reached.

The Nature of *Mukti*

"The state of *mukti*, according to *Nyaya*," writes Professor Das Gupta in his History of Indian Philosophy, "is neither a state of pure knowledge nor of bliss but a state of perfect qualitiessness, in which the Self remains in Itself in Its own purity. It is the negative state of absolute painlessness in *mukti* that is sometimes spoken of as being a state of absolute happiness (*ananda*), though really speaking the state of *mukti* can never be a state of happiness. It is a passive state of Self in Its original and natural purity, unassociated with pleasure, pain, knowledge, willing, etc."

Such a conclusion is inevitable for a purely logical system like *Nyaya*, but we shall see that other darshanas offer different conceptions of *mukti*".

THE vaishesika sutras form the basis of the second system of Indian philosophy, according to the sevenfold classification described in the preceding article. The word *sutra* literally means "thread," i.e., consecutive thought, and denotes the aphorisms or pithy stanzas in which the standard or foundation treatise of each of the systems of Indian philosophy is cast. Vaishesika is from the Sanskrit root *visesas* or "atomic individuality."

Although its origin is very ancient, the Vaishesika system was first formulated into sutras by Aulukya, better known under his nickname of *Kanada*, "atom-eater." Little is known of Kanada, who might well be called the "father of modern science," though we learn from a passage in the Vayu purana that he was born in Prabhasa, the son of Uluka, and the disciple of Somasarma. He flourished before the Buddhistic period, and his date is probably the seventh or eighth century B.C.

Many commentaries on the Vaishesika sutras have come down to us, and of these the Nyayakandali of Sridhara, a very lucid and detailed exposition, is most favored by modern students of Vaishesika. Sridhara was a sage of Bengal, and wrote his masterly *bhasya* (commentary) in 990 A.D. Another illustrious name in Vaishesika literature is Caraka (80 A.D.), an expounder of medical physics.

Vaishesika and Modern Science

Of all the various systematic presentations of Indian philosophy, the Vaishesika is the most interesting from the standpoint of modern science. In these ancient sutras we find discussions of many profound scientific problems which are just beginning to engage the attention of eminent western thinkers. The orderly arrangement of the natural world which was discovered so many centuries ago by the Indian sages, through mental discipline and analysis, is being verified today by scientific demonstration and patient investigation. One method is inward, the other outward, but the truths revealed are the same.

Thus, though the modern "atomic theory" is generally considered a new advance of science, it was brilliantly expounded long ago by Kanada the "atom-eater." The Sanskrit

anus can be properly translated as "atom" in the latter's literal Greek sense of "uncut" or indivisible.

Other scientific truths explained by Kanada so many centuries in advance of the present-day scientific era include (1) the movement of needles toward magnets, (2) the circulation of water in plants, (3) *akash* or ether as the necessary base for the vibration of sound, (4) the solar fire as the cause of all forms of heat, (5) heat as the cause of molecular change, (6) the law of gravitation as caused by the quality that inheres in the atoms of earth and accounts for its attractive power or downward pull, (7) the kinetic nature of all energy; causation as always rooted in a expenditure of energy or a redistribution of motion, (8) universal dissolution through the disintegration of atoms, (9) the radiation of heat and light rays, infinitely small particles, darting forth in all directions with inconceivable speed (note here the similarity with the modern "cosmic rays" theory) and (10) the relativity of time and space.

The 6 Logical Categories

The Vaisesika philosophy is so immense in its range and so acute and consecutive in its reasoning that it is impossible, in this article, to do more than hint at some of its broader divisions. Fuller accounts will be found in Dr. P. C. Ray's Hindu Chemistry, Dr. B. N. Seal's Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus and Professor S. N. Dasgupta's History of Indian Philosophy.

Kanada classified all natural phenomena under six logical categories (*padarthas*), namely, substance, quality, action or motion, class concept or genus, particularity or species, and inherence or intimate relation.

The substances (*dravyas*) are earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, mind and soul. The qualities (*gunas*) are smell, taste, color, touch, number, measure, separations, contact and the quality of belonging to genus or species.

Action (*karma*) means expansion, contraction, upward, downward and horizontal movement. The class concept (*samanya*) is the genus or aspect of generality in objects.

Through species (*visesa*) things are perceived as different or diverse. Inherence (*samavaya*) is that inseparable relation or intimate combination whereby two or more things are so united as to appear one whole, as cause and effect, or clay and pot.

These six *padarthas* or independent realities were recognized by Kanada from the standpoint of logic and common sense, as being experiences of ordinary perception.

Thus, Vaisesika is a pluralistic rather than a monistic philosophy, and the obvious facts of experience are given more weight than the demands of abstract thought for some one final original universal, such as we will find postulated as *prakriti* or "root-nature" in the Sankhya system.

Atomic Origin of the World

Vaisesika assigned the origin of the world to atoms, eternal in their nature, i.e., their ultimate peculiarities. Thus, this atomic doctrine teaches that the four kinds of eternal atoms (*bhootas*) are earth, water, fire and air atoms, which have mass, number, weight, texture, viscosity and motion. Atomic combination is possible only with these four elements, *akash* (ether) being conceived of as inert and structureless.

These atoms were regarded as possessing an incessant vibratory motion. Vaisesika claimed that there was no difference in the atoms of the same element, e.g., the atoms of various seed were the same since all were earth atoms; through heat alone all the transformations of the atoms take place.

This doctrine is in striking agreement with the modern "atomic theory" which holds that "all material substances consist of atoms of a few kinds, all of the same kind being uniform in size, weight and other properties. According to recent discoveries the atom is to be conceived of as a complex system whose components are in rapid orbital motion." (Webster's Dictionary.)

The recent claim that atoms are a solar system in miniature would be no news to those old Vaisesika and Sankhya philosophers who described the smallest unit of time (*kala*) as the period taken by an atom to traverse its own unit of space.

Of the nine substance or dravyas, the four eternal bhoota atoms and the mind (*manas*) were called parimandala or of atomic size, while time, space, soul and ether (*akash*) were conceived of as paramanahat or supremely great.

Drista or Experience

All the categories described by Kanada are founded on experience (*drista*), while those whose cause is beyond the scope of knowledge were called *adrستا* (unknown virtue). Some expressions of *adrستا* are (1) the eternality of the atoms whereby worlds are continually created, (2) the life principle, (3) natural motion of air and fire and (4) death and rebirth. All natural phenomena were conceived of as being caused not by any transcendental operation (*shakti*), but by molecular movement, with nothing more occult than the invariable time relation intervening between cause and effect.

Though Vaisesika thus denied any transcendental causality in the mechanism of nature, it recognized ultimate metaphysical conditions like *dharma* (merit), *adrستا* (unknown virtue) and the will of *Isvara* (God the Creator) as the direction operating to produce the union of atoms and hence the created worlds under an immutable moral law that works for the final emancipation of all beings.

Common and Particular Causes

Certain general conditions, as time, space, *adrستا* (destiny) and the will of *Isvara* were conceived of as the underlying cause of all effects and were known as *sadharana karana* (common cause) in contrast to specific natural causes of *asadharana karana* (particular cause).

Existence (*bhava or satta*) was not given as a separate category by Kanada as it indicates continuity only and hence was included as a genus under the classification of *samanya* (class concept). *Bhava* however was considered the ultimate genus, by virtue of which all things appear as existent.

That which exists yet has no known cause was called eternal (*nitya*), as the atoms. The non-eternal or transient were explained as atom aggregations or compounds. Thus the created world is permanent as atoms but is merely a non-eternal effect considered as a collocation of atoms. The world as an effect must have a cause like any other effect, and this cause is the eternal atoms.

The exterior world has a perfect correspondence and harmony with man's actions. Man is thus the measure or cause of all things, inasmuch as Isvara regulates the world in accordance with the karma of man.

The Atomic Body of Isvara

"As our self which is in itself bodiless, writes Professor Dasgupta, "can by its will produce changes in our body and through it in the external world, so Isvara also can by his will create the universe though he has no body. Some, however, say that if any association of body with Isvara is indispensable for our conception of him, the atoms may as well be regarded as his body, so that just by the will of our self, changes and movement of our body take place, so also by his will changes and movements are produced in the atoms."

Knowledge (*jnana*) was conceived of in Vaisesika as a quality of soul (*atma*, one of the nine *dravyas* or substances), similar to the quality inhering in any physical object. The rise of knowledge was thus thought to be comparable to the production of any other result. Just as certain conditions and equipment must be present before a pot can be made from clay, so a combination and contact of soul with mind, sense and the objects of sensory perception must be present before knowledge can arise. Thus knowledge is only inherent in soul and must be brought out by suitable means, as a pot from the clay.

Aham or I-ness

As we have seen in the preceding article, the Vaisesika philosophy has a correspondence with Sannyasada or the second stage of wisdom. Kanada claimed that meditation on the six padarthas or categories of natural phenomena would reveal the Self (which we directly perceive in our consciousness as *aham* or I-ness) as distinct from Nature. Since Vaisesika points out the difference between the *drista* (experienced) and the *adrستا* (unknown), salvation (*moksha*) could result from the destruction of *adrستا* through severance of all contacts and complete knowledge of Vaisesika.

WE now come to a consideration of Yoga, the most practical, or objective, of all the seven systems of Indian philosophy, and the one whose name is best-known, through various translations of the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali, to western readers.

