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AN OUTLINE OF
THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF INDIA

An Outline of
The Cultural History of India

15388

Compiled and Edited

By

(SYED) ABDUL LATIF

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THE INSTITUTE OF INDO-MIDDLE EAST CULTURAL STUDIES,
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FOREWORD

The outline attempted in these pages of the Cultural History of India is divided into three parts, each presenting in historic sequence a distinct phase of India's cultural development. The first part depicts the Aryan impact on the pre-Aryan Culture of the land, giving rise to what may be termed 'Indo-Aryan Culture' which, while assimilating, as time went on, diverse spasmodic cultural strains infiltrating into the country in ancient times from the North-West, displayed in its forward march, in an ever increasing measure, in almost every sphere of life, the dominating touch of the Vedic or Aryan outlook on life as developed on the soil of India. The second part marks the impact of Islam on this Indo-Aryan culture, setting in motion a synthetic process of development which in its results came to be styled as the 'Hindustani way'. The last phase, covered by the third part, is the further development achieved under the impact of the West, denoting the sum total of the cultural heritage which we possess today.

The matter of the volume has been presented not by a single scholar, but by several scholars, each dealing with an aspect of the subject of which he has had a special knowledge. Uniformity of style in such a scheme of presentation may not be expected. But the need for co-ordination and unity of effect—and it is this which matters in such a production—has been kept in view. The sense of pride in one's own heritage, by no means an impermissible virtue, as well as, one's attachment to one's subject of special study, may be responsible for the note of subjectivity struck, here and there, in individual contributions. But that has not taken the form of an obtrusion on the objective purposes of the studies undertaken. On the whole, the result may be regarded as a progressive presentation of the subject without missing any

strain which has contributed, in some manner or other, to the development of the culture of India.

It is not proposed to attempt here any review of the growth and development of India's culture, or to summarize the contents of the volume, by way of introduction. The primary idea has been to leave the volume to disclose its subject progressively from stage to stage, and present to the reader, at the end, a comprehensive picture of India's cultural heritage. That heritage, it may be pointed out, has now reached a crucial stage, and needs to be nursed with care. In its universal bearings, as distinguished from ritualism practised in the field of religion by the different sections of the Indian population, and from any belief or custom peculiar to any of them, this culture is not an exclusive asset of the people of India, much less of any particular section of it. On the other hand it is the asset of the entire human race, since cultural strains flowing into the land from almost every part of the civilized world have, in the course of its long history, gone to mould it into its present shape. If those who are called upon today, and those who may be called upon tomorrow to guide the destinies of the country, learn to respect, preserve, and strengthen, with perfect integrity of mind, every component element in the synthesis wrought so far, the culture of India will be found to possess the vitality or the requisite qualities to make a powerful contribution to the development of a lasting world culture for the whole of mankind.

In compiling this volume, I have been greatly encouraged by the kindly solicitude with which my call for contributions was responded to by scholars from the different parts of the country. I offer them, one and all, my sincere thanks. I am equally thankful to two of my local friends, both members of the Institute of Indo-Middle East Cultural Studies, under the auspices of which this volume is being issued. One is Dr. M. Rahatullah Khan, M.A., D.Phil. (Leipzig),

curator, State Central Library, Hyderabad, who prepared the index to the volume. The other is Prof. Natarajan, M.A., M.Litt., Department of History, Osmania University, who not only gave me valuable assistance in editing this volume, but read the proofs while the matter was in the press. My only regret is that notwithstanding the care taken in the reading of proofs, certain typographical errors have eventually crept in, here and there. They are however of minor character, and may kindly be condoned.

In conclusion, I feel it my duty to offer thanks to the Government of India in the Ministry of Education for the grant-in-aid kindly afforded to the Institute in connection with its publications, and to Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad for the scholarly interest he has evinced, since the very inception of the Institute, in the various studies pursued by its members.

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Syed Abdul Latif

PART ONE
INDO-ARYAN CULTURE

CHAPTER I

PRE-ARYAN CULTURE OF INDIA

The Indian culture is the oldest living culture in the world with a record of history spread over nearly five thousand years. The Rig Veda, the earliest of the Aryan sacred literatures, assigned to about 2000 B.C. says that the 'Dasas' or Dasyus who opposed the Aryans had established towns and built broad and wide fortresses (durga) of iron (ayasi) or stone (asma-mayi), some of which had hundred pillars (satabhuji). They are described as dark skinned, noseless (anasa), of hostile speech (mridhravak), without rites (akarma), lacking in devotion (ashrama), reviling gods (Devapiyu), not performing sacrifices (ayajvan), lawless (avrata), worshippers of phallus (sisna-devah), and so on. Archaeological discoveries at Harappa in the Punjab, Mohenjo-daro in Sind and other sites have brought to light the remains of a highly advanced civilization which, according to Sir John Marshall, flourished in the Chalcolithic Age between 3250 to 2750 B.C. It is reasonable to conclude that this pre-Aryan culture must have been developed by the Dasyus of the Vedic literature between 3250 to 2000 B.C.

The area covered by it comprised the whole of Sind, the Punjab and Baluchistan, a major portion of Kathiawar, a part of the West-Coast region, a part of the Gangetic basin, and a part of South India.

Similarities between the finds in these parts of the country and those in the parts of Western Asia known in ancient times

as Sumer, Babylon, Egypt and Assyria show that the growth of this civilization was not an isolated phenomenon, but was a phase of a larger movement expressing itself in a chain of civilizations operating particularly along the river valleys of the Nile, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. But it is to be noted that though there are many things in common between the Indus-Valley civilisation and the other contemporary civilizations outside India, the differences are so striking that they stamp the Indus Valley civilization with an individuality of its own. For example, the Indus Valley people prepared textiles of cotton, but this was unknown to the western world till about three thousand years later. The pictographic script used by the Indus Valley people was, as in the case of the Egyptians, Cretans, and Sumerians, based on the common principle of representing objects and sounds by the use of pictographs; but the signs developed in the Indus Valley were different from those of the other pictographic scripts. The use of the potter's wheel and the art of fixing colours on vessels were common, but the Indus people had their own peculiar designs and shapes for their pottery. Further, while the archaeological remains of West Asian civilizations represent little of the life of the masses, and concentrate on the life of the aristocracy, those in India demonstrate that the common man enjoyed along with others the amenities of civilised life. The great progress made in glyptic art, and the religious ideas of the Indus people also sharply distinguish this civilisation from the other contemporary civilizations.

The builders of this civilization were an enterprising people maintaining commercial and cultural contacts with peoples of other centres of civilization. In the Sumerian and Elamite sites, a number of seals with Indian designs have been discovered. Material has also been unearthed indicating that the fashions of hair-dressing in vogue among Sumerian women were typically Indian. In fact, the points of similarity between the Indus valley civilization and the Sumerian civilization were so numerous and striking that Sumerologists called the Indus Valley civilization as Indo-Sumerian civilization.

Excavations in different parts of Northern India have brought to light that the influence of the Indus civilization was widespread. The burial urns and pots that were found in the Deccan and in other places like Pudukkota, Tirunelveli, Adichanallur, etc. in South India reveal traces of cultural contacts with the people of the Indus Valley. Prof. N.K. Dikshit, in his book, "Pre-Historic Civilization of India", is of opinion that the conch shells and pearls used by the Indus Valley people should have been given to them by the Dravidians of the south specially by the Tamils. This opinion finds support from a poem in Aganuranuru, a Sangam work, which speaks of the existence of a community in the south that was engaged in cutting conch-shells and dressing pearls. The cities of the Indus Valley were well planned. The streets in them were broad and straight. The houses were built of well-shaped and well-burnt bricks and had more than one storey. These were provided with one or more bathrooms with floors carefully laid and connected with the main street by means of drains. One of the most striking remains is the Great Bath which is a marvel of engineering skill. The solidity and excellence of construction is proved by the fact that it is still amazingly well-preserved in spite of the ravages of nature over five thousand years. The remains of public storehouses, conservancy and drainage system, and public roads are proofs of a highly organized civic life. Mr. K. N. Dikshit believes that the watch and ward and board systems of the Mauryan epoch, and the city council of the Gupta period might be traced back to the earlier systems prevailing in the Indus Valley.

The people followed a variety of occupations of which those of the agriculturist, potter, weaver, carpenter, mason and metal worker were considered most important. Jewels of gold, silver, copper, bronze, faience shell, terracotta and many species of semi-precious stones were in fashion and these were remarkable for their variety and beauty. Different kinds of earthen wares were in use, though utensils of copper, bronze, silver and porcelain were not unknown, as also spindles made of baked earth and porcelain, and shell needles. Binial and decimal weights of fine po

lish and uniform size, and rectangular and round flat silver pieces, precursors of the later punch marked coins, were also in use. There was brisk trade with different parts of India and Asia.

The Indus Valley people knew the art of writing. They used a pictographic script of "neat monumental forms" remarkable for ingenuity, nicety and variety of characters. More than five hundred seals of the times with short inscriptions engraved on them have been discovered. Prof. Langdon thinks that the later Brahmi script was derived from the Indus script. Scholars have tried to connect it with a number of languages like the Sumerian, Sanskrit and proto-Dravidian. But the real key to the deciphering of this script has not yet been discovered and the various readings are no better than ingenuous suggestions. The art of the people is equally fascinating. The numerous engravings and models of animals and human beings which have been discovered bear testimony to their artistic skill.

The religious practices and ideas revealed by the seals, sealings, figures, stone images, etc. are interesting, and prove that the religion of the Indus Valley people was the "lineal progenitor of Hinduism". An important feature of this religion is Sakti worship or the cult of the Mother Goddess. A large number of female figurines of terra-cotta, faience etc. portray a standing semi-nude female figure with elaborate head-dress and ornaments. Similar representations have been discovered in Baluchistan, in many countries of Western Asia, and around the Aegean coasts. These are believed to be representations of the Great Mother or Nature Goddess. Traditions of this cult of Mother-Goddess have come down to our times. The Rig Veda refers to the Aditi, the mother of the Adityas. Even in modern times almost every village has a patron goddess or grama-devata. An interesting seal from Harappa depicts a tree as issuing out of the womb of a nude female figure turned upside down. This probably is a representation of Mother Earth, or Prithvi of the Rig Veda. The continuity of the worship of the Earth Goddess is proved by a similar figure of the Gupta Age from which a lotus is depicted as emerging. The Harappa seal referred to above has also the picture

of a man with a knife in his hand and a woman seated on the ground with hands raised in supplication. This probably suggests that the woman is to be sacrificed. There is another representation of figure as standing in the bifurcated branch of a 'pipal' tree. A worshipper appears to be leading a goat probably for sacrifice, and a number of people are standing in a row as if participating in the sacrifice. These representations prove that the sacrifice of animals, especially goats, which is a characteristic feature of Sakti worship, is only a significant survival from the Indus religion.

Representations of Siva depicting his various attributes have also been discovered. In one of the seals, he is represented with three faces and three eyes wearing a horned head-dress and sitting cross-legged in 'padmasana' posture, with his eyes fixed on the tip of the nose. He is surrounded by an elephant and a tiger on the right, and a rhinoceros and a buffalo on the left. A deer is standing under the throne. These are representations of Siva's attributes of 'trimukha' or three-faced, "thrinetra" or three eyed, "Bhutanatha" or "Pasupati" or lord of living beings, and "Mahayogi" or the great ascetic. The horned head-dress has not been continued in later representations of Siva, but it is important as anticipating the 'trisula' or the trident. Some figures have a sprig of leaves or flowers suggesting probably the representation of Siva as the personification of fertility or of the reproductive powers of nature. A horned archer dressed in leaves is taken to be a representation of Siva as the divine hunter. Another representation of the deity with worshippers on either side and a hooded cobra over the head bring to mind the representations of a later period at Sanchi and Barhut of the worship of Buddha by Nagas. Some figures have four arms and these representations are anticipations of the four-armed deities of later days. Representation of deities in 'Kayotsarga Yoga' a standing posture peculiar to Jain Yogis, and the association of 'Rishabha' or the bull as the emblem of the Jina are taken to be links between Jainism and the Indus religion. "If so, Jainism also, along with Saivism, must take its place as one of the oldest religions of Chalcolitic

origins, thus helping over the hiatus between the Indus and subsequent Indian civilisations as phases in a common cultural evolution." (Radha Kumud Mukherjee). The above view is also consistent with the traditions about the antiquity of Jainism. The discovery of a number of conical and cylindrical stones also suggest that Siva and Sakti were worshipped as Linga and Yoni as even in modern times.

The worship of trees, animals and probably of rivers also formed important characteristics of the Indus religion. Sometimes, worship was offered to trees in their natural form, and sometimes to the indwelling spirits. It is interesting to note that the 'pipal' tree which became famous as the Bodhi-tree or Tree of Knowledge of the Buddha and which is still an object of worship among Hindus, is depicted as a sacred tree in the seals. The animals which came to be worshipped fall into three categories. One of them consists of mythical or semi-human and semi-bovine creatures like goats with human faces and also of complex animals with the heads of different animals attached to a central boss. The second group consists of animals which are not completely mythical like unicorns and two-horned beasts, while natural animals like the bull, elephant, tiger, rams, etc. constituted the third group. Some of them later on figured as the vehicles or vahanas of some deities. The bull became the vahana of Siva, the buffalo of Yama, the tiger of Kali, and the elephant of Indra. Though no positive evidences have been discovered about the worship of rivers, it is suggested on the tradition of associating the crocodile with the Ganges and the tortoise with the Yamuna, that the long-headed 'gharial' often represented with a fish in its mouth may be associated with the Indus, for the cult of the gharial is even now prevalent in Sind. Representations of Svastika and wheel are also interpreted as symbolic representations of the sun.

Thus some features of later Hinduism can be traced back to the Indus religion. The differences between the religious ideas of the Rig Veda and the later Yajur and Atharva Vedas which stress belief in spirits and magic may be ascribed to some extent to the influence of the Indus culture. But these survivals of the

Indus religion, intermixed with the beliefs and practices of the Aryans, continued to be popular among the lower classes of Hindu society.

As regards the authorship of the civilisation, a controversy still goes on. It is, however, established that it is not of Sumerian origin. Some are inclined to believe that it is also non-Aryan. But I consider that it must be Dravidian on the following grounds:

1. The reference to the word 'Dasyus' in the Rig Veda refers to the Dravidians who were dark in complexion and stout in stature. The Dravidians were worshippers of Linga which is an aspect of Siva cult.

2. The deluges that are referred to in the Atharva Veda are the deluges that devastated the country of the Dravidians in the olden days.

3. The words 'Mina' and 'Nira' which are of Dravidian origin are to be found in the Rig Veda although the word "Mina" is not very often used there, since its place was taken by another word 'Machcha'.

4. The Machcha Purana has 'Satyaviradha Manu' as its hero and he is called 'Dravida pathi' in Bhagavata Purana. The Machcha Purana also mentions that Satyaviradha Manu performed penance in the Pothiyal hills which, according to Tamilian literary tradition, is the holy place of Sage Agastya in South India.

5. The practice of venerating woman in the Dravidian house-hold as the head of the family for all domestic purposes seems to have been followed by the Aryans after their coming into India; especially during the period of Brahmanas. The original practice of affixing the name of the father with the name of the son might have been a tradition with the Aryans before their contact with the Dravidians. The word 'Illal' is very significant in Tamil which means the head of the house-hold. There is no equivalent word in Tamil to denote the head of the house hold in the masculine gender. This proves in a convincing manner that

in the Dravidian family of antiquity women were highly respected.

6. Shri Babu Govindas in his book 'Hinduism' (page 185) is of opinion that the Dravidians were once living all over India including Baluchistan.

7. Bishop Caldwell who had made a careful study of the Dravidian languages and their comparative grammars is strongly of opinion that the Dravidians were very much advanced in culture and civilisation and that their arts and polity were really superb. Their kingly institutions, their beautiful buildings and cities and their perfected languages and wealth of literature are proofs of the cultural progress of the Dravidians.

8. The 'Brahui' language that is spoken in Baluchistan has nearly fifty per cent of Dravidian words in it. Some scholars believe that Sanskrit, the language of the Aryans, should have been influenced by the Dravidian languages in the pre-Aryan period, just like the Munda language which underwent enormous change because of Dravidian influence. Since the short vowels 'a' and 'o' which are found in the Dravidian group of languages now are to be found in the Pali language, we may infer that the cultural contacts between the North and the South might have taken place in the Pre-Aryan period itself. A close examination of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Dravidian languages may help us to know the Dravidian influence in North India during ancient times. Pali, which belongs to the Prakrit stock did not adopt the method of using cases and case endings like Sanskrit, but followed the method of the Dravidian languages. This view is supported by the author of 'Dravidic studies' (pp. 57-61).

We understand from Prof. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar's "The Stone Age in India" that the New Stone Age people in India spoke the languages of the Dravidians. Many languages and dialects that are spoken by different people from the Punjab to Orissa resemble the Dravidian languages in matters of gender, cases, adjectives, construction of sentences, figures of speech, and

North Indian tongues and South Indian tongues are entirely different from each other. He proves by his valuable researches supported by valid data that most of the spoken languages in India at present are but the branches of the Dravidian family with certain dialectical variations.

10. Dr. G. R. Hunter in his volume "The Script of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa" (pp. 51-128) opines that the Dravidian languages which were having a large number of monosyllabic words before the period of Asoka, had undergone some changes in the later period owing to various influences. Since the seals of Mohenjo-daro are monosyllabic in character, the influence of the Dravidians could be easily traced in the pre-historic period. On the basis of the Indus-Valley seals he concludes that the people of the valley might have used a language which was mainly monosyllabic in nature. In this connection, Dr. Caldwell's statement that the Dravidian languages were mostly monosyllabic in their nature may be taken as a corroborative evidence for Dr. Hunter's statement.

11. The earthen pots or the burial urns that were found in Hyderabad and other places in the Deccan had letters inscribed on them resembling the letters of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Father Heras in the "The Review" (1936, Vol. II pp. 1-16) tries to establish that the people who lived in the Indus Valley and the people who were called the Dravidians of South India did belong to one and the same stock, and that the language that was spoken by the Indus Valley people was nothing but Dravidian. Father Heras even goes to the extent of proving that the Indus Valley language very much resembles Tamil.

12. The coins that were found in the Tinnevalley District of South India bearing different pictures like shield, fish, crescent moon, bull, etc. very much resemble the coins of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. These coins, according to the Archaeological Survey of Mysore, should belong to the pre-Christian period or even to the pre-historic period.

13. During the age of the epics, the Khandaras, Nagas, Machchars, Garudars, etc., who belonged to the Dravidian stock, so on. Prof. Iyengar also thinks that it is wrong to say that the

had lived in the northern parts of India. According to Prof. Ragozin's 'Vedic India' (P. 308) the Dravidians who had already settled in North India should have built the mighty cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Prof. Rogozin also thinks that the city of Hyderabad in Sind, should have been the capital of a Naga King of the Dravidians who carried on trade in muslin cloth with the Sumarians of antiquity. The Dravidians had cultural contacts with the Mesopotomians also. Whatever may be the weakness of each argument, these taken together suggest that the Indus Valley civilization was Dravidian.

Besides these archaeological discoveries the classical works in Tamil, the oldest of the Dravidian languages, give us interesting accounts of the pre-Aryan culture in South India. It must be pointed out at the outset that the pre-Aryan period in South India covers a longer period than in the North, because infiltration of Aryan influence into these regions took place only long after the Aryans had established themselves in the North.

The civilisation depicted in Tamil literature is that of the Dravidians who were probably the most important of the non-Aryan races that contributed to the growth of Indian culture. Tamil literary works which furnish valuable information about this ancient civilisation belong to what is known as the Sangam Age or the classical period of Tamil literature, which may be pushed back to 2500 B.C. or even earlier. The three Sangams (Tamil Academies) which are mentioned in ancient literature were prominent academic bodies that were sponsored and supported by the great Pandya kings who ruled in South India from immemorial times. The first Sangam or Academy was conducted at Southern Madura, the second at Kapadapuram and third at modern Madura. The sage Agastya who is said to have learnt Tamil from Lord Siva along with Panini is considered to have been a prominent member of the First Tamil Sangam. Whatever be the tradition of Agastya in the Tamil country, we have to admit that a great man named Agastya lived in the Tamil country and did yeoman service for the advancement of Tamil language and literature by writing a valuable grammar called

Agathiam. His twelve disciples too, wrote valuable treatises on grammar, literature, music, dance etc. But unfortunately we have lost many of these precious literary works, and the only work extant is Tolkappiam, which is a pen picture of Tolkappiyar, one of the twelve disciples of Agastya. This great work belongs to the first millennium B.C. Dr. Swaminatha Iyer, the renowned Tamil scholar, is strongly of opinion that Tolkappiam is not less than 3000 years old. Though it is a treatise on Tamil grammar, it deals with the living conditions of the ancient Tamils, their religious outlook, their cultural concepts, their philosophical stand and economic pursuits.

The Tamil country in the pre-historic times was very vast in its area and the southern boundary of the land, according to the Purananuru anthology, went as far as the rivers Pahuruli and Kumari. There is also another reference to this Pahuruli river in Silappathiharam. These rivers which existed as the southern boundaries of the Tamil country in the pre-historic age were subsequently submerged in the Indian Ocean at various stages. The geologists who speak of a number of deluges in the past refer to these deluges in the Indian Ocean. The author of the book "Lost Lemuria", by name Scott Elliot, refers to the existence of a vast territory in the Indian Ocean stretching from Australia to Madagascar some thousands of years ago. Earnest Heckell, the author of a monumental work caled "The History of Creation", speaks of this land and opines that the cradle of the human race had its birth in the Lemurian continent or the Kumari Nadu. Whatever be the story of the rise and spread of the human race, we have some reason to think that this Lemurian continent in the pre-historic times was an important area from which spread culture and civilisation to the rest of the world. The present Tamil country is only the residuary territory of the ancient Tamilakam parts of which were gradually submerged in the ocean by a succession of deluges.

The civilisation developed by the Dravidians was different from that of the Aryans. The Dravidian society was partly mat-

riarchal and thus differed fundamentally from that of the Aryan. There was no caste system among them in the Aryan sense and no hereditary priesthood. We, however, come across a later classification based partly on birth and partly on occupation like the rulers, sages, merchants and agriculturists. They believed in a supreme power to whom they built temples and worshipped mother-goddess, trees and various demons and spirits. A feature of their worship was the offering of animal sacrifices. The worship of the serpent (Naga Raja) seems to have been prevalent. These gods and goddesses were later on adopted by the Aryans and given new names and attributes.

They had their own walled towns, and cities equipped with all the refinement and luxuries of civilised life. They were skilled in agriculture and they were the earliest to build dams for purposes of irrigation. They followed the arts and trades of civilized societies, including weaving of cotton and woollen cloth, and dyeing. They knew the art of casting iron, and their goldsmiths prepared beautiful ornaments of gold, and silver bedecked with pearls and precious stones. They carried extensive trade both inland and foreign. They had commercial contacts with ancient Chaldea, and discoveries at the site of Ur, the seaport of Babylon and Capital of Sumerian kings, reveal that South Indian teak was used there even in the fourth millennium B.C. There are also evidences to show that there was trade between Egypt and India about 2000 B.C. and the similarities between the Egyptian gods and of South India prove that cultural relations between them even on the religious level were intimate. They traded with the Assyrians some 1500 years before the birth of Christ and also with Burma and China in the east. Tolkappaim refers to the voyage of the Tamils in pursuit of trade and commerce, and says that they did not take their wives with them because sea-voyage was in those days full of dangers.

The Dravidians had their own alphabets called 'Vattaluttu'. They had their own numerals, and their own accurate calendars. The important Sangam works bear testimony to their glorious achievements in the literary field.

The antiquity and glory of Tamil culture are confirmed by the great epics of India, Ramayana and Mahabharata. The former refers to the existence of the great Tamil country and of the city of Kapadapuram which was the seat of the Second Tamil Academy (Sangam II) patronized by the Pandya monarchs. This reference is found in Kishkinda Kandam, 47th Sarukkam, 19th sloga of Valmiki's Ramayana. There, the king of the monkeys, Sugriva, while giving instructions to the monkey leaders who went in search of Sita (Rama's wife) described in glorious terms the magnificent nature of the Pandya Capital Kapadapuram (Pearl city), and advises his monkey subjects not to get enticed by the attractions of the Tamil language and its illustrious Academy.