The word Yoga is found in the Rig Veda, oldest of the four Vedas, in the sense of yoking, uniting, harnessing, accomplishing the unaccomplished, and this word of ancient Aryan lineage is present today in the English language as "yoke".¹ The original Vedic meaning of the word had reference to the control of steeds and later was applied to the control of the senses which were compared to wild or untamed horses. The following passage from the Bhagavad Gita (translated by Sir Edwin Arnold as The Song Celestial) conveys the difficulty in controlling the senses and also refers to Yoga as the science of such control:

Arjuna:

"The heart of man
Is unfixed, Krishna!

Rash, tumultuous, wilful and strong.
 It were all one, I think,
 To hold the wayward wind, as tame man's heart."

Krishna:

"Hero long-armed! beyond denial,
 Hard man's heart is to restrain, and wavering;
 Yet may it grow restrained by habit, Prince!
 By wont of self-command. This Yogi, I say,
 Cometh not light to th' ungoverned ones;
 But he who will be master of himself
 Shall win it, if he stoutly strive thereto."

Patanjali, Compiler of Yoga

The Yoga system is generally associated with the name of Patanjali (147 B.C.), and his Yoga Sutras are indeed a masterly formulation and systematic presentation of the doctrines of this school. However, Yoga teachings and practices were known and followed centuries before Patanjali. We find this system mentioned in the Mahabharata and in two of the earliest Upanishads, the Katha and Svetasvatara. The Maitrayani Upanishad, also very ancient, contains a well-developed presentation of Yoga. The oldest Buddhist teachings (*Satipatthana sutta*) are full of Yoga references and practices. Hence we may be sure that Patanjali merely systematized the doctrines of a very ancient school. The philosophical basis of Yoga is in fairly close agreement with the Sankhya metaphysics. The latter will be discussed in a later article of this series.

Four Yoga Systems

The Yogatattva Upanishad classifies Yoga into four groups,

- Mantra Yoga,
- Hatha Yoga,
- Laya Yoga and
- Raja Yoga.

Mantra Yoga is concerned with nama-rupa, the world name and form. The word mantra means sacred chant, prayer or mystic word such as Om. Because the mind is powerless to comprehend anything without the aid of names and forms, Mantra Yoga utilizes this defect of the mind as a virtue, and through name (i.e., sound, mantras) and form (images, symbols) enables the mind ultimately to reach That which is nameless and formless. The illustration is given that, just as a man who falls on the ground raises himself to an upright position by supporting himself with his hands on the same ground, so the human mind, enslaved by name and form, can nevertheless utilize these very bonds to achieve its emancipation, in accordance with the methods prescribed by Mantra Yoga.

Vibratory Sounds of Creation

Where action or motion exists, there is always vibration and hence sound. The *pranava* or Om sound is the creative vibrations, when nature is first released from its state of equilibrium and the act of creation begins.² ("In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God".—John 1-1.) Just as nature in its state of equilibrium is related to *pranava*, so nature in its disturbed or manifested states is related to various sounds (*bija mantras*, root-formulae). The verbal *bija mantras*, taught in this system of Yoga, are the spoken equivalents of the inaudible or subtle primal sounds of nature (*prakriti*). The *pranava mantra* is thus the equivalent for Brahman or the Creator, and the *bija mantras* for various lesser powers, gods and goddesses (*saguna rupas*, forms with qualities). The guru or spiritual teacher imparts to each devotee that mantra for which the latter is best fitted by nature and capacity.

The devotee utilizes the power of his mantra in three successive ways, as he perseveres in his practice,

- *vachanik*, verbal or repetition aloud,
- *upanshu*, semi-verbal, where only the organs begin to vibrate but no sound is heard and
- *manasik*, mental, repeating the words only in the mind.

Meditation on Form

Besides utilizing the power of sound, this Yoga system prescribes the contemplation of *sthula* (material form). Concrete symbols or images of Vishnu, Surya, Devi, Ganesh and Siva, or the five divine attributes, are used for this purpose. This fivefold division corresponds to the five primary elements in nature by which mankind also can be classified into five basic groups. Each group is naturally allied sympathetically with one of the five divine attributes, and the guru understands this point of correspondence in choosing the proper symbol or image for the contemplation of each devotee. This *saguna dhyana* or meditation on form is not image-worship, but is an utilization of the natural tendency of the mind to concentrate on form. Thus the divine qualities symbolized by various sacred forms are gradually perceived in the course of meditation.

16 Stages of Mantra Yoga

Mantra Yoga is divided into sixteen stages,

- *bkakti*, devotion,
- *shuddhi*, purity (of body, mind, place of worship, etc.),
- *asana*, proper bodily posture for meditation,
- *panchang sevan*, reading of sacred books, recitation of stotras, hymns in praise of the Lord, repeating His prescribed thousand names (symbolized by the "thousand-petalled lotus" in the brain, the seat of superconsciousness),
- *achara*, proper mode of life or training,
- *dharana*, concentration, holding the mind to one thought for twelve seconds,
- *divya desha sevana*, the medium through which the system of worship is performed, as, fire, water, emblem, sacrificial

altar, picture, figure, pitha (one of the mystical centers of prana of life-energy), image, saint or teacher, or one of the sacred centers of spiritual power in the human body, as the heart, navel or third eye,

- *prana kriya*,
 pranayama, control of the prana of life-energy
 through regulation of the breath,
 nyas, locating and controlling the prana in
 various parts of the body,
- *mudra*, physical exercises to bring the body under complete control of the mind,
- five forms of worship or sacrifice,
- *dhyana*, meditation and
- *samadhi*, absorption in God.

Hatha Yoga, Bodily Control

Hatha Yoga is the second system. It comprises those sadhanas, methods of procedure, which give perfect control over the physical body. The underlying idea is that the gross outer body is intimately connected with the mental and subtler bodies of man, and that full control of the former brings control over the passions and impulses of the mind, and thus fits the Yogi for true spiritual communion.

In Mantra Yoga, certain outward ceremonials must be observed, and various restrictions are found, such as concern duties of caste, of the various stages or classified periods of life, of the two sexes, and of family or race. But in the initiation for Hatha Yoga, there is no such question of fitness in relation to the outer world, but only of the fitness of the physical body to withstand the Yogic discipline, and of the *adhikara* or moral worthiness to receive such training.

Concentration on Light

No images are used in Hatha Yoga, but the devotee is directed to concentrate on a center of light in the body. "In Hatha Yoga it is prescribed to contemplate the Light-appearance of God who is the Light of all light."

The Hatha Yogis claim that *mana* (mind), *vayu* (life breath) and *virya* (vital fluid) are three aspects of one force, and that control over one automatically brings control over all. Mantra Yoga lays more stress on mental and physical chastity or control over *virya*, while Hatha Yoga, in addition to chastity, requires control over *vayu*. To this end, the practices of *pranayama* (regulation of the life breath) and *vayu nirodh* (holding of the breath) must be mastered.

7 Stages of Hatha Yoga

The system of Hatha Yoga is divided into seven stages, of which the first is *shat karma* or six processes, whereby the cranium, throat and abdominal cavity are cleansed of all impurities and the body becomes a fit instrument for the practice Yoga. Many incredible

feats which would baffle western anatomists and physiologists are accomplished through *shat karma*. Perfect control is established over every muscle and organ of the body; perpetual youth, health and energy are attained.

The second stage of Hatha Yoga is *asana*, or postures, thirty-three in number, whereby pressure is exerted on or withdrawn from various nerves of the body. These *asanas* enable the Yogi to hold the body steady throughout long periods of meditation so that no physiological process of bodily uneasiness can interrupt the spiritual communion. The main object is to hold the spinal column free and erect, so that the seven mystical centers of spiritual power within the spine, starting with the *muladhara* or lowest center at the base of the spine and ending with *sahasrara* or "thousand-petalled lotus" in the brain, may be opened up.

The third stage of this system is *mudra*, twenty-four varieties of psycho-physiological exercises, more advanced than the thirty-three *asanas*.

Prana, source of Energy

Pranayama is the fourth stage. This process, basic to all the four Yoga systems, is misunderstood in the West as being "breathing exercises." The word means, literally, control (*yama*) of the life energy (*prana*). Breathing exercises are only one of many means by which *pranayama* is accomplished.

According to the Hindu sages, *akasa* is the subtle omnipresent primal material of the universe, and *prana* is the infinite omnipresent energy or force which produces all motion, magnetism, activity. Knowledge and control of *prana* brings infinite power to the Yogi; he is then a lord of nature, and could create or annihilate worlds, due to his mastery over the source of energy or *prana*.

Because the *prana* which is carrying on the vital processes of the body and the thought in the mind is the nearest and most accessible *prana* to a man, the Yogi begins his effort at *pranayama* with his own body and mind. Breathing, or the motion of the lungs, is the most perceptible effect of *prana* in the human body, and the Yogi, gaining control over the breath, is thus enabled to reach the *prana*, first in all other parts of his body and finally in all other bodies and the universe. He uses the breath as a silken thread which guides him through the labyrinth of *prana*, or as a flywheel which sets all the rest of his complex bodily machine to work.

Kundalini, "Serpent" Power

The *Kundalini*, "coiled up" (hence like a serpent) power in the basic *muladhara* center, the "root receptacle," is released through the power of *pranayama* and travels up through the other mystical centers to the brain, when superconsciousness and omniscience result. The *pranayama* exercises are eight in number and are only practiced in India under the spiritual guidance of a guru.

The fifth stage of Hatha Yoga is *pratyahara*, literally, "gathering toward" a center; restraining the outgoing tendencies of the mind. Through *pratyahara* the Yogi secures *dhirata*, equipoise of steadiness of the *sukshma sharira*, subtler bodies.