Kamba Ramayanam which happens to be a monumental work in Tamil literature has also got a reference to the existence of Agastya in the Pothiyal hills and his associations with a popular Tamil Sangam. These references make us understand that the Tamil Sangams in the Tamil country were not only very ancient in their nature but also very popular. The fact that the first Tamil Sangam should have preceded the Valmiki Ramayana by many centuries is easily admissible. With the help of a poem in the Purananuru anthology we are able to know that a Chera king called Perum Sorru Uthian Cheralatan extended his help to the armies of the Pandavas and the Kauravas during the battle of Kurushetra by supplying enormous food. These pieces of information clearly show that the Tamilians possessed a highly advanced civilisation and well developed culture.

In course of time, the Aryan influence began to spread in South India. The migration of sage Agastya to the extreme south of India may be said to mark one of the earliest stages of infiltration of Aryan culture and the Ramayana is said to portray the slow cultural conquest of South India. The Aryan and the Dravidian strains of culture then slowly merged into each other and started on an integrated course. This mingling of cultures is an event of supreme importance to the cultural history of India, because the later Hindu civilisation was an offspring of the union of the transcendental ideas of the Aryans and the emotional and creative art of the Dravidians.

CHAPTER II

VEDIC SOCIETY AND RELIGION

Of the various elements that formed part of the composite culture of India, the Aryan phase, depicted by the Vedas, is the most important, as it formed the basis of the entire Hindu thought and fixed the pattern and framework of later cultural progress in the country. Though there is still great controversy about the exact date of the Vedas, the general tendency among scholars is to assign the Rig Veda, the earliest of the Vedic literature, to 2000 B.C. and the Upanishads, which constitute the last phase of this group of literature, to 600 B.C. The term vedic period therefore may be said to refer to the centuries between 2000 B.C. and 600 B.C.

The original home of the Aryans is again a controversial point, and in the face of the hopeless chaos of conflicting views it seems impossible to come to any definite conclusion. The most probable theory seems to be that the Aryans migrated into India from outside, the exact region from where they came being still a point of discussion.

From the geographical data furnished by the Rig Vedic hymns, it is clear that the Aryans first occupied the regions stretching from Eastern Afghanistan and the Upper Valley of the Ganges, the major portion of which was known as Sapta-Sindhu, the land of the Seven rivers. With the increase in their numbers, the Aryans were forced to spread east and south. The geographical outlook of the Yajur Veda is wider than that of

the Rig Veda, and the Brahmanas refer to a number of cis-Vindhyan tribes and peoples. Thus during the Brahmana period Aryanisation of the more eastern countries was definitely achieved, and Kurushetra became the centre of activity. The Punjab slowly lost its importance, and Madhyadesa became the holy land of the Hindus. The Ganges became the most sacred river and Kasi, Prayag, and Haridwar acquired pre-eminence as religious centres. But the Aryans during this period did not penetrate very much to the south beyond the Narmada and to the east beyond Mithila.

The leaders of the Aryan tribes divided among themselves the fertile territories where they settled and established a number of tribal principalities therein. The most important of the Rig Vedic tribes were the Bharatas who occupied the region between the Sarasvati and the Yamuna and established their political ascendancy by numerous successful campaigns against the Aryan and non-Aryan tribes. Their achievements in the cultural and religious fields were equally magnificent, and the whole country came to be known after them. The other important tribes who flourished during this period were the Purus, Yadus, Dhurvasas, etc. The proximity to each other of these tribal Kingdoms naturally led to frequent inter-statal conflicts resulting in the formation of larger political units and unification of Aryan settlements under a paramount ruler or overlord. The most important of these conflicts was the Battle of Ten Kings (Dasarajna) which is alluded to in many hymns of the Rig Veda. In this famous battle, Sudas, the Bharata King of the Tritsu family, fought against a big confederacy of rival Aryan tribes and won a great victory over them on the banks of Purushni, or modern Ravi. This decisive victory established beyond challenge the pre-eminence of the Bharatas among the Aryan tribes.

There are also references to the continuous and bitter struggles with the non-Aryan races who were called by the Aryans as Dasas or Dasyus who differed from the Aryans both physically and culturally. The numerous hymns imploring their gods to destroy their Dasa opponents indicate that the conflicts with these

tribes were prolonged and bitter. The most famous of these fights were those of Divodasa against Sambara, a Dasa King, and of Sudas, the Bharata monarch against the combined forces of Ajas, Sigrus, and Yakshus on the banks of the Yamuna.

The spirit of adventure and expansion urged the Aryans to spread in different directions and establish numerous Aryan kingdoms over all the regions to the north of the Narmada and even over some areas to the south of that river. As a result, during the later Vedic period many of the old states disappeared or paled into insignificance, and new tribes and states came into existence. Pre-eminent among these were the Kurus and the Panchalas. The former ruled from Asandivat and their territory corresponded to modern Thanesar, Delhi and the Upper Gangetic Doab. The Kurus reached the height of their prosperity under Parikshit who is described in the Atharva Veda as a universal king (Raja Visvajanina) whose kingdom was exceedingly prosperous. Even during the reign of his son, the kingdom was in a flourishing condition and he is said to have performed an Asvamedha sacrifice. But the Kingdom fell on evil days during the time of his successors, and the Kurus were obliged to quit Kurushetra and establish their capital at Kausambi (near Allahabad).

The Panchalas were close allies of the Kurus, and they ruled from Kampila. Their kingdom comprised of Bareilly, Budaun and Farrukhabad districts and some adjoining territories. Some of the kings are described as great conquerors and performers of Asvamedha sacrifices, while one of their kings Pravahana Jaivali is praised as a great philosopher in the Upanishads.

In the Brahmana period, the Kuru-Panchalas are referred to as a composite tribe and at one time they were ruled by one King. They were regarded as the best representatives of the Vedic culture and their academies were reputed to be great centres of learning. Their mode of sacrifice was considered perfect and Sanskrit was said to be spoken best by them.

In course of time, however, their fame was eclipsed by the rise of Kosala, Kasi, and Videha kingdoms. Ajatasatru of Kasi

and Janaka of Videha along with Yajnavalkya and Svetaketu became leaders of thought. Besides these Aryan tribes, we find references to non-Aryan races like the Andhras, Pundras, Mutibas, Pulindas, Sabaras, some of whom were in the Deccan.

During this period of Aryan conquest and settlement, monarchy, naturally enough, was the normal form of government, though non-monarchical states were not unknown. That Indo-Aryan kingship had its origin in war is indicated by the Rig Veda which speaks of the sad plight of a people who did not have a king to lead them against the enemies, and the Aitreya Brahmana which says. "The Devas and Asuras were fighting—The Asuras defeated the Devas. . . The Devas said: 'It is on account of our not having a king (arajataya) that the Asuras conquer. Let us elect a king.' All consented." There is a passage in the Satapatha Brahmana which suggests that kingship came into existence to end the anarchy and confusion of the 'state of nature'. It says: "whenever there is drought, then the strong seizes the weaker, for the waters are the law."

Monarchy was normally hereditary. There are, however, references to election of kings by the people. The King was the shepherd of the people whose duty was to protect his subjects and offer sacrifices to gods. He was assisted by a number of functionaries like Senani (leader of the army), Gramini (the village headman), Purohita (priest) and so forth.

The will of the people was expressed by the popular assemblies called Samiti and Sabha. The Atharva Veda describes them as the twin daughters of God Prajapati, and the Chandogya upanishad says that the Sabha was so important that even Prajapati could not dispense with it. Though the exact functions of these bodies cannot be defined with precision, the numerous references to them in the Vedic texts indicate that they occupied an important place in administration. Hence the Rig veda pleads for unanimity among the members and concord between the monarch and the assemblies.

The expansion of the Aryans led to important political results. Powerful kingdoms were established in place of the old

tribal principalities and the process of political integration is indicated by a number of terms such as "lord of all the earth" (Sarvabhauma), sole-ruler (Ekraat), universal king (Raja Viswanina), and the celebration of sacrifices befitting their ranks like the Rajasuya, Vajapeya, Asvamedha etc. There was an increase in the powers of the king and the Satapatha Brahmana declares: "He, the Rajanya, is the the visible representative of Prajapathi: hence while being one, he rules over many" But the strengthening of royal authority did not make the monarch an autocrat. In Aryan polity, the divine right of kings was never recognised as a personal attribute of the monarch, though he was given divine qualities. He had no right except that which was conferred upon him by the Aryan law. He was never the law-maker and he was bound by the Dharma of the land. The popular assemblies were still regarded as important limbs of administration, and the Atharve Veda declares that cordial relation between the Assembly and the King was essential for the King's prosperity. The coronation ceremony also emphasised the limits of royal authority. In his coronation oath, the king promised to consider as good whatever was in accordance with Dharma and declared: "If I play thee false, may I lose the merit of all my religious performances, and the rewards of my good deeds, my place, my life, and even my progeny." The dependance of the King on his ministers and officers was impressed upon him by the role of some officers called Raja-Kartri (King-makers) during the coronation, and by the ceremony of Ratna havis which followed it when the King gave presents to individual ministers (Ratnins) uttering the formula, "It is for him that he is thereby consecrated and him he makes his faithful follower." The taxes that were paid to the King were in the nature of compensation for the services rendered by the King, and the people could withhold payment if he neglected their welfare. Above all, there was the fear of rebellion against a cruel ruler, and there are a number of recorded instances of kings who had been deposed for bad rule, and also of some who had been restored to the throne after performing some prescribed ceremonies by way of amends.

The early Aryans were a rural people. We do not find references to cities or even small towns. Naturally the people led a pastoral life. The chief source of income was cattle rearing; but they were not indifferent to agriculture, trade and industry. No stigma was attached to any profession, and even tanners and cobblers were not regarded as inferior members of the community. The system of barter existed, but references to Nishka, a piece of metal of a particular weight, show that the people were not unacquainted with the use of coins.

The basis of Aryan social structure was the family which was organised on a patriarchal basis. The head of the house was called Grihapathi who wielded considerable powers over the members of the family. During the Rig Vedic period, monogamy was the norm. But later on polygamy became fashionable among kings, and the royal example was copied by the nobles. Vedic marriage could not be dissolved by human action, and infidelity and immorality were severely condemned. There was much freedom in the choice of the partner in life, and even inter-caste marriages were not prohibited. The Satapatha Brahmana refers to the marriage of Sukanya, the daughter of a Kshatriya king named Saryata with a Brahman called Chyayavana. During the later Vedic period when contact with other races gave rise to serious problems about retaining purity of blood, restrictions on marriages increased. Child marriages which were unknown during the Rig Vedic period also came into vogue.

Women occupied an honourable and exalted position in the family. The Grihapatni was regarded as the ornament of the house and enjoyed perfect equality with her husband in religious and social activities. The education of women was of a high standard. Some of the vedic hymns were composed by ladies like Visvavara, Gosha and Apala. Gargi was a great scholar who addressed an assembly of philosophers on a number of philosophical problems, while Maitreyi, the wife of the great sage Yajna-alkya, was respected as a great authority on spiritual problems.

The caste system, which had played an important role in the growth and preservation of Hindu society and culture, was

developed during this period. Different theories have been suggested as regards the origin of this system. It is said to be of divine origin, because the *Purushasukta*, a hymn of the Rig Vedic period says that from the face of the Creator came the Brahman, the Kshatriyas from his arms, the Vaisyas from his thighs and the Sudras from his feet. Some scholars suggest that the same verse proves that different occupations followed by the people formed the basis of caste system. The face is symbolic of intellect and those who followed intellectual pursuits were called Brahmins. The arms suggest physical prowess and those who contributed the warrior class were called Kshatriyas. The people who were said to have emerged from the thighs were the Vaisyas who sat in their shops and carried on trade and commerce. Those who were always on their feet and served their masters formed the Sudra class. A third theory suggests that colour formed the basis of distinction because *Varna*, which means colour, was applied to caste also. A fourth view asserts that the caste system was the result of the attempt of the Aryans to preserve the purity of their race and perpetuate their political and cultural domination. Still another view suggests that it is the outcome of the Hindu genius for synthesis and toleration. It is said that when the Aryans settled in India at the dawn of history their great problem was how to deal with the numerous divergent peoples who had migrated into India from very early times. One alternative was to impose uniformity by reducing them to the position of serfs or by exterminating them. This was repugnant to the cultured Aryans. Another alternative was harmonisation and integration of the different races into a single social system with full scope for development of individual characteristics of the component units. This was the policy which was followed by the Aryans in India and the result was the caste system. Thus caste system was a successful institutional expression of the basic principle of Hindu philosophy of unity in diversity, and was more or less intended to enable the different races to live in harmony by evolving a common heritage embodying the best elements of the different cultures. But the individual theories stated above emphasise only some one aspect to the

neglect of every other. It will be more correct to regard the caste system as the cumulative effect of all the factors.

It is hard to decide the extent to which caste system prevailed in the Rig Vedic period, though it seems clear that much of the framework upon which the later elaborate structure was based, should have existed. During the later Vedic period, the institution was fully developed. The system, however, was flexible and free from the later rigours of caste distinctions. Viswamitra, who in the Brahmanas is described as of royal descent, was the priest of King Sudas. Some of the hymns of the Vedas were composed by saintly kings and monarchs like Janaka of Videha, Asvapati, king of Kekayas in the Punjab, Ajatasatru of Kasi and Pravahana Jaivali of Panchala who were respected as great authorities on spiritual matters even by the Brahmins. But the most interesting case is that of Satyakama Jabala who was accepted as a disciple by a great rishi even though he was the son of a slave girl through an unknown father. The saying that, by birth is a man born a sudra and by deeds he is born a brahman, indicates that caste was not determined merely by birth. There were also many cases of the people of the high castes being degraded to the position of the chandalas.

The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas formed the privileged class and the position of the Vaisyas and Sudras was not quite enviable. There were already signs of rivalry between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas and the declarations emphasising the superiority of the latter indicate that the Brahmins did not enjoy their privileged position unchallenged. We learn from the Chandogya Upanishad that the life of the higher caste people was rigidly regulated into three stages, that of the pupil (Brahmachari), the house-holder (Grihasta), and hermit (Vanaprasta). The mass of men were divided into a number of functional sub-castes like those of the smith, carpenter, fishermen etc. Besides these there were two classes of people called Vratyas and Nishadas. The former were "probably Aryans outside the Brahmanic order,... spoke some Prakritic language, and led a nomadic life". The latter "were clearly a non-Aryan people who lived in

their own villages and had their own rulers (Sthapati). They were probably identical with the modern Bhils".

The caste system has come to our own days and its permanence is mainly due to the services it rendered both to the individual and the society. It provided for the individual from the time of his birth some definite social privileges and canalised his various activities. It developed a spirit of fellowship and sympathy among the members of the caste, and in times of difficulties one could always be sure of assistance from the fellow members of his caste. In short, it acted as his trade union, his benefit society, his social club, his cultural association and his orphanage.

The caste system was eminently suited for preserving and transmitting from generation to generation the pattern of skill, knowledge and behaviour which constitute the culture of particular groups. The corporate life of occupational castes enabled them to preserve craft secrets and improve professional skill from generation to generation. An individual inherited a certain amount of skill in a particular craft, and with a favourable home atmosphere and training from childhood, he developed rapidly into a master craftsman. In this manner, much of the waste which would normally result from a wrong choice of profession was eliminated. Thus, "the resultant grading of classes by occupation produced a society similar to that recommended by Plato in his Republic and embodying the essence of Plato's definition of justice, in that the members of each occupation knew and attended to their business and did not aspire to perform the functions of members of different castes" (C.E.M. Joad)

By admitting the conquered races into their social system, the Aryans minimised class rivalry and enmity and developed a feeling of solidarity among the people. At the same time, by relegating the conquered races to the lowest class, the Aryans succeeded in preserving the individuality and in saving themselves from being overwhelmed by superior numbers. The caste system mitigated economic conflicts and racial antagonism. The Hindu outlook on life has always been characterised by a pre-

paredness to put up with the present miseries in the hope of future bliss, and the caste system held out such a hope because it was believed that a person by performing his caste duties could attain his salvation. It made society independent of any political changes; but at the same time acted as a sure defence against despotism.

The caste system was also responsible for enriching and ennobling Hindu culture. It saved India from complete barbarism and preserved the Hindu pattern of culture even under the regime of alien conquerors. The vitality of Indian culture through the ages has been mainly due to the Hindu genius for synthesis and caste system by absorbing the conquered races into the Hindu society made the fusion of the Aryan and other civilisations possible. By avoiding the elimination and impoverishment of the conquered races, the caste system encouraged the further blossoming of the different cultures in diverse ways and the final evolution of unity from multiplicity.

But the greatest service of the caste system was the integration of different groups in the society. Since the limits of castes transcended those of towns or kingdoms, the members of a particular caste living in different parts of the country developed a feeling of unity and fellow-feeling. The Purushasukta by describing the different castes as parts of one body, emphasised the need for harmonious working of the different groups for achieving the common ideal of healthy progress of the society as a whole.

But the caste system as it exists today is quite different from what it was centuries before, and its defects are obvious. With the growth in the number of castes, restrictions and prohibitions became rigid and people became group-minded. Social unity was broken, and union became difficult even in times of grave crisis. By emphasising differences and inequalities among men, it retarded the progress of democracy which believes that one individual is as good as the other. It developed a spirit of superiority and arrogance in the upper classes, and a feeling of inferiority and servility in the lower classes. Further, caste absorbed the individual completely, and the purpose of his life, his

loyalty and his faith were all determined by the accident of his birth. Occupation was determined by birth and not by contract and the individual was forced to adopt the calling of his forefathers. Such a system tended to stifle progress in economic life and paralyse genius and initiative.

The study of the Vedas is also interesting because we can easily trace the development of mythology and religion from the most simple to an advanced stage. We see, as it were, the gods rising before our eyes and we witness the transition from animism to polytheism and final unification in monotheism.

The religion that is revealed is simple but not primitive. As in the case of other races in their infancy, animism formed the background of the religious consciousness of the early Aryan. The friendly forces became gods, while the hostile forces were dreaded as demons. Thus many of the hymns in the earlier stages invoked, worshipped, and glorified the natural phenomena as the shining sun, the glorious dawn, the silvery Moon, the wide sky, the fruitful Earth etc.

But the Aryans soon rose from Nature to Nature's gods and the natural phenomena were transformed into gods and goddesses. Their physical features were only figurative and this shadowy nature was responsible for the absence of images and temples. The most prominent characteristic of gods was their power to regulate the universal order. They protected the righteous, destroyed the wicked, and cheered by the exhilarating Soma Juice led a life of bliss in Heaven.

Though Hindu religion is polytheistic, there is no definite hierarchy of gods, and each deity shrinks into insignificance or shines supreme according as it is the object of adoration or not. This stage is neither polytheistic nor monotheistic and this practice of invoking different gods as if each of them is paramount for the time being was called by Max Muller as henotheism. The Vedic Aryans conceived of Nature as a cosmos and the various gods were associated with some aspect of Rita or Eternal Order. They are labourers together in maintaining a single or all-comprehensive cosmic order. The trend was therefore towards monotheism, and the Rig Veda says: "What is in reality one is

called by the wise by different names". Thus the Aryans first worshipped as they feared, then as they admired, and lastly as they reasoned.

During the later Vedic period, great changes came over the religious life of the people. The old gods lost their lustre and new ones came into existence. Rudra, who soon came to be regarded as the Great Lord (Mahadeva), the Lord of Animals (Pasupati), and Vishnu, who was adored as the most sublime among the celestials, became very popular. At the same time non-Aryan deities such as Naga were adopted in an Aryan garb to please the mass of the Dravidians.

The sense of dependence on God and the hope of getting divine favour through liberal offerings and prayers naturally gave rise to rituals and sacrifices. Agni, as the mediator between gods and men, became the medium through which, offerings could be made. So sacrifices became an important aspect of worship and even gods are said to have attained immortality through sacrifices. The Satapatha-Brahmana says:

"The gods lived constantly in dread of Death—
The mighty Ender—so with toilsome rites
They worshipped and repeated sacrifices
Till they became immortal".

The Taithiriya Brahmana also says: "By means of sacrifice the gods attained heaven".

In the early Rig Vedic period certain simple ceremonies called Grihya Karmaṇi were prescribed for the householder to be performed on different occasions. Later on we come across more elaborate and expensive sacrifices which were performed by kings and nobles. The main sacrificial offer was the exhilarating Soma juice. Animals were also sacrificed and the Rig Veda refers to Aswamedha or horse sacrifice. The Sunahsepha legend suggests that even human sacrifice was in vogue. But the Aryan sentiment soon revolted against this, and human sacrifice was replaced by animal sacrifice. The Aitaraya Brahmana says: "The Gods killed a man for their victim. But from him thus

killed, the part which was fit for a sacrifice went out and entered a horse. Thence, the horse became an animal fit for being sacrificed. The gods then killed the horse, but part of it fit for being sacrificed went out of it and entered an ox. The gods then killed the ox, but a part of it fit for being sacrificed went out of it and entered a sheep. Thence it entered a goat; then it became pre-eminently fit for being sacrificed."

The sacrifices were just intended for the nourishment of the gods, and later on the idea of expiation was slowly introduced. A verse in the Tandyā Brahmana says: "O thou limb of the victim now consigned to the fire, thou art the expiation for sins committed by the gods, by the fathers (our deceased ancestors), by men, by ourselves. Whatever sin we have committed, sleeping or waking, knowing or unknowing, thou art the expiation for that". It was also believed that through sacrifices one could acquire even superhuman powers and get from gods any desired boon.

Ritualism has no doubt great social importance. It binds together different units of society from generation to generation and thus ensures continuity in religious practices. It acts as an aid to visualising beliefs and serves as an outlet for religious and aesthetic emotions which crave for expression. They give effective training in self-control and create an atmosphere for the liberation of the soul.

But too much emphasis on elaborate rituals leads to spiritual stagnation by making religious practices mechanical and static. The priestly class in order to perpetuate their hold on the people began to stress the importance of rituals, and the Vedic religion lost its simplicity. Sacrifices and rituals were elaborated. Offerings became richer and numerous priests were required for the performance of sacrifices which might last from a few days to a few years. The growth of rituals eclipsed the deities as moulders of human destiny, and it was believed that even gods could be compelled by sacrifices to grant the required boon. Religion became rigid and mechanical, and these soul-stifling rituals were regarded as infallible guides to salvation. Naturally the Upa-

nishads which embody the cream of Indian philosophy protested against this undue emphasis on barren rituals.

The most remarkable achievements during this epoch were on an intellectual plane. Comparative peace, increased prosperity, and exemption from military service gave the Brahmans great opportunities for striking victories of peace. The life of the Brahman was dedicated to intellectual pursuits and the Brahman village developed into a University town. Besides being centres of spiritual education, these developed into schools of arms, military tactics, diplomacy and political science. The study of Vedic texts facilitated the development of the science of grammar, phonetics, metre and etymology. Geometry grew from the rules for the erection of sacrificial altar. The discovery of the right moment for the performance of sacrifices encouraged the study of astronomy. The beginnings of civil laws were made in the attempt to fix the relation of man to God and of the state to the subject. The Vedic literature bears eloquent testimony to the achievements of the Aryans in the literary field. But the greatest triumphs were in the realms of philosophy. The Upanishads which constitute the most brilliant intellectual achievement of the ancient Hindus are among the noblest contributions to the philosophical thought in the world.

The two important beliefs of the Hindus, the Karma theory and transmigration of souls, were evolved during this period. The Karma theory emphasises that every action must have a reaction and that people reap as they sow. The present is the product of the past, and the individual's life does not commence from the time of birth but has been in the making in the past. This theory which is fully elaborated in the Upanishads is first referred to in the Satapatha Brahmana which says "He is born again here as a worm, as a bird, as a tiger . . . as a man, according to his Karma". This theory seems to offer a scheme of justice in human experience, which, without this assumption, will appear to be full of contradictions and injustice. It encourages the sufferers to submit to suffering with the hope that he is wiping off the

accumulated Karma which had caused his present misery. It also makes the happy man to make himself worthy of this happiness even in the future. Hence it encourages supreme exertion on the part of the individual for the attainment of supreme happiness. Thus far from being a philosophy of despair or fatalism, it is a theory of hope and cheer in so far as it makes man the architect of his own happiness or misery. The theory of transmigration of souls suggests that the soul on the death of a being casts off the body and enters another to undergo the effects of Karma. These two beliefs influenced greatly the development of later philosophical ideas and even such a scientific thinker like Gautama Buddha made them part of his teachings.