Dhyana or meditation is the sixth stage. In Hatha Yoga this meditation is directed to the point of light (*jyoti*) within the body, arriving at the state of *ek-tattva* (all-in-one and one-in-all).

Samadhi (*mahabodha*) is the seventh and last stage (*saptamadhikar*), where the goal of all Yoga is reached by the realization of God.

1Compare Latin *jugum*, German *Joch*, Anglo-Saxon *geoc*.

2This is Sankhya doctrine, and a fuller explanation is given in the present writer's book, "Cosmic Creation."

LAYA YOGA is the third system in the fourfold division of Yoga, and it requires more mental discipline than either Mantra or Hatha Yoga (described in our last article). Laya is from the Sanskrit root *Li*, to dissolve or disintegrate. In physics or chemistry, the state of laya would correspond to the zero-point of perfect equilibrium. The Laya Yogi achieves an equilibrium of mind which is the result of mental training and an understanding of the finer (*sukshma*) forces within the body. Laya Yoga teaches the connection between the Vyashti, microcosm, and Samashti, macrocosm. The correspondence which exists between the *brahmanda* , solar system, and the *pinda* , individual entity, is pointed out in Laya Yoga as similar to that between the forest as a whole and its separate trees.

The illustration is given in the Laya Yoga Samhita that just as the beams of the sun entering a room reveal the presence of innumerable motes, so the *virat* (body) or *Mahakash* (great space) of *Purusha* (creative Spirit) is filled with countless *brahmandas* (solar systems), all of which are near the beginning, middle or end of their respective cycles of manifested existence. This is the *lila vigraha* , literally, "play image," the cosmic play of the lord in the phenomenal world.

Divine Basis of Astrology

The forces of attraction and repulsion which connect the *brahmandas* of the universe also affect the *pindas* or individual lives. Patanjali tells us in his Yoga Sutras the method (*samyama* , a successive combination of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi; perfect one-pointedness of the mind) by which the ancient fully-enlightened yogis trained their minds to be able to see the influences exerted by the planetary bodies on humanity and all which has life. From this knowledge the great *rishis* (sages) formulated the science of astrology on the basis of astronomy.

This study of the interrelation between the macrocosm and microcosm which is a predominating feature of Laya Yoga enabled the Yogic seers to point out the *pithas* or special seats of divine power in various areas of the human body. The highest center (*sahasrara*) on the roof of the skull is the *pitha* or seat of God (*Sachchidanandamaya Paramatma*). He is considered as *nirlipta* , the unattached witness. The lowest pitha (*muladhara* chakra) just above the anal outlet is the pitha of *prakriti shakti* (nature power, the female principle). In the average man, *prakriti shakti* is in a state of sleep (*sushupta*) and is considered as facing outwards (*bahirmukti*). Hence the outward world alone seems real to the ordinary man.

Kundalini Power

This shakti, power, is known as *kula kundalini*. It is the aim of the Laya Yogi to gradually awaken the *kula kundalini shakti*, under the guidance of a true guru (master) and to bring the *kula kundalini* up through the *shat-chakras* (six mystical centers along the spinal column) to the highest point of *sahasrara*. Thus *prakriti shakti*, the female principle, is merged with the *Purusha (chit satta)*, the male principle, and the mystic marriage is accomplished. This is the liberation (*nirvikalpa samadhi*) which is the goal of all Yoga. We have seen that Mantra Yoga is mostly allied with the outer world of name and form (*nama-rupa*); Hatha Yoga with physical powers and bodily control; and Laya Yoga with the super-physical *pithas* or mystical centers and all the finer forces that link man, the microcosm, with the *brahmanda*, macrocosm. In Mantra Yoga, the devotee meditates on forms or images as the phenomenal manifestation of the Spirit; the Hatha Yogi meditates on Light; and in Laya Yoga the *prakriti shakti* in the *kula kundalini* reflects itself in the third divine eye of the devotee, and on this reflection he meditates. This reflection is known as *vyotishmata*, untainted. When by perseverance in practice this *vyotishmati* becomes permanent it is called *bindudhyana*.

When the yogi's mind rejects all thought to worldly pleasure (*vairagya*, renunciation) he advances gradually by regularity in practice (*abhyasa*), the cultivation of faith and confidence (*sraddha*), strength and energy in his discipline (*virya*) and thus gains wisdom (*prajna*).

9 Divisions of Laya Yoga

Laya Yoga has a ninefold division (*angas*, "limbs" or parts). The first *anga* is *yama* or control over ordinary temptations. *Yama* includes harmlessness or non-injury (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), continence (*brahmacharya*) and the avoidance of any gift or luxury, of anything not strictly necessary to life (*aparigraha*).

The second stage is *niyama*, a stricter set of moral disciplines. *Niyama* includes cleanliness, both the body and the mind; mental contentment or equilibrium; mortification and endurance of the body against outward irritations such as heat and cold; and silence in speech (collectively called *tapas*); the philosophical study of the scriptures (*svadhyaya*), and meditation on God (*Isvarapranidhana*).

Other moral disciplines include control of selfish motives by self-sacrifice (*pratipaksa-bhavana*), considering all beings as friends (*maitri*), compassion for those who suffer (*karuna*), sending thoughts of happiness for the world (*mudita*) and equanimity in the face of the sins and vices of other men (*upeksa*).

The third *anga* or state is *sthula kriya* or physical processes. These include *asana*, posture, and *mudra*, certain physical exercises. Only a few of the 33 *asanas* and 24 *mudras* developed in Hatha Yoga are considered of use in Laya Yoga.

Science of the Inner World

The fourth stage is *sukshma kriya* or control, of the finer forces. It comprises *pranayama* (explained in our last article) and *swarodaya*. Laya Yoga utilizes only two of the eight kinds of *pranayama* mentioned in Hatha Yoga. The *swarodaya* shastras or teachings

explain the marvelous science and mystery of the inner world (*prakriti sukshma rajya*), including the *ida* and *pingala*, two nerve currents in the spinal column, and the *susumna*, the hollow canal running through the spinal cord, and the *kundalini* power stored therein. The *swarodaya* scriptures also explain how to know the five basic elements (*pancha tattwas*, or ether, air, fire, water and earth) in their subtle essence, and control over the *sukshma prana* or essence of life in force.

The fifth *anga* is *pratyahara*, which brings the mind under full control, withdraws it from the outer world, and enables it to hear the various *nads* (primal sounds) of nature. The subtlety, profundity and detailed comprehensiveness of the *swarodaya* science testifies to the indisputable fact that only divine *rishis* could have formulated a science of such overwhelming grandeur and complexity.

Dharana, Chief Laya Feature

The sixth step is *dharana*, concentration or one-pointedness of the mind. Just as *japa* or the repetition of certain mystical mantras is the chief feature of Mantra Yoga, and *pranayama* the main feature of Hatha Yoga, so *dharana* is the outstanding *anga* of Laya Yoga. Through *dharana* the devotee guides the *kundalini* power through the six *chakras* along the *susumna* channel.

The seventh step is *dhyana* or meditation, where the *bindudhyana* or reflection of the *kundalini* power becomes fixed in the third or spiritual eye of the yogi.

The eighth *anga* is *laya kriya*. The exercises under this division are so transcendently fine that there are no words in which to do them justice. Only practice under a guru can convey any idea of their nature.

5 Stages of Samadhi

The ninth and last *anga* is *Samadhi*, called *Mahalaya* in Laya Yoga. This is the goal of all the Yoga systems; in *Mayhalaya* the devotee looks upon the face of God.

Samadhi is of five stages. The first four stages are *vitarka*, *vicara*, *ananda* and *asmita*. These are called the *samprajnata* (with knowledge of objects) stages, because to attain them the mind must first concentrate on definite objects. The last and highest stage is the *asamprajnata* or *nirodha samadhi*, free from objects. In this stage the *samskaras* (impressions in the mind-stuff which produce habits and actions) are destroyed, the *buddhi* (intelligence becomes pure like the *purusha* (Spirit) and the *chitta* (mind-stuff) returns back to *prakriti* (nature).

Miraculous Powers

Many miraculous powers (*vibhuti*) come to the yogi as he progresses in his practice. Patanjali has given a most enthralling description of some of these powers in his Yoga Sutras (third chapter). They include the Yogic power to make oneself as light as air, as heavy and huge as the earth, invisible, omnipresent, etc. But the true yogi rejects the use of these powers.

"By giving up even these comes the destruction of the very seed of evil; he attains *kaivalya* (aloneness; independence). There should be entire rejection of enjoyment of the temptations form celestial beings, for fear of evil again." (Yoga Sutras, III, 50-51).

THE Hindu scriptures tell us that liberation is attained through three paths—*Karma Yoga* (right words), *Bhakta Yoga* (devotion) and *Jnana Yoga* (wisdom). The Karma Yogi fills his mind with the thought that service to the world is service to God. The Bhakta Yogi sees the Lord in every creature and thus maintains an unceasing worship. The Jnana Yogi says, "I am Brahman" or the Supreme Lord, and attains to emancipation through this realization.

Raja Yoga

Mantra, Hatha and Laya Yogas, dealt with in previous articles of this series, are useful for Yogis who have not the extreme strength of mind demanded of a Jnana Yogi. Raja Yoga is the practical side of Jnana Yoga. *Raha* is the Sanskrit work for "king" and Raja Yoga is the kingly or highest type of Yoga. (The word comes form the root *ranja*, to please, hence the duty of a king is to please his subjects.)