CHAPTER III

THE VEDIC PHILOSOPHY

The Vedas constitute the basic scripture of Hinduism. The Hindus call their religion 'The Religion of the Vedas' (vaidikamata). The philosophical faiths of India are divided into two groups: those that accept the authority of the Vedas, and those that do not. But it is interesting to note that even those cults and schools that do not profess any allegiance to the Vedas are nevertheless influenced by them. As the Himalayas are to the physical history of India, so are the Vedas to its cultural history. Through the ages, the Vedic climate has been pervasive of the Indian mind. It is the persistent vitality of the Vedic ideas and doctrines that has kept India spiritually alive.

It is not the story of a primitive, uncivilized people that we have in the Vedas. On the contrary, the Vedas reveal the existence of a highly cultured race in India at the time. A people who could conceive of such concepts as 'being' and 'non-being', and inquire into the origin of the gods can in no sense be called primitive. The Vedic poets and seers were not simple nature-worshippers; their inspiration was not the result of either fear or lust. Being gifted with the vision divine, they saw the one infinite Spirit in all things, and as a consequence exquisite poetry in the form of hymns burst forth from the depths of their experience. The seer-poets bring tidings to their fellow-humans of invisible powers that lie behind the phenomena of nature. Thunder and lightning, rain and wind, night and day, dawn and dusk, which

are but natural occurrences to the ordinary mind, appear to the inner eye of the rishi as the masks of a spiritual Force that is the origin as well as the end of all things. It is to this Force that he appeals, not for gifts of the mere wealth of this world, but for granting him cows that stand for the radiant rays of wisdom and horses that mean the powers of the immortal Spirit. Even those who are not prepared to read the inner meaning of the hymns do marvel at the sanctified air that is about them, and at the metaphysical depths they reveal. They, in fact, constitute the first grand poetry of humanity, the earliest literary monument of the human race.

The word 'veda' means 'book of knowledge'. The Vedas are four in number: Rig-veda, Yajur-veda, Sama-veda, and Atharva-veda. Of these, the oldest is the Rig-veda, which is the Veda of hymns. The Yajur-veda, which has a liturgical purpose, consists of hymns taken from the Rig-veda together with prose-formulas for the performance of sacrifices. The Sama-veda is also a liturgical collection of hymns mostly selected from the Rig-veda, and arranged solely with reference to their place in what is known as the Soma sacrifice. The Atharva-veda, which was the last to be added, combines Vedic religion and philosophy with popular cults and practices. A tradition which started with the age of the rituals relates the four Vedas to the four priestly functionaries at the sacrifice. The Rig-veda is for the Hotri priest whose function is to recite the hymns inviting the gods to the sacrificial place. The Yajur-veda is for the Adhvaryu who performs the sacrifice according to rule. The Sama-veda is for the Udgatri priest who sings the hymns. And the Atharva-veda is for the Brahma priest who is the general supervisor of the sacrifice.

As meaning the collections of hymns, Samhitas, the term 'Veda' is used in its narrower sense. In its wider sense, each Veda, from the standpoint of its contents is composed of Mantra, Brahmana, Aranyaka, and Upanishad. The Mantras are divine hymns—poetic expressions of perceived truths. The Brahmanas are guide books for the performance of sacrificial rites. The Aranyakas, which are 'forest-books', give philosophical interpretations of the rituals by allegorizing them, and prescribe

various modes of meditation. And the Upanishads, which are the concluding portions of the Veda and are therefore called Vedanta, contain metaphysical teachings about the ultimate Reality and the means to realize it. By a set of fortuitous circumstances the Mantras came to be attached to the sacrifices. But more properly they are the preludes to the Upanishads. The religio-philosophic truths that are for the most part implicit in the Mantras are made explicit in the Upanishads. The close connection between the two is evident from the fact that the Upanishads themselves cite the Mantra-texts to give authority to what they teach.

The Vedic hymns are not simple praises of the gods who are personifications of natural phenomena. The religion of the Veda is neither a crude naturalism nor an unphilosophical polytheism. It is true that the Vedic seers marvelled at the manifestations of nature. But they did not stop there. They succeeded in getting behind those manifestations and discerning there a divinity that knows no decay or diminution. Agni, for instance, means fire. It also stands for the fire of spiritual discipline, and the divine fire of life and illumination. Addressing Agni, a seer of the Yajurveda sings:

"Agni, Lord of Vrata! I will observe the Vrata:
here I approach truth across untruth."

Savitir, a solar deity, is said to have his power in truth, and is implored to 'send far away all evil', and 'send what is good'. The well-known Gayatrimantra addressed to Savitir asks for the illumination of the intellect. Varuna who represents cosmic order is also the guardian of the moral law. Indra, who is invoked alone in about one-fourth of the hymns of the Rig-veda is the god who vanquishes evil. One of the Indra-hymns says:

"Without whom men do not conquer, whom they, when fighting, call on for help; who has been a match for everyone, who moves the immovable: he O men, is Indra".

We meet with the names of many gods in the Vedic hymns. Supreme powers and the highest attributes are ascribed to all of them. The deva that is adored in a particular hymn is the greatest, according to that hymn. Max Muller calls this tendency

henotheism. In explanation of it, it has been said: 'every god takes hold of the sceptre, and none keeps it!' And henotheism has been described as 'opportunistic monotheism'. But if one looks at it from the philosophical standpoint, one would realize that only subtle minds could have arrived at the truth, that all the gods are one in spirit, and that it is a matter of indifference which god is promoted to the first place in any given circumstance. The Vedas clearly state this principle of the unity of Godhead in several contexts. Sometimes it is said that all gods are one in Indra or in Agni. Sometimes the one Godhead is described as All-Gods, Visve-devah. One of the texts of the Rig-veda declares: *ekam santam bahudha kalpayanti*, 'the One Being the sages contemplate in many ways'. Another proclaims: *ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti agnim yamam matarisvanam ahuh*. 'The One Being the wise call by many names, as Agni, Yama, Matarisvan'.

How philosophy and religion are inextricably combined in Indian life and thought will be evident to those who study carefully the Vedic hymns. The seers of these hymns were not satisfied with any anthropomorphic conception of the Godhead. The limitations of the human mind make it necessary, it is true, that Divinity should be conceived after the human model. But the aim should nevertheless be to transcend these limitations. The seer-poets of the Veda adopt several techniques to outgrow the limitations of the mind. First, the differences of sex, age, etc., are regarded as irrelevant so far as the Divine is concerned. A *rishi* of the Rig-veda sings:

"Agni I deem my Father, my Kinsman;
I deem Him my Brother, my Friend for ever".

In the Atharva-veda there is a verse which addresses the Godhead thus:

"Thou art woman. Thou art man.
Thou art the youth and the maiden too.
Thou as an old man totterest with a staff.
Being born, thou becomest facing in every direction".

Secondly, the divine person is not pictured in the ordinary normal way. The famous *Purusha-sukta* describes him as thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, and thousand-footed. Thirdly, God

is said to be everywhere, even in the heart of man. It is not that he has a region of his own, from where he rules this world. He is immanent in the universe; and this transcendence signifies that the categories such as space, time, and cause do not bind or exhaust his nature. Fourthly, certain abstract divinities were fashioned out of functions and attributes of the Godhead: e.g. Dhatri (Protector), Visvakarman (All-creator), Prajapati (lord of creatures), Brihaspati (lord of speech), etc. Finally, the moral and spiritual law itself came to be regarded as the governing principle of all gods. Speaking of Rita, the eternal order, a verse of the Rig-veda says:

"Firm seated are Eternal Law's Foundations.
In its fair form are many splendid beauties".

Rita is said to be the source of even the gods. It is the father of all. "The Maruts come from afar from the seat of Rita" "The Dawn follows the path of Rita, the right path, as if she knew them before. She never oversteps the regions. The sun follows the path of Rita".

Thus in the Vedas there is a powerful movement towards the impersonal Absolute. This is evident from the fact that the Godhead is often referred to in the neuter gender. The supreme reality is 'tad ekam, ekam sat,' the One Being. The hymn where Absolutism appears in all its glory is the Nasadiya-sukta which has been praised as containing 'the flower of Indian thought'. 'In its noble simplicity, in the loftiness of its philosophic vision', says Deussen, 'it is possibly the most admirable bit of philosophy of old times'. The first two verses of the hymn, as rendered by Muir, read as follows:

"Then there was neither Aught nor Nought,
no air nor sky beyond.
What covered all? Where rested all
in watery gulf profound?
Nor death was there, nor deathlessness,
nor change of night and day.
That One breathed calmly, self-sustained
nought else beyond it lay'.

Here the final Reality is designated as 'That One', and no particular name is employed. To this one principle all things are traced. Opposites like being and non-being, life and death, night and day are shown to be the self-unfoldment of this One. How from the distinctionless principle which is 'neither aught nor nought' the world of opposites and distinctions arose no one can tell. Thus, the quintessence of Absolutism is to be found in this beautiful hymn. Here we have the foundations of Advaita, as in many other hymns of the Veda. A verse of the Yajur-veda declares: 'Agni is that, Aditya is that, Chandramas is that, Light is that, Brahman is that, Apah are those, Prajapati is He'. A mantra dedicated to Aditi, the unbounded Being, reads:

'Aditi is the sky, Aditi the mid-region,
Aditi the mother, the father, the son,
Aditi all deities, the five-classed men,
Aditi is all that is born, all that will be born'.

In the Vedas we have not only religious and metaphysical ideas about the ultimate Reality but also directions for so moulding one's life that one may attain that Reality. Insistence is laid on the cultivation of the twin-virtues, Truth and Rectitude, Satya and Rita. An Upanishadic sage recapitulates the Vedic teaching when he says:

"By truth are the divine paths laid out
By which sages, having obtained what they desire,
Ascend the supreme abode of truth".

The Vedic quest itself is a search for truth. One sage asks, 'To which God shall we offer oblation?' (Kasmai devaya havisha vidhema). 'By truth is the earth upheld', says the Rig-veda, 'The Deity has truth as the law of his being', declares the Atharva-veda. One of the Upanishadic texts proclaims, 'satyam eva jayate, nanrutam' (Truth alone triumphs, not untruth). Similarly, Rita (rectitude) is what makes life divine. It is certainly difficult to keep to the narrow and straight path. But one has to accomplish this task in order to reach the goal. A Vedic seer says: ritam Vadishyami, satyam vadishyami (I shall speak what is right, I shall speak what is true). Whatever one does, whatever one

speaks, and whatever one thinks must be right and true. All other dharmas such as austerity, piety, etc., are based on rita and satya. It is only on the basis of truth and rectitude that all should meet, understand one another and live with one another. It is wrong to say that the Vedic Indian was an individualist without a social instinct. The final Reality is the goal of all beings. Each one has to progress towards it by helping in every way the rest to march on. It is significant that the very last hymn of the Rig-veda should be of the nature of a call to unity and universal understanding:

'Assemble, speak together: let your minds be of one accord
As ancient Gods unanimous sit down to their appointed
share.

The place is common, common the assembly, common the
mind, so be their thoughts united.

A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with
your general oblations.

One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of
one accord.

United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree'.

II

The seeds of religio-philosophical ideas that are to be found in the Vedic hymns sprout and grow with luxuriance in the Upanishads. It is in the Upanishads that we have the first explicit philosophizing in India. All subsequent development of thought in this country owes greatly to the Upanishads. And, every movement of Indian renaissance has been inspired by these immortal texts.

The Upanishads, however, are not systematic treatises on philosophy. They are records of the discussions, debates and insights of the ancient seer-poets. The teachings in these texts are usually given in the form of stories and parables. The term upanishad itself means etymologically "to sit (sad) close by (upa) devotedly (ni)", and is indicative of the manner in which the doctrines embodied in the Upanishads were imparted to small

groups of eligible pupils by competent teachers. The word thus means "a session", and came to be applied in course of time to what was taught at such sessions. It is employed in the Upanishads themselves in the sense of "secret doctrine". The "secrecy" here refers only to the difficulty involved in understanding the doctrine and the careful way in which it must be taught. Texts like "the Real of the real" (*satyasya satyam*) are described as the upanishad. These together with their explanations were probably reduced later on to the form in which we have the Upanishads now. There are more than two hundred texts bearing the name "upanishad". One of the Upanishads, *Muktika*, gives a list of one hundred and eight Upanishads. Not all of them are old. About twelve or thirteen of them may be regarded as canonical Upanishads, as an early philosopher like Sankara either comments on or quotes from them.