Science of Mental Discrimination

Raja Yoga is the science of mental discrimination by which the unreal is eliminated and the real shows forth. Mental processes, their origin, development, control and cessation, are exhaustively inquired into in Raja Yoga; indeed, no other mental science of either ancient or modern times has ever approached the profound scope or detailed comprehensiveness of this Raja Yoga study.

The goal of Yoga is to liberate man from the prison-house of matter. Mind is the subtlest form of matter, and its nature must be thoroughly understood before mastery over matter can be achieved. the Sankhya-Yoga view of gross and subtle matter is explained by DasGupta in his fascinating work, *The History of Indian Philosophy* (Vol. I, pp. 241-2): "Knowledge-complexes are certainly different from external objects in this, that they are far subtler and have a preponderance of a special quality of plasticity and translucence (*sattva*), which resembles the light of *purusha* (soul), and is thus fit for reflecting and absorbing the light of the *purusha*. The two principal characteristics of external gross matter are mass and energy. But it has also the other characteristic of allowing itself to be photographed by our mind; this thought-photograph of matter has again the special privilege of being so translucent as to be able to catch the reflection of the cit—the super-translucent transcendent principle of intelligence. The fundamental characteristic of external gross matter is its mass; energy is common to both gross matter and the subtle thought-stuff. But mass is at its lowest minimum in thought-stuff, whereas the capacity of translucence, or what may otherwise designated as the intelligence-stuff, is at its highest in thought-stuff. But if the gross matter had none of the characteristics of translucence that thought possesses, it could not have made itself an object of thought; for thought transforms itself into the shape, color, and other characteristics of the thing which has been made its object.

"Thought could not have copied the matter, if the matter did not possess some of the essential substances of which the copy was made up. But this plastic entity (*sattva*) which is so predominant in thought is at its lowest limit of subordination in matter. Similarly mass is not noticed in thought, but some such notions as are associated with mass may be discernible in thought; thus the images of thought are limited, separate, have movement, and have more or less clear-cut forms. The images do not extend in space, but they can represent space. The translucent and plastic element of thought (*sattva*) in association with movement (*rajas*) would have resulted in a simultaneous revelation of all objects; it is on account of mass or tendency of obstruction (*tamas*) that knowledge proceeds from image to image and discloses things in a successive manner.

"The *buddhi* (thought-stuff) holds within it all knowledge immersed as it were in utter darkness, and actual knowledge comes before our view as though by the removal of the darkness or veil, by the reflection of the light of the purusha. This characteristic of knowledge, that all its stores are hidden as if lost at any moment, and only one picture or idea comes at a time to the arena of revelation, demonstrates that in knowledge there is a factor of obstruction which manifests itself in its full actuality in gross matter as mass. Thus both thought and gross matter are made up of three elements, a plasticity of intelligence-stuff (*sattva*), energy-stuff (*rajas*), and mass-stuff (*tamas*), or the factor of obstruction. Of these the last two are predominant in gross matter and the first two in thought."

Chitta or Mental States

To rise beyond the domain of *chitta* (thought) or the subtlest of matter is thus the goal of the Raja Yogi. *Chitta* is an inclusive term for *manas*, the mind which receives impressions from the outer world, *ahamkara*, self-consciousness or egoism, and *buddhi*, the determinative or discriminating faculty. These three stages stand between the pure *purusha*, soul, on the one hand, and the sense-organs and brain centers (*indriyas*) connected with *manas*, the mind, on the other hand.

Because of the law that "knowledge is power," the Yogi, by understanding the nature and functions of the mental instruments through which the purusha comes into contact with the external world, thereby gains the power to separate his consciousness from *chitta* and associate it with *purusha*, thus achieving his goal (his *swarupa* or true form.) The *purusha* is pure, untainted, free, unqualified, while *chitta* is bound to *prakriti*, root-matter, nature.

Samskaras, Root-Impressions

The importance of the psychological control of the mental states or *chitta* is due to the inherence of *samskaras* in *chitta*. *Samskaras* are the subconscious impressions of all actions, thought, and experiences. The same *chitta* accompanies any particular ego in all its rebirths from life to life. All the instincts, tendencies and potencies of past lives are inherent in the *chitta* as *samskaras*, which are thus the endless seed of *karma* (action and reaction, which produce effect from cause and thus continue the ceaseless cycle of reincarnation.)

All human beings are in a three-fold net of *samskara-karma*. The sum total of all past experience is called *sanchit* (stored-up) *samskara*. Only a small part of the *sanchit* storehouse is brought into prominence or activity in any one life, since a particular environment and heredity act like heat to bring out or revive only those *samskaras* which are in harmony or agreement with the conditions of such a specific life. The rest of *sanchit-karma* remains in total latency for the period of that one life.

Out of the whole fabric of subconscious impressions or the essence of the experience of past lives, that part which is active in producing a particular birth is called *prarabdha* ("ripe" or predestined) *samskara*.

Kriyaman or Present Karma

Lastly, the new *karma* which man makes today as the result of his daily actions and thoughts is termed *kriyaman* (in progress) *samskaras*. Only over this type of *samskaras* has the ordinary man any control. The kind of life he lives today is determining the nature of some particular future life, its length (*ayus*) and its quality (*bhoga*), good or bad. The strength of past *karma* or *prarabdha* (ripe) *samskara* is so great that actions performed or thoughts cultivate in a present life seldom bear their full fruits in this life. However, if the intensity of such a present mode of action or thought is of sufficient power to outweigh the *prarabdha* or ripened *karma*, i.e., if a man is either extremely good or frightfully evil in a certain life, he often precipitates the results of the causes he has set in motion, all in one life.

In this way, we can understand the mingled scene of seeming injustice and justice which the world-drama presents to our gaze every day, and why it is that, on the one hand, virtue often suffers while vice triumphs, and, on the other hand, why grief generally overtakes the evil man and peace comes to the pure-hearted, even in one life.

Destroying Seeds of Past Karma

Control over *chitta* with its inherent *samskara*, then, is the goal of the Raja Yogi. Such mastery brings eternal, not transient, liberation, for the whole fabric of *sanchit samskara* or the seeds of all future rebirths are destroyed. The illustration is often made in the Hindu scriptures, whereby the *sanchit samskaras* of an emancipated Yogi are compared to fried seeds which can never germinate or come to fruition.

Though the tendency of *chitta* or the various mental states is toward the accumulation of *samskaras* which tie a man to the cycle of rebirths, another and opposite tendency is always discernible in the *chitta*—the urge toward liberation, the desire to be free. *Vyasa-bhasya* compares the *chitta* to a flowing stream with two river-beds, one toward the good and the other toward evil.

"In the midst of many bad thoughts and bad habits there come good moral will and good thoughts, and in the midst of good thoughts and habits come also bad thoughts and vicious tendencies. The will to be good is therefore never lost in man, as it is an innate tendency in him which is as strong as his desire to enjoy pleasures. This point is rather remarkable, for it gives us the key of Yoga ethics and shows that our desire of liberation is not actuated by any hedonistic attraction for happiness or even removal of pain, but by an innate tendency of the mind to follow the path of liberation.

"Removal of pains is, of course, the concomitant effect of following such a course, but still the motive to follow this path is a natural and irresistible tendency of the mind. Man has power (*sakti*) stored up in his *chitta*, and he has to use it in such a way that this tendency may gradually grow stronger and stronger and ultimately uproot the other. He must succeed in this, since *prakriti* (nature) wants liberation for her final realization." 1

Kinds of Concentration

The steady restraint of the various modifications or states of *chitta* and its final separation from *purusha* is the Raja Yoga object. Such is the meaning given to Yoga by its great expounder, Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras. This goal is achieved through concentration. The latter is of various kinds, as (1) *Ksipta* (wild) as the concentration of fury or other passion, (2) *pramudha* (ignorant) as instinctive or unreasoned attachment, (3) *viksipta* (unsteady) as ordinary mental concentration, (4) *ekagra* (one-pointed), the steady application of the mind by will-power, and (5) the final *nirodha* (cessation) stage where the *chitta* fluctuations are wholly at rest and the *purusha* is freed from the meshes of *chitta* or mind.

16 Steps of Raja Yoga

The systematic training of a Raja Yogi comprises sixteen steps which are compared to the sixteen *kalas* or phases of the full moon. The first seven steps or *angas* are *vichar*, reasoning and discrimination, based on an understanding, through the help of a guru, of the Seven Systems of Hindu Philosophy (Nyaya, Vaisesika, Yoga, Sankhya, Karma Mimansa, Daiva Mimansa and Vadanta), by which he ascends the seven planes of *Karma Yoga* (works), *Bhakta Yoga* (devotion) and *Jnana Yoga* (wisdom).

The next two steps in Raja Yoga are *dharanas* or concentration, one called *prakriti asraya* (dependent on nature) and the other *Brahmasraya* (dependent on Brahman). The next three steps consist of three types of *dhyana* or meditation on God in His three-fold aspect of *Virat* (the material universe), *Ishvara* (creation, preservation and destruction) and *Parabrahman* the Supreme *Satchitananda* or Absolute Consciousness-Knowledge-Bliss).

Having come this far, the Raja Yogi is now fit for the last stage of his sixteen-fold practice—the four stages of *samadhi*—superconsciousness or absorption in God.

Samadhi, the Final Goal

Of these forms of *samadhi*, the first three are called *savi kalpa* or subject to change, i.e., there is still present in the Yogi's mind some link with *prakriti* or nature. The fourth and final stage of *samadhi* is termed *nirvi kalpa* or changeless, timeless, in which all danger of bondage to matter is forever past.

Raja Yoga or the kingly Science is alone capable of producing the *Jivan Mukta*, literally, "living freedom," the perfected man who achieves the highest goal while still in a human body. Because India has produced a great number of *Jivan Muktas*, such as Vasishta, Janaka, Krishna, Buddha and many others whose lives are described in the Yoga Vasishta, Sannyasa Gita, Surya Gita, and Dhisha Gita, it is still a great spiritual center of

the world and the fountain-head from which all religions may draw inexhaustible refreshment.

With this study of Raja Yoga, our presentation of the various Yoga systems, surely the most glorious study and practice that ever engaged the thoughts and lives of human beings, draws to a close. We have been able to give merely a hint as to their profound nature and scope.

1Das Gupta's "History of Indian Philosophy," pp. 269-270.

The Sankhya System of Philosophy

WE have already examined three—Nyaya, Vaisesika and Yoga—of the seven systems of Hindu Philosophy. This article will outline the very interesting cosmological reasoning of Sankhya. The oldest treatise of this system is the Sankhya Karika by the sage Kapila whose date is pre-Mahabharatan and thus many thousands of years ago. A well-developed Sankhya cosmology is also to be found in the Svetasvatara, Maitrayani and other of the earliest Upanishads.

The philosophic or theoretical part of the Yoga system differs only slightly from Sankhya. Yoga gives Ishvara (the Supreme Lord) a definite place in its cosmology, while Sankhya does not stress this point. For this reason, a division is often made by scholars who speak of Patanjali's Sankhya and of Kapila Sankhya, or of Sesvara Sankhya (with Ishvara) and of Nirisvara Sankhya (without Ishvara, or atheistic Sankhya).

Sankhya Not Atheistic

Kapila Sankhya however scarcely deserves the charge of atheism, since it does not deny the existence of Ishvara but merely claims to be putting forth a purely rational explanation of universal creation, leaving the explanation of Ishvara to more transcendental systems.

The orthodox (Kapila) Sankhya philosophy postulates the existence of twenty-five categories of Tattvas, working principles of nature. The word tattva is derived from the roots *tat*, That (the Ultimate Substance) and *tvam*, thou, and thus has the meaning, thou art That. Nature is the shadow of Reality, and at the root of the phenomenal world the Noumena shines.

Purusha or soul is the first *tattva*, the indispensable First Cause for whose sake all creation arises. The second *tattva* is *prakriti* or root-nature, undifferentiated cosmic substance. *Prakriti* is merely the name given to a state of equilibrium of three eternal opposing and diverse forces, *sattva* (illuminating), *rajas* (activating) and *tamas* (obstructing) *gunas* (qualities, literally, "that which guides imperceptibly", ultimate subtle entities whose groupings and regroupings in varying proportions make up all the created worlds of thought and matter).

These three *gunas* can never reach a state of equilibrium or undifferentiated *prakriti* except during *pralaya* (unmanifestation of creation, the Night of Brahma when creation sleeps, "and the earth is without form and void; and darkness is upon the face of the deep"). The Law of Karma, following *prakriti* or the three equilibrated *gunas* because of their activities in past creations, introduces a disturbance in *prakriti*. The perfect balance

of the *gunas* is thus broken up and *Mahat Tattva* or Intelligence comes into being as the first-born of the mysterious union of the *purusha*, soul, and its fertile or productive female principle of *shakti*, which is *prakriti* or root-nature.

Thus cosmic creation begins. *Mahat*, (literally, "greatest"), the third *tattva*, and the first comprehensible working principle of nature, is composed predominantly of the *sattva guna* or illuminating quality of the three creative principles. *Rajo guna*, the active force whose function is to make manifest the other two principles or polarities (*sattva* and *tamo gunas*) continues its activity and hurls the quiescent *tamas* or obstructing force into manifestation to produce the fourth *tattva*, that of *Aham*, the principle of consciousness and individuality. *Aham* means I, and is derived from the root *aha*, to occupy separately.

Birth of Manas, Mind

The fifth *tattva* has a preponderance of *rajo guna* and is known as *Manas*, mind. It comes from the root *mana*, from which the word *manush* or man, a rational being, is also derived.

Mahat, Intelligence, *Aham*, Egoism, and *Manas*, Mind, as these first evolve from the inter-activity and manifestation for the three eternal *gunas* of nature, are universal and unlimited in their scope, and are only very imperfectly reflected in the human world among individuals. Nevertheless, man is in potential touch through his own channels of intelligence, consciousness and mind with the perfect source of these attributes, and great men occasionally contact these cosmic sources directly.

Rajo guna, continuing its activities on *Manas*, produces the ten abstract senses—*Jnana-Indriya*, the five abstract cognitive or knowing senses, and *Karma-Indriya*, the five abstract conative or working senses. These are the mental or subtle root-essences of the later physical senses of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, and of the executive senses that enable man to speak, handle, move about, procreate and excrete.

Tamo guna, the principle of mass and resistance in nature, is by now very much stirred up by *rajo guna* and produces the five *Tanmatras*, subtlest form of actual matter. This word is derived from the roots *tat*, that, and *matra*, merely, and signifies Only That, or Merely That, the inconceivably subtle vibratory structure of matter. The five *Tanmatras* which determine all the varieties of matter in creation are *shabda* (vibratory sound), *sparsha* (touch or texture), *rupa* (form and color), *rasa* (taste and fluidity) and *gandha* (odor).

Bhutas or Gross Matter

An increase in *tamo guna* activity results in the creation of the five *Bhutas*, the elements or gross matter in its strictly ultimate or atomic form. *Bhuta* means past; their true nature has been left behind in time, i.e., they are only effects of far subtler causes, such as the *Tanmatras* and so on back to *prakriti*.

In reference to time, it will be of interest here to point out that Sankhya does not conceive of time as an independent reality but merely as a construction of the mind whereby the latter grasps phenomenal changes. The minutest division of time or the ultimate "moment" (*ksana*) is considered by Sankhya to be that in which an atom or *bhuta* completes a movement in space equal to its own measure or size. Modern scientists must

stand in awe at these inconceivably minute classifications mapped out thousands of years ago by the Hindu *rishis*.

The first of the five *Bhutas* is *Akash*,² the ethereal fluid that interpenetrates the universe and is the vehicle of light and sound, and of magnetic, electrical and cosmic ray vibrations. The root meaning of *akash* is "the shining, all-pervading".

The second *Bhuta* is *vayu*, "that which flows". It is the root-material of air and all gaseous substances, and its function is to exert pressure.

Tej is the third *Bhuta*. Its derivation means "light", heat, magnetism. Fire is its element, expansion its work, and form and color its expression.

The fourth *Bhuta* is *Ap*, "the nourishing". It is the liquid element or water atom, that which contracts, preserves and cleanses.

The last *Bhuta* is *prithivi*, "the sustaining and fixed". It gives solidarity, compactness and the gravitational forces of the earth.³

Each of the five *Bhutas* has a qualitative vibration or rhythm, caused by the resistance of *tamo guna* on the expansion of *rajo guna*. These five vibrations and their combinations are the typical pattern on which are based all the movements of the universe, whether of nature or of man. The characteristic vibrations are classified in a descriptive table which will accompany next month's article.

The Sankhya cosmology is explained more in detail in *Cosmic Creation*, a small work published, with the present writer as co-author, in 1922.

25 Tattvas Enumerated

The twenty-five *tattvas* enumerated by Sankhya have now been very briefly (and insufficiently) described, with the following order:

- (1) *Purusha*, the soul.
- (2) *Prakriti*, the three *gunas* in equilibrium.
- (3) *Mahat Tattva*, Intelligence.
- (4) *Aham Tattva*, Consciousness, Individuality.
- (5) *Manas*, Mind.
- (6-10) *Jnana - Indriyas*, the five knowing sense-concepts.
- (11-15) *Karma - Indriyas*, the five working sense-concepts.
- (16-20) *Tanmatras*, five vibratory structures of matter.
- (21-25) *Bhutas*, five atomic forms or elements of matter.

ALL creation, of thought on the one hand, and of matter on the other, is seen to be produced by varying combinations and preponderances of the three creative or causative *gunas*. All conscious manifestation and purposeful growth in the phenomenal world are due solely to the quality or *guna* of *Sattva*; all activity, energy and movement to *rajas* alone; all mass, resistance and stability to *tamas*.

Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, so are named
The qualities of Nature,
"Soothfastness", "Passion", and "Ignorance".
These three bind down
The changeless Spirit in the changeful flesh . . .
When, watching life, the living man perceives

The only actors are the Qualities,
 And knows what rules beyond the Qualities,
 Then is he come nigh unto Me . . .
 For nothing lives on earth, nor 'midst the gods
 In utmost heaven, but hath its being bound
 With these three Qualities, by Nature framed . . .
 All things are everywhere by Nature wrought
 In interaction of the qualities.
 The fool, cheated by self, thinks, "This I did"
 And "That I wrought";
 But—ah, thou strong-armed Prince!—
 A better-lessoned mind,
 Knowing the play
 Of visible things within the world of sense,
 And how the qualities must qualify,
 Standeth aloof even from his acts.
 The' untaught
 Live mixed with them,
 Knowing not Nature's way,
 Of highest aims unwitting, slow and dull . . .
 Whoso, for lack of knowledge,
 Seeth himself as the sole actor,
 Knoweth nought at all . . .
 —The Bhagavad Gita ("Song Celestial")
 Translated by Edwin Arnold.