We saw that in the Vedic hymns there are both the personalistic and impersonalistic conceptions of Godhead. These receive clearer and better formulation in the Upanishads. The expressions that are usually employed to indicate Godhead or the ultimate reality are Brahman and Atman. In the entire range of Indian philosophical terminology there are no words which are more significant and important than these. Whatever might be the etymology of these terms, quite early in the history of Indian thought Brahman came to mean the ultimate spirit which is the source of the universe, and Atman the essential self of the individual. In a definite formula the *Taittiriya* Upanishad says that Brahman is that whence all beings come, wherein they reside, and whereunto they return at the end. Similarly, there are texts which define Atman as the innermost immortal self. The Upanishadic seers would seem to have approached the central problem of philosophy, viz. the nature of ultimate reality from two distinct standpoints—the objective and the subjective. Taking the objective world as the basis of their enquiry, they asked: what is the root of it all? Wherefrom does all this (meaning, all that is experienced) emerge? And again, turning to the subject who experiences, they enquired: What is his essential nature? In both these investigations, the

line of advance is the same. Starting from the obvious and the gross, the analysis proceeds to what is not so obvious and is subtle.

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, for instance, Yajnavalkya is asked by Gargi to declare what the support of all things is. "On what is all this woven, warp and woof", she enquires. In a series of answers, Yajnavalkya leads the enquirer to higher and higher concepts, and is at first reticent to go beyond space. When Gargi persists in asking about the support of space, the sage replies that it is the Imperishable (Akshara).

In the Taittiriya Upanishad, Bhrigu learns from his father Varuna that Brahman is the ground of all existence and sets out to discover it. He thinks at first that matter or food (*anna*) is Brahman; for food is what makes existence possible. But soon he realizes that food is only the outer shell of what animates it, viz. life (*prana*). Even this knowledge does not satisfy him; for on further enquiry he finds that mind (*manas*) is the substratum of life. Subsequent analysis reveals to Bhrigu that mind too is a product and cannot answer to the definition of Brahman as the ultimate ground. He now imagines that intellectual awareness (*vidyana*) is the final reality. Just as materialism, vitalism, and mentalism were found wanting on closer scrutiny, intellectualism too is seen to be inadequate. And at last, Bhrigu arrives at the final truth that bliss (*ananda*) is Brahman. In this delight which is the Absolute there is no distinction of enjoyer and object enjoyed. In the infinite there is no division.

The Indra-Virocana myth related in the Chandogya Upanishad is another illustration of the method adopted by the ancient seers for discovering the true nature of reality. The myth is as follows: Prajapati, the lord of creatures, said, "The Self which is free from sin, free from old age, free from death and sorrow, hunger and thirst, whose desire is the real, whose conception is the real—that should be sought, that one should desire to know." The gods (*devas*) and the demons (*asuras*) heard this, and they desired to know more about the self. Indra, the sovereign of the gods, and Virocana, the chief of the demons, were sent as envoys on the mission of learning from Prajapati, knowledge of the self. The two approached Prajapati, dwelt with him for

thirty-two years as his pupils, and then asked him about the self. Prajapati said to them, 'The person that is seen in the eye, that is the self. That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahman'. The implication of this teaching is that the principle responsible for seeing and knowledge is the self. But the pupils misunderstood Prajapati's teaching. They thought that the image of a person which is seen formed in the eye of the one who sees is the self. The corollary they drew that the reflection of the body that is observed in media like water and mirror is the self. When they conveyed this inference of theirs to Prajapati, he simply said, 'Look at yourselves in a pan of water, and whatever you do not understand of the self, tell me'. Indra and Virocana looked at their own reflections in water, and reported to their teacher that they saw themselves in the water to the very hairs and nails. Prajapati asked them to look again in a pan of water after adorning themselves, putting on their best clothes and cleaning themselves. They did as they were told, and perfectly satisfied with their fine reflections, went away thinking that the reflection and the body that was reflected constituted the self. Prajapati did not correct them at that stage, for he wanted to test their competence and give the true doctrine only to him that had proved his fitness. Virocana returned to his clan and spread among the demons the philosophy which he thought he had learnt. 'The body is the self', he said, 'it alone is to be worshipped; it alone is to be served.' Though at first this doctrine seemed to satisfy Indra, very soon he discovered a serious defect in it. When the body is well adorned, dressed and cleaned, the reflection appears well-adorned, dressed and cleaned. But how would the reflection be if the body were blind, lame or crippled, It too would certainly be blind, lame or crippled. And if that were the self, it would perish when the body perished. Indra saw no good in such a doctrine. Without returning to his tribe, he went back to Prajapati and expressed to him his difficulty. After a second period of studentship for thirty-two years, Indra was led a step higher. Prajapati now said to him, 'He who moves about happy in a dream he is the self. That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahman'.

Indra pondered over the implications of this new teaching. It is true that the self of the dream-state is not affected by the defects of the physical body. Yet it is not all happiness that is experienced in dreams. There are also bad dreams and nightmares in which the self appears afflicted, is chased, becomes conscious of pain, and weeps. So, for the third time, Indra went to Prajapati; and at the end of a further period of apprenticeship for thirty-two years, he was instructed by Prajapati thus: 'When one is sound asleep, composed, restful and sees no dream—that is the self. That is the immortal, the fearless. That is Brahman'. In sleep the self is not afflicted, there is no sorrow. But, reflected Indra, there is ignorance, annihilation of consciousness as it were, in so far as one does not know oneself. So, he returned to his teacher once more for further light on his problem. This time he had to wait only for five years, at the end of which period Prajapati gave him the final doctrine. What the teacher said was that the self should be distinguished from the body which is its temporary abode, and the various states of experience. So long as one identifies oneself with the body, one is tossed between pleasure and pain. When one is freed from this wrong identification, there is for him neither pleasure nor pain. When the true knowledge is gained, the self realizes its nature as bliss and consciousness. Indra received this doctrine and carried it to the gods.

The method of arriving at the true nature of the self through an inquiry into the three states of experience is best exemplified in the Mandukya Upanishad, which Sankara describes as containing the essence of the entire Vedanta (sarva-vedanta-sarishtha). The Upanishad begins with an exposition of the significance of aum. Aum is all this—what was, what is, and what will be. It is also what is beyond the three divisions of time, viz., the unmanifest ground of the manifest universe. All this is Brahman; aum is its sound symbol. The self is Brahman. The Upanishad then goes on to say that, corresponding to the three modes of aum (a,u,m) and the fourth modeless (amatra) part, there are the three forms in which the self appears in the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep respectively, and the

fourth which is the natural state of the self, the unchanging and unconditioned Turiya. In the state of waking the self experiences the gross objects of the external world, and its enjoyments are also gross. In dreams it lives in a world of images, and its experience is subtle. In sleep there are no desires, nor dreams; the self becomes one and goes beyond the distinction of seer and seen; it abides there as a mass of sentience, as bliss enjoying bliss. The names assigned to the self in the three states of experience are, respectively, *vaisvanara*, *taijasa*, and *prajna*. The fourth (*caturtha* or *turiya*) is the real self and is beyond the changing modes of existence. While it is not to be identified with any one of the segments of experience in its three states, it is the underlying ground of experience. It is supersensible; it is not in the sphere of empirical usage; it cannot be grasped; it does not possess any distinguishing marks; it is unthinkable and unnamable; it is the one self which is the essence of consciousness; it is that into which the universe gets resolved; it is tranquil bliss, the non-dual reality. Thus the *Mandukya* teaches the true nature of the self through an analysis of the three states of experience. Here too, it will be noted, the inquiry proceeds from the gross to the subtle, from the outer to the inner.

The Self that is the ultimate reality, according to the Upanishads, is not the subject as over against the objects. It is that which underlies both subject and object. That is the implication of the *Mandukya* term *turiya*. And that is the meaning of the equation; *Atman-Brahman*. We have already said that the method followed for arriving at the nature of the supreme truth is to advance from the gross to the subtle. This applies to both the outer and inner words. That which pertains to the outer world is usually referred to as *adhidaiva*, and that which belongs to the inner world as *adhyatma*. In order to teach the identical reality that is the basis of the subject and the object, the Upanishads often identify a term in the subjective series with its corresponding term in the objective series. For instance, in the *Brihadaranyaka* and *Kaushitaki* Upanishads there is a dialogue between *Balaki* and *Ajatasatru* where the technique of correspondences is employed. At first *Balaki* speaks of the Person in

things like the sun and the moon as Brahman. Ajatasatru shows how in each case there is a deeper principle underlying the cosmic phenomena. These are the *adhidaiva* forms of the real. Then the discussion turns to the *adhyatma* forms like one's shadow, echo, bow and eye. And finally, Ajatasatru expounds the nature of the all-soul from which come forth all worlds, all gods, all beings.

The central doctrine of the Upanishads is that of the Supreme Identity. Yajnavalkya expresses this doctrine in a set of beautiful passages where the principle that lies behind all things, cosmic as well as individual, is described as the inner ruler. Addressing Uddalaka, he says, "He who dwelling in all things, yet is other than all things, whom all things do not know, whose body all things are, who controls all things from within—He is your self, the inner ruler, immortal". The locus classicus of the Identity-doctrine, however, is in the teaching of Uddalaka to his son Svetaketu in the Chandogya Upanishad. Here Uddalaka begins by stating that the *sat* (reality, existence) alone was at the beginning, one only without a second, and traces the stages of the world-appearance from that non-dual reality. Then, with a dramatic swiftness, he identifies that reality with the self of Svetaketu whom he has undertaken to teach. "That which is the finest essence—this whole world has that as its soul. That is reality. That is the Atman. That thou art, O Svetaketu!" The formula "That thou art" (*tat tvam asi*) is repeated nine times in this context, thereby indicating that it constitutes the central teaching of Uddalaka. The meaning of this formula is that the ground of the universe is the same as the root-reality of the individual. It is this reality which is non-dual that is referred to by such terms as Atman and Brahman.

In regard to the relation between the non-dual reality and the world of plurality, there are principally two views in the Upanishads: one which regards the universe as a real manifestation of Brahman, and the other which holds that the universe is an illusory appearance thereof. These are respectively called the cosmic (*saprapanca*) and the acosmic (*nishprapanca*) views of the Absolute, and led later on to the founding of the theistic

and the absolutistic schools of Vedānta. The Upanishads express the cosmic view of reality in such passages as the following: "He who consists of mind, whose body is life, whose form is light, whose conception is truth, whose soul is space, containing all works, all desires, all odours and all tastes, encompassing the whole world, the speechless and the calm—this soul of mine within the heart is smaller than a grain of rice, or a barley-corn, or a mustard-seed, or a grain of millet, or the kernel of a grain of millet; this soul of mine within the heart is greater than the earth, greater than the mid-region, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds" (Chandogya). "The self, indeed, is below. The self is above. The self is to the west. The self is to the east. The self is to the south. The self is to the north. The self, indeed, is this whole world" (Chandogya). "It is Brahma; it is Indra; it is Prajapati; it is all these gods; and these five great elements, namely earth, air, ether, water, fire; these things and those which are mingled of the five, as it were, seeds of one sort or another; those born from eggs, those born from wombs, those born from sweat, and those born from sprouts; horses, cattle, men, elephants; whatever creature there is here—whether moving or flying, and what is stationary" (Aitareya). The cosmic view, thus, sees the same reality everywhere and in everything, sentient, and insentient, living and non-living, big and small, gross and subtle. The spirit, according to it, is *viswa-maya* (of the form of the world).

The other view denies reality to the world-appearance, and describes the nature of the Absolute which is the sole reality via negative. In the Brihadaranyaka there is a typical text relating to the acosmic Absolute. Here Yajñavalkya says: "This is imperishable, O Gargi, which the wise men adore—not gross, not subtle, not short, not long, not red, not adhesive, without shadow, without darkness, without air, without space, without attachment, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without speech, without mind, without light, without breath, without mouth, without measure, and without either inside or outside. Not that does anything eat; nor that does eat anything". In a similar strain the Kaushitaki declares: "Devoid

of sound, of touch, of form, without decay, and likewise devoid of taste, eternal, and devoid of odour, beginningless, endless, superior to the Great (mahat) and firm; realizing that, one is released from the jaws of death".

Such negative descriptions of the Absolute do not imply that the Absolute is a negation. All that they mean is that the plenary reality cannot be categorized. Hence the Upanishad says, "not this, not this" (*neti neti*). In order to construe such statements properly, we must take into account other texts which are affirmative in form, viz., texts like "Brahman is reality, consciousness and infinitude" (*Taittiriya*), "Brahman is consciousness, bliss", it is "the real of the real" (*Brihadaranyaka*). The expression *saccidananda* which later on came to be definitive of Brahman is formed out of what is taught in the Upanishads. *Sat* (existence), *cit* (consciousness), and *ananda* (bliss) are the highest concepts by which the human mind is able to indicate the nature of the supreme spirit.

We have seen already that there are two main views of reality in the Upanishads, the cosmic and the acosmic. The world, according to the former view, is a real projection of the ultimate spirit. According to the latter view, it is an illusory manifestation. But, according to both, the primary reality is the Spirit alone. No other cause for the world is acceptable to the Upanishads than Brahman. The *Svetasvatara* poses the questions "What is the cause? Whence are we born? Whereby do we live? On what are we established? And by whom supervised do we experience our pains and pleasures?", mentions the alternative explanations offered by the different schools of thought in terms such as time (*kala*), nature (*svabhava*), necessity (*niyati*), chance (*yadhiccha*), the elements (*bhuta*), the womb (*yon*i), and the male (*purusha*) and rejecting these as inadequate to serve as the first cause of the world, sets forth its considered view that what is responsible for the world-manifestation is the self-power (*atma-sakti*) of God (*deva*), hidden in his own qualities (*guna*).

God, according to the cosmic view of the Upanishads, is both the material and the efficient cause of the world. In the termi-

nology of later Vedanta, God is abhinna-nimittopadana-karana, efficient cum material cause. There is a text in the Chandogya which reads: "All this, verily, is Brahman. Tranquil, let one worship it as tajjalan". This cryptic expression tajjalan is explained by Sankara as meaning "that (tat) from which the world originates (ja), into which the world dissolves (li) and in which it breathes (an) and lives". A cause that answers to this description must be both material and efficient. This is taught explicitly in the Taittiriya where it is said that Brahman is the cause of the origination, sustentation and dissolution of all things and beings. The Isavasya declares that the world is enveloped in God, thereby implying that God is the material cause. The Kena, whose name itself is significant meaning By whom?, teaches that Brahman is the prime mover of all things. The two together, then, which are the first two Upanishads to be mentioned in the traditional list of 108 Upanishads, characterize the Absolute as the whole and sole cause of the world. The same doctrine of God's causality in relation to the world is to be found in texts like, "He desired, 'May I procreate myself!' Having performed austerity, he created all this, whatever there is here. Having created it, into it, indeed, he entered" (Taittiriya), "It thought, 'Would that I were many! Let me procreate myself'" (Chandogya), "Having manifested the world, the self entered it, even to the nail-tips, as a razor would be hidden in a razor-case, or fire in a fire-holder" (Brihadaranyaka). Several illustrations are given to explain how the world is manifested out of Brahman. The process is likened to the ejection of the thread from a spider, the scattering of sparks from fire, the sprouting of herbs from the earth, and the growth of the hair of the head and body on a living person. Although the world proceeds from Brahman, Brahman is not affected by the defects and limitations that we notice in the world. "As the sun, the eye of all the world, is not sullied by the external defects of the eyes", says the Katha-Upanishad, "so the one inner self of all things is not sullied by the misery of the world, being external to it."

The acosmic view regards the modifications that constitute the world as but names. There is no real creation or transfor-

mation. The One alone is; the many that change and pass are only apparent manifestations. In later Advaita the world came to be described as *maya*. Although the *maya* doctrine is not found in the Upanishads in its full-fledged form, the idea is undoubtedly there. When, for instance, Yajnavalkya declares that one sees another where there is duality as it were (*iva*), the expression "as it were" implies that the world of duality is not real. According to a Chandogya text, all modifications are mere names, verbal expressions (*vacarambhanam, namadheyam*). The term *maya* itself appears in the Rig-veda and in the Upanishads in the sense of 'illusion', 'appearance'. The Svetasvatara speaks of God as the wielder of *maya* (*mayin*). That the world production is a marvel and is like unto magic is what is signified by the term *maya*. The world-appearance is *Maya* and the supreme reality is *Mayin*. This conception of the theory of *Maya* and *Mayin* is a revolutionery one as it led later philosophers to establish the utter unreality of the world. (*Mayam tu Prakritim Vidyat Mayinam tu Maheswaram*) in the *svetasvatara* itself the whole world is spoken of as *Maya* and a person attains self-realization only when he realizes that the creation is nothing but *Maya* and *Avidya*. (*Visvamayanivritti*.) God is described as a magician (*Jalavan*) and the creation is a marvelous magic.

The Nama-Rupa-Karma theory propounded in the *Brihadaranyaka* is very significant in the sense that it fully supports the acosmic view of God and nature. According to this theory name, form and action together constitute this world-appearance which is illusory manifestation of Reality. *Mundaka* also states that the two phenomena of nature, viz, name and form are only the transitory and impermanent features of the individual. As rivers flowing into the sea lose their identity with their names and forms set at naught, even so the individuals being divested of their name, form and individuality become absorbed in the Reality. In the *Prasna*, Sukesha receives a lesson from Pippalada in which the unreality of the manifest which is having for its constituents name and form and the oneness of the individual with the ultimate reality are beautifully expressed.

The acosmic view of the Absolute has received the best treatment at the hands of Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka. Though the absolute is situated in all beings, He is distinct from them. All the existing beings are his body, though the latter do not know this fact. He is the unseen seer, unheard hearer, unthought thinker and unknown knower. None except him sees. None except him hears. None except him thinks. None except him knows. He is the internal immortal soul.

Thus at times, a compromise is arrived at by the followers of the two distinct views of the Absolute, viz. Cosmic and Acosmic.

CHAPTER IV

RISE OF JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

The sixth century before Christ was an age of great intellectual ferment, and may be said to mark the adolescence of Indian culture. Such problems as the nature of the soul, the causes of pain and pleasure and the possibility of life after death engaged the attention of the thoughtful, and a number of religious thinkers, varying in character, temperament and spirit, satisfied their religious curiosity in endless philosophical speculations. Each religious thinker claimed a monopoly of truth for his system and ruthlessly tore to pieces the subtle metaphysical theories woven by others.

The materialistic Carvakas, for example, repudiated the authority of the Vedas and other holy scriptures, and did not believe in self or soul, virtue or vice. They declared life and consciousness as combinations of matter and since the body was destroyed on death there could not be any life after death or rebirth. Life was only for enjoyment. The Ajivikas were fatalists who believed that nothing was the result of human effort. They therefore denied moral responsibility of human action, good or evil. Another school founded by Ajita Kesakambalin resolved man into the four elements of earth, water, air and fire which dispersed at death, the inevitable end of life. It was said that neither parents nor any former lives had influence in moulding one's life in this unreal world.

In the midst of this amazing chaos of metaphysical speculations, cantankerous dogmas, theological inconsistencies and moral anarchy, the ordinary man lost his spiritual moorings and appeared dazed and despondent. But this anarchy in thought led to one very good result. It made the religious teachers realise the futility of misty metaphysics and develop an analytical mind and a desire to look at the moral rather than at the physical side of things.

At the same time there was a change in the spirit of the Vedic religion. The simplicity and cheerful outlook of the Vedic period slowly disappeared yielding place to an attitude of despair. Unrestrained imagination and wild superstition deified all conceivable objects in the world and created a pantheon crowded with numerous gods and goddesses, spirits and ghosts with infinite capacity for dreadful malevolence when angry, and unbounded benevolence when appeased. Man's life was just a plaything of divine forces and his happiness and misery were the result of divine compassion or divine caprice. Man was becoming more and more conscious of his helplessness and was therefore anxious to placate the gods by sacrifices and supplication.

But the growth of rituals in course of time eclipsed the importance of even gods as controllers of human destiny and it was believed that even they could be subdued by sacrifices. There was no longer any need to solicit their favour by propitiatory offerings as they could be compelled by sacrifices to grant the desired boon. The Vedic religion had degenerated thus into a collection of formalities, childish superstitions and soul-stifling sacrifices. Naturally this soulless and ritual-ridden Hinduism could not lead to the fulfilment of life, and seemed to be straying from the practical spiritual needs of the people. It was in this atmosphere of religious unrest that Vardhamana Mahavira, the last of the Jain Tirthankaras, and Gautama Buddha, the Prophet of Buddhism, were born.

BUDDHISM

Gautama Buddha, by his spiritual insight, moral elevation, prophetic wisdom, and supreme compassion for suffering huma-

nity became the leader of a new spiritual movement which held out a message of universal benevolence and hope among the lowly and the disinherited. His teachings were simple and clear, and the essence of his doctrines was found in his famous Benares Sermon in which he elaborated his four "Aryan Truths" viz., misery (dukka) cause (samudaya), suppression (nirodha) and way (magga).

Life, he said, was full of miseries like old age, sickness, death etc. and the tears of misery were more abundant than the waters of the deep sea. "Now, this is the noble truth concerning suffering. Birth is painful, decay is painful, disease is painful, painful is the separation from the pleasant, and any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment are painful." In short, misery seems to be the inexorable law of life.

There must be some cause for the existence of this misery because the Law of Causation is a fundamental truth. The emphasis on this axiom is one of Buddha's important contributions to Indian philosophic thought. Gautama said, "Now this is the noble truth of the origin of suffering. Verily, it is the craving thirst that causes the renewal of becomings, that is accompanied by sensual delights, and seeks satisfaction, now here, now there—that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the senses, or the craving for prosperity". Thus his chain of argument runs as follows. "From ignorance comes predisposition, from predisposition comes consciousness, from consciousness come name and form, from name and form come the six provinces of the senses, from the six provinces comes contact, from contact comes sensation, from sensation comes craving, from craving comes clinging, from clinging comes existence, from existence comes birth, from birth come old age and death, pain and lamentations, suffering, unhappiness, and despair".

Therefore if suffering is to be eliminated, its cause must be removed. The craving for the satisfaction of futile personal aims and senseless pleasures must be destroyed. From his own personal experience, he realised the futility of cloying sensuality and

tortuous austerities for achieving this. He said, "There are two extremes which he who has gone forth ought not to follow—habitual devotion, on the one hand, to passions, to the pleasures of sensual beings, and habitual devotion, on the other hand, to self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, unprofitable. There is a middle path discovered by the Tathagatha—a path which opens the eyes and bestows the understanding which leads to peace, to insight, to the highest wisdom, to nirvana. Verily it is the Aryan eightfold path. That is to say: right beliefs, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindedness and right rapture".

Buddha taught that wrong acts sprang from wrong views or beliefs and therefore right knowledge was necessary. Right vision leads on to right aspiration which is "longing for renunciation, the hope to live in love with all; the aspiration of true humanity". According to Bodhicharyavatara, the aspirant would say, "May I be a balm to the sick until sickness come never again; may I quench with rains of food and drink the anguish of hunger and thirst; may I be in the famine of ages' end their drink and meat; may I become the unfailing store for the poor, and serve them with manifold things for their need? My own being and my pleasures, all my righteousness in the past, present, and future, I surrender with equanimity, so that all creatures may reach their goal. . . I yield myself to all living beings to deal with me as they desire. . . I would be a protector of the unprotected, a guide to wayfarers, a ship, a dyke and a bridge for them who seek the farther shore; a lamp for them that need a lamp; a bed for them that need a bed, a slave for all things that need a slave".

Right aspirations result in right action which consists of right speech, right conduct and right living. Right speech implies eschewing falsehood, abstaining from frivolous talk and avoiding harsh language. The Lalitavistara therefore says, "Those who have sin at heart, but are sweet of speech are like a pitcher smeared with nectar but full of poison". Right conduct means unselfish action and eschewing all activities that hinder the progress towards higher life. Buddha was opposed

to all kinds of self-mortification which were painful, vain and profitless and did not help in triumphing over the senses. "Neither abstinence from fish or flesh, nor wearing the matted hair, nor dressing in a rough garment, nor covering oneself with dirt, nor sacrificing to Agni, will cleanse a man who is full of delusion". He also believed that to satisfy the necessities of life without developing attachment to the body was not evil. In short, "to keep the body in good health is a duty, for otherwise we shall not be able to trim the lamp of wisdom and keep our minds strong and clear".