Sankhya teaches that the purusha or soul, whose union with prakriti (root-nature) causes the universal creation or interplay of the twenty-four working principles, each one a different combination or proportion of the three causative gunas, is liberated from the ceaseless cycle of periodical manifestation through conscious disassociating. When the purusha has experienced all that prakriti has to show, the former withdraws itself through right knowledge and thus attains apavarga (emancipation).

Whoso thus knows himself,
 And knows his soul Purusha,
 Working through the qualities
 With Nature's modes,
 The light hath come for him!
 Whatever flesh he bears,
 Never again shall he take on its load . . .
 Seeing, he sees, indeed, who sees
 That works are Nature's wont,
 For Soul to practice by Acting, yet not the agent; sees the mass of separate living things
 —each of its kind—Issue from One,
 And blend again to One:
 Then hath he Brahma, he attains!
 —Bhagavad Gita

The chief teaching in Sankhya is the nature of the three gunas, the eternal qualities or principles of nature or prakriti, forever opposed to the purusha or soul of man who, to be free, must realize that no action proceeds from him but from the gunas of nature alone. The twenty-four working principles or tattvas (specialized modes of the gunas) of nature, through which cosmic creation proceeds, were described in the last article. The purest example of an unadulterated guna is sattva in mahat (intelligence), tamas in ahm (egoism), and rajas in manas (mind). The rest of the tattvas are more complicated and compound in their nature. The cognitive senses are made up with a preponderance of the sattvic portion of the five elements, as the sense of sound from the sattvic part of akash (ether), and the sense of smell from the sattvic part of prithivi (earth). The conative or executive senses, however, are composed mostly from the rajas principle in the five elements, as the organ of speech from the rajasic part of akash, and the organ of generation from the rajasic part of ap or water. (Students of Astrology will notice an interesting correspondence here, for the sign Scorpio, ruler of the generative organs, is a water sign, ruled by Mars, the most active or *rajasic* planet.)

The Qualities in Matter

The tamasic quality is apparent in the physical world of gross *bhutas* (atomic form) as, scientifically, the "skin" of matter. The skin or outer covering of water may be seen when a bubble is formed; the skin of fire when we see a flame being blown from side to side by a wind. We could not feel invisible air if it were devoid of a tamo guna covering. The cover of earth or gross matter is of course apparent to all.

All of the Bhutas possess some sattvic qualities, though naturally less than the preceding tattvas. The all-pervasiveness of ether or akash is due to sattva. Air and fire manifest upward and outward in response to sattvic characteristics. Water gets its buoyancy and ability to be converted into steam from its sattvic quality. In earth the sattva guna is unmanifested or latent.

The subtle body or linga sharira of the universe and of man is composed of all the tattvas except the five gross bhutas which are quickly perishable.

Yoga or Patanjali Sankhya counts the categories as twenty-six (Ishvara and Purusha in addition to the Twenty-four working principles of nature). This system counts Ishvara, the Supreme Lord, as the first cause or first tattva through whose direction all the evolution and involution of worlds take place. This subject will be discussed from various angles in the present writer's forthcoming book, *World Cycles and Ages*.

The following chart is an attempt to sum up some of the Sankhya teachings about the three causative gunas of nature and their five bhutas, final expression in the physical world.

Karma Mimamsa Philosophy

KARMA MIMAMSA is the fifth system of Hindu Philosophy. The philosophical part of this darshana was systematized chiefly by Bharadwaja, while the name of the sage Jaimini is associated with the ritualistic defense of the Vedas which forms the technical exposition of Karma Mimamsa.

Mimamsa means "rational inquiry" and comes from the Sanskrit root man, to think or reason. Karma means action. The Karma Mimamsa sutras written by Jaimini some centuries before the Christian era are not so much a system of philosophy as a well-formulated code or set of rules for the proper interpretation and practical usage of the Vedic texts which enjoin sacrificial rites and rituals as a means to salvation.

Argumentative Philosophers

After Jaimini, the two most illustrious names in Mimamsa literature are those of Kumarila, contemporary of the immortal Sankaracharya, and the former's pupil, Prabhakara. A number of interesting stories concerning the lives of Kumarila and Prabhakara have come down to us. One is that the *chela* (disciple) Prabhakara used to express so many doubts as to the accuracy of his master's interpretations of Mimamsa that the later began to refer to his pupil sarcastically as "guru" (master). Finally, Kumarila, in despair because of the antagonistic views of his disciple, determined to test Prabhakara's sincerity by pretending to die. The method of performing the Vedic funeral rites was one of the points of disagreement between guru and chela, so when the brother-disciples of Prabhakara asked the latter whether their master's burial ceremonies should be performed in accordance with his own or Prabhakara's interpretation, the disciple admitted that Kumarila's views had been correct and that he had only challenged his guru's opinions in order to enliven the discussions. Kumarila then arose with great satisfaction from his supposed death-bed and proclaimed himself the victor, only to hear the irrepressible Prabhakara deny that Kumarila could persuade him "in life!" Another and somewhat contradictory tale about this argumentative pair was that Prabhakara, on pointing out the correct grammatical construction of a difficult and involved Sanskrit sentence which had puzzled his master, was henceforth called "guru" by Kumarila. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is a fact that the mimamsa commentaries of Prabhakara are referred to by scholars to this day as "*guru mata*" (views of the master) while the *bhasyas* (commentaries) of Kumarila, whose other name was Bhatta, are known today simply as "Bhatta mata." Prabhakara Mimamsa, by Dr. Ganganatha Jha, is about the only available work in English on the complicated epistemological Mimamsa system, with the exception of an interesting chapter in Das Gupta's "History of Indian Philosophy."

Practical Nature of Mimamsa

The Vedic texts, admitted by all the seven orthodox (*astika*) *darshanas* or systems of Hindu Philosophy as infallible or divinely inspired, were considered in India not only as sacred literature but also, and chiefly, as mantras, incantations or chants, of specific practical value for the accomplishment of desirable ends, including the ultimate goal of salvation.

The complexity of the Vedic injunctions or commands (*vidhis*) and the necessity of following their instructions with the utmost exactitude and detailed comprehensiveness was the cause which gave rise to the Karma Mimamsa or inquiry into the right procedures. The practical importance of Mimamsa can hardly be overstated, for through the principles and maxims which it has formulated and handed down, all the Vedic rites,

rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices and daily religious observances and duties of the Hindus are determined and performed to this day. Hindu Law (*smṛiti*) is also interpreted in the light of Mimamsa principles which regulate the civil life of the people even under their present British administration.

Self-Validity of Knowledge

The main doctrine of Mimamsa is that of the self-validity (*svataḥ-pramānya*) of knowledge, whereby the soul stands revealed in every cognition. The objective world does not generate knowledge (*jñāna*) in us, for by cognition alone the whole world stands illumined or revealed, and for the soul the world, without the photography of knowledge, ceases to be. There can be no validity in things, but only in knowledge which temporarily lends its own certitude to them by viewing them.

Mimamsa, admitting like the Nyaya philosophy that time, space and atoms are the three eternal substances, explained the variability of knowledge of the cognizing soul as due, not to the soul's relation with time or space which, being all-pervasive, are invariably present, but to the atom *manas* (mind). The latter through its contact with the sense-organs which are in touch with the phenomenal world, brings objects to the attention of the soul for illumination. Thus the perceiver (*pramātā*), the object perceived (*pramēya*) and the process of perceiving (*pramāna*) are simultaneously revealed.

Memory and Dreams

The only time when knowledge is admitted by Mimamsa not to rise independently of all causes is in the case of memory, when knowledge depends on a previous experience and the latent impressions left by it in the *manas*. Similarly, cognition in dreams may be classed as memory of past experiences. An interesting point is made that only those memories are roused in dreams which can give us that amount of joy or pain which our *karma* (past actions), require us to have and for which our present conscious existence offers no suitable scope for manifestation.

In logic the Hindu mind has always had a brilliant genius, and the Mimamsa sutras display a profound analysis of dialectic processes. The nature of perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), analogy (*upamāna*), implication (*arthapatti*) and *anupalabdhi* (non-perception or perception of the non-existence of a thing) is examined with exhaustive detail and in numerous subdivisions.

These modes of knowledge are called *pramānas*. An exposition of them is included in Mimamsa in order to prove that they are insufficient to point out to us the path of *dharma* (righteous action leading to salvation) which is conveyed to us, according to Mimamsa, only through *śabda pramāna* or the word of the Vedas.

From the same reason, Mimamsa stresses the doctrine of the self-validity of knowledge, in order to prove the self-validity of the Vedas or *Śabda pramāna*, "testimony of the truthful word," the only infallible *pramāna* or means of knowledge. Kumarila, in his Mimamsa commentaries, even went so far as to deny the ceaseless creation and dissolution (*srsti* and *pralaya*) of worlds, admitted by all other schools of Hindu thought, in order to uphold the doctrine of the eternity of the Vedas.

The Potency of Sound

In the course of proving this claim of Sabda pramana or the true Vedic word, Mimamsa offers some very interesting theories on the nature and potency of sound, language, letters and alphabets. Words were considered by these philosophers to be eternal and denotative or significant by and in themselves and not, as commonly supposed, to derive their meanings from arbitrary man-made associations. Thus Mimamsa declared that the sacred sacrifices or rites, when performed according to the Vedic ritualistic chants or words, would result in the positive force or capacity (*apurva*) promised by the words of the Mantra or incantation, and finally, as the Vedas declare, to salvation.

Universal Law or Dharma

KARMA MIMAMSA as expounded by Bharadwaja is much broader in scope than that system as explained by Jaimini, who confined his exposition to a defense of Vedic Dharma or rites, as we have seen in the last article of this series.

Bharadwaja's work is in four parts and contains a full explanation of the laws of dharma, karma, reincarnation, the caste system and many other topics of great interest to all students who aspire to understand the fundamental principles of religion and law on which the massive superstructure of Hindu civilization rests.

The word *dharma* comes from the root *dhri*, to hold, and is used in the Mahabharata and Narayana-Upanishad in the sense of "that which upholds the universe." Its true meaning covers a tremendous field of thought and its philosophical implications are very wide. Dharma is Shakti, Divine Power or Divine Law, the regulator of all action. It may be considered as the principle of equilibrium or perfect balance (*sattva*) between the eternal dual forces of attraction (*rajas*) and repulsion (*tamas*). The law which holds the planets in their courses is *dharma*, and the orderly evolution of the natural world is *dharma*. All *prakriti* (nature) is under *dharma*, and every gradation of created life which follows the law of its being is fulfilling its *dharma*. Shakespeare was referring to this *dharma* when he said, "To thine own self be true, And it shall follow as the night the day Thou canst not then be false to any man." Krishna said of *dharma*, in the Bhagavad Gita:

"This is better, that one do
His own task as he may, even though he fail,
Than take tasks not his own,
though they seem good."

Dharma it is which has brought the *jiva* (individual soul) of man from the lowly stages of plant and animal life to the high estate of human birth. This principle of evolution was perfectly known, thousands of years before Darwin, to the Hindu rishis, who also understood the necessary reactionary law of involution, even now not clearly comprehended in the West.

It is difficult to convey all the varied significance of the word *dharma*, but in reference to man's daily life it has the broad meaning of cooperation with universal law, while all harmful non-cooperation or unwise exercise of free-will is called *adharm*a (not—dharma). *Adharma* arrests the steady evolutionary progress of the *jiva* and its consequences may include an unnatural retrogression into forms of life lower than the human.

Dharma is used in the Hindu scriptures in the sense of religion, for all actions which contribute to the onward evolution of the *jiva* are *dharma*, i.e., religious or right action. Every action, however trivial or commonplace, such as eating, sleeping, talking, listening, etc., can be classified either as *dharma* or *punya* (good actions) or as *adharma* or *papa* (bad actions) or as mixed. All actions have a religious significance since they have their inevitable effect in hastening or retarding the *jiva*'s final emancipation which nature has in mind as the goal of evolution. For this reason, the Hindu rishis did not separate religion from life, for *dharma* or religion is operating at every moment of our existence.

Everything man does, thinks or feels has a bearing on his religious life and can be classified as either *dharma* or *adharma*, *punya* or *papa*, helpful or harmful to the law of his being. Since man alone among created things has the power of choice or free-will and consequently does not always cooperate with natural law, the problem of *dharma* is very important for him and the ancient sages have formulated many beneficial rules for his guidance in this matter.

The rishis classified *Dharma* into four divisions (1) *Sadharana*, general or universal dharma, (2) *Vishesha*, particular or specific dharma, (3) *Asadharana*, extraordinary dharma and (4) *Apaddharma* or dharma under emergencies. *Sadharana* or general dharma is the ordinary rule of life and the other three classes of dharma apply only in exceptional cases, to be mentioned presently.

Sadharana Dharma has three principle divisions (I) *Dana* or the path of charity, (II) *Tapas* or the path of austerities and (III) *Yajna* or the path of sacrifice. These three paths are divided into 72 subdivisions or *angas*.

(I) The path of *Dana* or charity includes three *angas*: (1) *Abhaya-dana*, giving spiritual hope and encouragement, also initiation (*diksha*) into a path of salvation. (2) *Brahma-dana*, giving knowledge and the means of learning and education. (3) *Arthadana*, giving money, property, food and other material gifts.

(II) The path of *Tapas* or austerities includes three subdivisions: (1) *Sharirik Tapas*, bodily discipline, restraint and endurance. (2) *Manasic Tapas*, mental training and control. (3) *Vachanic Tapas*, austerities or special control in reference to speech.

(III) The path of *Yajna* or sacrifice is very inclusive, embracing all the ordinary paths which are within the capacity of the average man. The three main branches of *Yajna Dharma* are (1) *Karma* (the path of action), (2) *Upansana* (the path of worship) and (3) *Jnana* (the path of knowledge).

(1) *Karma Yajna* is subdivided into six parts: (a) *Nitya karma*, daily work or dutiful action imposed on a man by his station in life, his training or talents and his obligations. *Nitya karma* is considered so essential and self-evident as a duty that its performance does not give any special merit (*punya*) but its non-performance brings demerit or sin (*papa*).

(b) *Naimittic karma*, exceptional or occasional observances, such as pilgrimage to holy places. Performance of *naimittic karma* is not essential but produces merit, while its non-performance is not sinful. (c) *Kamyakarma*, special observances for the fulfillment of some desired object. The Vedas specify certain rites for these accomplishments, such as the *Putreshti Yajna* or sacrifice to obtain the birth of a son.

(d) *Adhyatma karma*, performance of philanthropic acts for the sake of spiritual progress, such as public service thru maintenance of a temple or library of scriptural texts. (e)

Adhidaiva karma, rites and rituals dedicated to higher powers and agencies. (f) *Adhibhuta karma*, helpful acts for the welfare of others, whether embodied or disembodied.

(2) *Upasana Yajna* has nine principal *angas*: (a) Worship of *Nirguna* (formless) *Brahman* as *Satchitananda* (Being - Consciousness - Bliss). (b) Worship of *Saguna* (with form or attributes) *Brahman* thru symbolic representation, such as the worship of the Five Divine Forms or aspects (*panchopasana*) of *Brahman*. The objects of this worship are Vishnu, Surya, Devi, Ganesh and Siva. This fivefold division is based on the fivefold nature of the *tattvas* (elements). (c) *Lila-Vigraha-Upasana* or worship of *Brahman* thru *Avataras* or Divine Incarnations. This form of worship is also widely practiced in the West. (d) The worship of various gods and deities, *richis*, *devas* and *pitris*. (e) The worship of elementals, nature spirits, etc. (f) Worship thru *mantras* (chants) and images (*Mantra Yoga*). (g) Worship thru discipline of the body (*Hatha Yoga*). (h) Worship thru control of the subtler or finer forces of nature (*Laya Yoga*). (i) Worship thru discrimination and wisdom (*Raja Yoga*).

(3) *Jnana Yajna* or sacrifice thru the path of knowledge has three divisions: (a) *Shravana*, studying the scriptures and receiving instruction at the feet of a spiritual teacher or guru. (b) *Manana*, reflections and discussion on philosophical and scriptural teachings. (c) *Nididhyasana*, meditation for realization of wisdom thus acquired.

Thus we see that *Sadharana* or general *dharma* has 24 main branches or *angas*—3 of Charity, 3 of Austerities, and 18 of Sacrifice (the latter subdivided into 6 of action, 9 of worship and 3 of knowledge). Each of these 24 *angas* has a right, wrong, and indifferent or mixed, mode of expression or application, dependent on the predominance in a man of one or the other of the three eternal *gunas* or qualities—*sattva* (intelligence), *rajas* (desire) or *tamas* (ignorance). Chapter 17 of the *Bhagavad Gita* contains an illuminating exposition of the expression of each of the three *gunas* in the three main paths of Charity (*Dana*), Austerities (*Tapas*) and Sacrifice (*Yajna*). For example, the three modes of expression of *Dana* or Charity are "the gift lovingly given" (*Sattva*). "the gift selfishly given" (*Rajas*) and "the gift churlishly flung" (*Tamas*).

As each of the 24 *angas* of *Sadharana Dharma* would thus be multiplied by three to express its *guna* qualities or modes of application, we arrive at 72 subdivisions of *Sadharna Dharma* or universal religion. All shades, heights and depths of religious belief, worship and endeavor must necessarily be included in one or more of these 72 *angas*. Such minute and all-inclusive classifications mapped out ages ago by the Hindu *rishis* amply justify Swami Dayananda's description of *Bharata Dharma* as "the world's eternal religion", since no religion, however crude and unscientific, or however pure and exalted, is left unrepresented in the categories of *Dharma*.

Vishesha or Particular *Dharma* consists of special rules applicable only to certain classes of persons. Thus, there are special *dharmas* for *sannyasis* (religious mendicants), for women, for kings, for soldiers, and so on. What may be merit or *dharma* for ordinary householders, such as marriage and accepting wages, would be *adharna* or sin for *sannyasis*, hence the need for separate rules for guidance. Such rules are mostly to be found in the *Smritis* or Hindu law texts.

Asadharana or Extraordinary *Dharma* is not applicable to ordinary people and is rightly used only by yogis and those of high spiritual realization and powers. These alone may safely reverse the rules of *sadharana* or general *dharma*. An illustration of *Asadharana*

Dharma is found in the Puranas in the story of the great *yogini* Draupadi, who had five husbands—a procedure which would be *adharna* for the average Hindu woman. *Apad-dharma* or suspension under emergency of the ordinary *dharmic* rules is explained by the illustration of the sage Vishwamitra who was compelled to seek dog-meat— forbidden food—in a time of famine. What would ordinarily be *adharna* becomes *dharma* in this case. A special chapter in the Mahabharata is given to an exposition of this kind of *dharma*.

Vishesha, *Asadharana* and *Apad Dharmas* are exceptional *dharmas*, but their inclusion proves the flexibility and far-reaching scope of *dharma* as conceived by the ancients. For the mass of mankind, the rules of *Sadharana* or general *Dharma* suffices. The 72 *angas* or branches of the latter are pictured in the *Shakti Gita* as the Tree of *Dharma* (*Dharma Kalpa Druma*) about which *Shakti*, as the Eternal Mother, says, "I am the root of the Tree of *Dharma*, as well as the soil on which the tree stands and on account of which the tree lives. The trunk is the Universal *Dharma* which upholds the universe. The tree has three main branches—*Dana*, *Tapas* and *Yajna*. It has 72 branches, symbolized by the leaves and flowers. This tree of *Dharma* is the cause of all *Dharmas* of the world." Two birds are pictured at the top of the tree; one is the red *Pravritti* (desire) who is eating the two unripe fruits of lust for material and spiritual gain. The white bird *Nivritti* (renunciation) eats the ripened fruit of *Moksha* or Freedom.

The Natural Basis of the Caste System

BHARADWAJA in his Karma Mimamsa (Inquiry into Right action) has given us a clear picture of the natural and evolutionary basis of *Varna Dharma*, usually translated as the Caste System. The literal meaning of *varna* is color and applies to the spiritual "color" of man as determined by his rank in evolutionary progress. The spiritual colors of the four castes or natural divisions of humanity are (1) black for the *Sudra*, servant or manual worker, (2) brown for the *Vaisya* or merchant, (3) red for the *Kshatriya*, warrior and ruler, and (4) *white* for the Brahman, guru or perfected man.

Inclusion in one of these castes, as set forth in the works of Manu and Bharadwaja, and in the Shambhu Gita and Yagnavalkya Samhita, depended not on a man's birth but on his natural capacities as demonstrated by the goal in life he elected to achieve. This goal could be (1) *kama*, desire, activity of the life of the senses (Sudra state), (2) *artha*, gain, fulfilling but controlling the desires (Vaisya state,) (3) *dharma*, self-discipline, the life of responsibility and right action (Kshatriya stage) and (4) *moksha*, liberation, the life of spirituality and religious teaching (Brahman stage). These four castes render service to humanity by (1) body, (2) mind, (3) will-power and (4) spirit.

Correspondence With Nature

These four stages have their correspondence in the eternal *gunas* or qualities of nature, *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*, obstruction, activity and expansion, or, mass, energy and intelligence. The four castes are marked by the *gunas* as (1) *tamas* (ignorance), (2) *tamas-rajas* (mixture of ignorance and activity), (3) *rajas-sattva* (mixture of right activity and enlightenment) and (4) *sattva*, (enlightenment). Thus has nature marked every man with his caste by the predominance in himself of one, or the mixture of two, of the *gunas*. Of

course every human being has all three gunas in varying proportions. The guru or natural Brahman will be able rightly to determine a man's caste or evolutionary status.

The ancient Hindu books state that the four stages in human life are in correspondence with the orderly evolution of the natural world which brings the *jiva* (individual soul) safely and inevitably through the stages of plants (*udvijja*), germs (*swedaja*), animals (*andaja*) and human beings (*jarayuja*).

The planetary rulership of castes is as follows: Jupiter (Guru) and Venus (Sukra) rule Brahmins or priests and Vedic scholars; Sun (Surya) and Mars (Kuia) rule Kshatriyas or rulers and warriors; Mercury (Budha) and Moon (Soma) rule Vaisyas or traders and farmers; Saturn (Sani) rules Sudras or servants. In a very general or idealistic sense, the watery signs of the zodiac, Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces, are assigned to the Brahmins; the fiery signs, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius, to the Kshatriyas; the earthy signs, Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn, to the Vaisyas; the airy or impressionable signs, Gemini, Libra and Aquarius, to the Sudras.

Bucke, in his *Cosmic Consciousness*, speaks of the four distant stages of intellect: "First, the mind made up of precepts or sense-impressions; second, the mind made up of these and precepts—the so-called receptual mind, or in other words, the mind of simple consciousness; third, we have the mind made up of precepts, receipts and concepts, called sometimes the conceptional mind, or otherwise the self-conscious mind—the mind of self-consciousness; the fourth and last, we have the intuitional mind—the mind whose highest element is not a receipt or a concept, but an intuition. This is the mind in which sensation, simple consciousness and self-consciousness are supplemented and crowned with Cosmic Consciousness."

The natural inequalities found among men are due, in a particular sense, to the *karma* or actions of past lives which require that each one reap what he has sown, and, in a general sense, to the disorder introduced into the world-scheme when the human race was divided into sexes and gradually became so much identified with the senses or bodily vehicle (*sthula sharira*) that the consequence was the "expulsion from Eden" or perfect world of harmony and equality.

Caste a Check Against License

To a certain extent, nearly all races and nations observe in practice, if not in theory, the features of *Varna Dharma* of Caste System. Where there is great license or so-called liberty, particularly in intermarriage between extremes in the natural castes, the race dwindles away and becomes extinct. The *Purana Samhita* compares the offspring of such unions to barren hybrids, like the mule which is incapable of propagation of its own species. Artificial species are eventually exterminated. History offers abundant proof of numerous great races who no longer have any living representatives. The caste system of India is credited by her most profound thinkers with being the check or preventive against license which has preserved the purity of the race and has brought it safely through millenniums of vicissitudes, while other races have vanished into the night of oblivion. In addition to the wise regulation of society afforded by *varna* or caste, the ancient rishis provided a system of progressive life stages or activities (*Ashrama Dharma*). These two together are known as *Varnashrama* and constitute the special dharma or life-duty of the Hindus. It may well be that the perfect world-order of the future will base itself on the ancient rules of *Varnashrama* which have triumphantly withstood the assaults of time,

foreign invasion and the gross misunderstanding of younger nations. Patterned as it is on correspondences from the natural world, it follows the law of harmony or the will of God. India's great future lies in her adherence to the rules of life formulated by her rishis in the hoary past, for the element of time is powerless against perfection.

One of the greatest of the *Dharma Shastras* or Hindu scriptures on the conduct of life is the *Yajnavalkya Smriti*, in which the ashramas or four stages of life are described. The ashrama training applies only to the three superior castes; the duty of a sudra, or the man in thrall to his senses, is fulfilled by serving the higher castes and by obedience to their supervision. The Vaisyas are required to follow the first two ashrama stages only; the Kshatriya the first three, while the highest or Brahman caste is able to complete the four full stages of ashrama life. These are called the four Purusharthas or "gains for the soul". The first stage is the student life, generally begun at the age of eight years. This educational system of the Hindus will be described in a later article. The greatest stress is laid on *achara*, self-discipline or control of the body; the cultivation in early youth of right habits and moral strength.

The second stage of life is that of the married man or householder. Marriage is considered as a religious duty for the perpetuation of the race and various purificatory and spiritualizing Vedic rites are enjoined at the time of marriage and before and after the birth of a child in order to insure heroic progeny. The performance of the five-fold Mahayajnas or great sacrifices is compulsory on every Hindu householder, by which he acknowledges his debt to Brahma, to the divine beings which watch over the welfare of humanity, to his friends and neighbors, to those who furnish him with the necessities of life, and to strangers and foreigners. These Mahayajnas will be explained later.

The third stage of ashrama life is that of the recluse, reached when all the obligations of married life have been fulfilled and bodily strength is waning. The ancient Hindus used then to make their home in the forest, living simply on natural food, and practicing various spiritual exercises. The last stage, achieved only by the highest or Brahman caste, is that of complete renunciation, when all earthly ties and desires are relinquished and the mind is immovably fixed on the final goal of spiritual emancipation. Thus, stage by stage, the young Brahman becomes the old sage, contributing all his life long to his own progressive growth and the welfare of all beings.

Lord Siva, in the Shambhu Gita, describes Varmashrama or the system of caste and of the graduated stages of life, as comparable to the embankments which keep the river of life flowing smoothly to its goal or the ocean of spirit. The text follows: "My *Prakriti* (nature or creation) is divided into two, animate (*chetana*) and inanimate (*jada*). *Chetana-Prakriti* (conscious life) is pictured as a rushing stream taking its rise from the top of the mountain of *Jada* (inanimate or unconscious life). The stream flows smoothly down through four gulfs in its course, representing the *udvijja* (plant), *swedaja* (germ), *andaja* (animal) and *jarayuja* (elementary human) stages. The stream strictly keeps to its channels while flowing through these gulfs, and there is not the least danger of its swerving from its course (i.e., there is no freewill in these stages, which are completely under the orderly guidance of nature). On coming down to the flat tableland, representing the true human stage of life, from the slopes of the mountain, the stream widens (free-will and variety enter in), but is exposed to the danger of flowing astray into pits and abysses, and of being swallowed up there instead of passing straight onward to meet the ocean, representing the *Brahman* (Deity) and *Mukti* (salvation). The pits and abysses represent

the loss of spirituality and consequent barbarity and extinction. The embankment of the river on the tableland represents *Varnashrama Dharma* which, on the one hand, keeps the *Chetana*-stream from going astray into the pits and abysses and, on the other hand facilitates its onward course to the ocean of *Mukti*. In this peacefully flowing stream, the *Devatas* (gods) bathe in delight, and the *Rishis* (holy sages) are engaged in prayers on both banks of the river, enjoying its beautiful scenery." The idea conveyed here is that the perfect *Varnashrama* life of mankind is helpful and pleasing to the *devatas* and *rishis*, who in turn serve humanity by preservation and repairs on the embankment of *Varnashrama*. The efforts of the higher beings are always directed to the maintenance and elevation of humankind, considered the most important race in all of the fourteen *lokas* or planes of universal creation.

(published in East West Magazine 1933-1934)