The following conversation between Gautama and a disciple reveals his real attitude which is not very different from that of the Hindu. "Have you ever at any time been hit in a battle by an arrow"? "Yes, I have". "And was the wound anointed with ointment, smeared with oil and bandaged with a strip of fine cloth?" "Yes, it was". "Did you ever love your wound?" "No". "In exactly the same way the ascetics do not love their bodies; but without being attached to them, they take care of their bodies in order to advance in the religious life". He also condemned all ceremonialism, rituals and sacrifices. He once told a Brahmin: "No river can cleanse the doer of evil, the man of malice, the perpetrator of crime.... To the pure, it is always a perpetual fast. To the man of good deeds, it is a vow everlasting.... Be kind to all beings. If thou speaketh not false, if thou killeth not life, if thou taketh not what is given thee, secure in self-denial—what wouldst thou gain by going to Gaya? Any water is Gaya to thee". He believed that "If man performs each month thousand sacrifices and goes on making offerings, without cessation, this is not equal to that man's conduct who but for a moment, with undivided attention fixes his mind on Dharma". He therefore advised a Brahman "Do not deem, O Brahman, that purity comes from merely laying sticks in fire, for it is external. Having therefore left that course, I kindle only the fire within which burns for ever". "Here in this sacrifice, the tongue is the sacrificial spoon and the heart is the altar of fire". It must, however, be emphasised that Gautama was opposed only to the morbid and cruel forms of sacrifice and even permitted one of his disciples,

Kutadanta, to perform sacrifices which did not involve slaughter of animals, because such practices did not conflict with his fundamental principles. Thus Gautama emphasised the practice of morality and taught his followers to develop the virtues of purity, humility and charity. The Buddhist concept of these virtues is brought out in the thoughts of Yuan Chwang when he was about to be sacrificed to Goddess Durga by some robbers. He wished: "Let me return and be born here below that I may instruct and convert these men and cause them to practise themselves in doing good and giving up their evil deeds, and thus by diffusing far and wide the benefits of Dharma to give rest to all the world". Gautama also preached: "Hatred meeting hatred is as the rushing together of oil and flame. Hatred does not cease by meeting hatred, but by meeting love and kindness." "Let hatred be put out by love, as fire is put out by the gentle softness of water".

The conversation between Gautama and Eklochan, the reformed robber chief, reveals the Buddhist concept of love. Gautama asked: 'When they hear thee and are full of fury at the Doctrine, and curse thee and call thee such names as are not to be repeated, what wilt thou think, Eklochan?' The disciple replied, "I shall think: 'These are men in whom is the cream of kindness and gentleness, as in the cocoanut is its sweet milk! For they speak only words of insult, they do not strike me with their hands or fling at me stones, such as my deeds have merited' ". Then Gautama asked, "What if they shall then strike thee with their hands or fling at thee stones". Eklochan replied, "I shall think: 'These men are kind and friendly. They do not strike me with clubs and swords' ". Gautama further asked, "If they strike thee with clubs and swords?" Eklochan replied, "I shall think: 'At least they do not kill me.' " "And if they kill thee?" The disciple with all self-possession replied: "Then that will be the greatest kindness of all, and I shall think 'These men are my well-wishers, for with so little pain they set free Eklochan, the robber, from this hateful body in which he did so many and such evil deeds' ".

Right effort consists in controlling passions by suppressing evil impulses and revitalising the good. Such right effort will not be possible without right thinking, for, "on the mind depends

the Dharma, on the practise of Dharma depends enlightenment". Right meditation or Dhyana is the highest contemplation by which one loses oneself completely in truth and trains the mind to be in harmony with all things that exist. Gautama summarises the way to Nirvana thus: "Faith is the seed I sow; devotion is the rain that fertilises it; modesty is the plough-shaft, the mind is the tie of the yoke; mindfulness is my plough-share and goal. Truthfulness is the means to bind; tenderness to untie. Energy is my team and bullock. Thus this ploughing is effected, destroying the weeds of delusion. The harvest that it yields is the ambrosia fruit of Nirvana and by this ploughing all sorrow is brought to an end".

Buddha took from the common stock of Hindu philosophical thought the principles of Karma and Rebirth. He, however, gave a new interpretation to this theory, because he did not accept the Hindu concept of soul. According to him, beings pass into nothingness at death; but the passions generated by them take new life to satisfy the thirst for existence. This process will go on until the individual completely overcomes the thirst for being.

Thus Gautama presented a humane religion open to all and identical with morality. Asoka, the great saintly Emperor sums up the Buddhistic ethics thus: "What is Dharma? To eschew evil and follow after good; to be loving, true, pure in life and patient. This is Dharma".

The teachings of Buddha have been characterised by some as pessimistic. In analysing the cause of misery, he no doubt over-emphasises the sufferings of life and the emptiness of worldly pleasures. He wonders, "How is there laughter, how is there joy as the world is always burning? Why do you not seek the light, ye who are surrounded by darkness? This body is waste-full, full of sickness and frail; this heap of corruption breaks to pieces. Life indeed ends in death". This emphasis on the predominance of misery over happiness offers a rational justification for man's efforts to gain redemption. For example, in the Katha Upanishad, Nachiketas, the aspirant after Brahma Vidya refused to accept Yama's tempting offers of all kinds of earthly pleasures

and asked: "shall we be happy with these things seeing thee". While Gautama taught that life was a continuous stream of misery, he never emphasised that such suffering was an inevitable feature of life. Buddha realised that all miseries were the result of ignorance which encouraged people to mistake the impermanent pleasure for the real. He taught that if the beauty of life and the pleasures of the senses were transient, so must be the miseries of existence and the agonies of death. His teachings did not tend to destroy the hope of everlasting bliss or discourage the effort for progress. He exhorted his followers not to mourn or despair, but to fight against evil and to perfect human nature. He asks: "And yet what would I have gained by wailing and lamenting either for myself or for others? Would it have brought to me any solace from my loneliness? Would it have been any help to those whom I have left? There is nothing that can happen to us, however terrible, however miserable, that can justify tears and lamentations and make them aught but a weakness". Further well directed suffering is not purposeless for it perfects human nature and hastens the march towards Nirvana which is not a fall into the abyss of nothingness, but a consummation of a spiritual struggle, a state of unalloyed blessedness full of "confidence, peace, calm, bliss, happiness, delicacy, purity, freshness." His robust optimism is well reflected in his message of hope to his followers: "What you deem happiness is unworthy of name. There are better things than this in store for you. There are treasures of happiness in store for you,—pure, perfect, imperishable, real. These will be given to you freely if you will but win them for yourselves."

Gautama no doubt questioned the sanctity of the Vedas which came to be regarded more as a collection of authoritative texts than as embodying fundamental truths which could be explained and tested through life. But Buddhism was not in essence a new rebellious creed which repudiated the fundamental principles of Hinduism. Buddha's teachings were in a sense a logical development of the philosophical ideas embodied in the Upanishads. "Many of the doctrines of the Upanishads are no doubt pure Buddhism, or rather Buddhism is on many points the consistent

carrying out of the principles laid down in the Upanishads." (Max Muller). The philosophy of the Upanishads was understood only by an enlightened few and had not spread to the masses. Gautama accepted its basic truths and tried to reorganise the Aryan society on a wider basis by emphasising the neglected truths and adapting them to suit the spiritual needs of his times. In fact, he made an appeal for a holier living in the bosom of Hinduism of the Upanishads. For example, instead of organising a crusade against the caste system as such, he accepted the standpoint of the Upanishads and asserted that "not by birth is one a Brahmin, nor by birth is one an outcaste; by deeds is one a Brahmin, by deeds is one an outcaste." According to Buddha a true Brahmin is one "who has removed all sinfulness, who is free from haughtiness, from impurity, self-restrained, an accomplished master of knowledge, who has fulfilled the duties of holiness."

In the same manner, Buddha was opposed only to the ugly and debased forms of worship and the spirit of barter and cajolery of the idol behind the performances of sacrifices. Faith in the omnipotence of gods led to a belief in the futility of human endeavour without their grace and generated a feeling of despair, inaction and irresponsibility. The Upanishads exposed the hollowness of the prevailing superstitions, condemned the performance of cruel and mechanical sacrifices and protested against polytheism which corrupted and debased human nature. Gautama completed the work of the Upanishads by emphasising the relentless operation of the Law of Karma and Rebirth which had been elaborated by the Upanishads. With the help of these principles, he was able to re-establish the organic connection between virtue and happiness, demolish the prestige of Providence which had discouraged human action, and destroy the prevailing religious illusions. On the same principles, he preached the gospel of self-help. He declared: "By oneself evil is done; by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone; by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself; no one can purify another." Hence he told his disciples "Be ye lamps unto yourselves; be a refuge to yourself, betake yourselves to no external refuge; hold fast as a refuge to the truth; look not for refuge to anyone besides your-

self." Above all, the codes of duties of the Upanishads which emphasised good conduct, meditation, attainment of true wisdom and dispelling of ignorance are not different from those of Buddhism in essentials. His mission was to hasten the fulfilment of the Upanishadic ideals and not its destruction. Hence Hinduism and Buddhism may be considered as the two poles of Indian philosophy. They should never be regarded as poles apart in their fundamental principles.

Buddha, like all truly religious men, wanted to share the bliss of his spiritual enlightenment with others and moved from place to place preaching his doctrines till his death in 527 B.C. The success of Gautama's mission was in a large measure due to his magnetic personality, genuine piety, transparent simplicity and unbounded compassion for the lowly and the neglected. His teachings were simple and free from all futile metaphysical discussions. People could follow them easily because he preached in their vernaculars and illustrated his points by parables drawn from common and well-known incidents. He also satisfied the spiritual desire of the masses by emphasising the doctrine of spiritual equality and condemning elaborate rituals at a time when ceremonials failed to satisfy religious men. His Kshatriya origin and family influence enabled him to get converts from the Kshatriyas who were opposed to the pretensions of the Brahmins, and his scientific and logical approach appealed to the intellectuals. His disciples and the Sanghas which he established also did their best to spread the new religion. Royal patronage was yet another cause for the spread of the new faith. The Kings of Eastern India were impatient of the Western religious domination and therefore supported Buddhism. Later still, great monarchs like Asoka, Kanishka and Harsha patronised it liberally and made it popular among the people.

But during the two centuries following the passing away of its founder, Buddhism, just like the other ascetic movements of the age, was popular among a few only and was confined mostly to Magadha and Kosala. It was during the reign of Asoka, the St. Paul of Buddhism, that it started on its splendid progress into

a world religion. The sight of misery and suffering which he witnessed on the field of Kalinga stirred his delicate sensitiveness to the horrors of war and worked a revolution in him. At this hour of spiritual crisis in his life, the message of Buddha appealed to him most and he became a convert to Buddhism. He renounced temporal conquests for ever and dedicated himself to the delightful conquest of Dharma. He adopted vigorous measures to spread the religion not only in his empire but also in the different parts of the world.

The rapid expansion of the religion, lack of co-ordination between the different communities due to absence of easy communications, and changes brought about by local influences and local traditions disturbed the unity of the church and gave rise to various schools. The monastic religion was slowly transformed into a number of popular and theistic creeds, the most important among them being the Mahayana.

The Mahayana or the Great Vehicle which became popular by the time of Kanishka differed very much from the Hinayana or Little Vehicle propagated by Asoka. The scriptures of Hinayana which are in Pali represent the original teachings of Buddha and are rationalistic and puritanical. The scriptures of Mahayana which are in Sanskrit are devotional and mystic. They abandon the monastic and self-centred ideal of Hinayana and sanction a number of popular superstitions. While Buddha's teachings are agnostic and emphasise the ideal of self-help, the Mahayana emphasises charity and Bhakti as the means of salvation. Buddha is regarded as the chief God in the company of other gods who should be worshipped with flowers, garments, perfumes, lamps, etc. Thus while the Hinayana emphasises that a man shall reap as he sows, the Mahayana preaches a new idea that a man shall be saved as he prays.

But in spite of the popularity it enjoyed, Buddhism totally disappeared from the land of its birth. Lack of unanimity about the teachings of Buddha led to serious controversies and schisms. The munificence of the followers led to accumulation of wealth in the Sanghas and lowering of the morals of the monks.

The indolence, luxury and scandalous life of the monks started a reaction in the mind of the masses, and the religion lost its charm. Some monks spent their idle hours in weaving metaphysical speculations and devising new rituals. A new literature embodying new interpretations and points of view grew rapidly. But unfortunately no two philosophers agreed, and the church broke into a number of warring sects. Further, during the period of Buddhist ascendancy, Hinduism was neither silent nor dead. Within half a century after Asoka's death, Hinduism recovered its former position. There was very little difference between the basic assumptions of Hinduism and the teachings of Gautama, for, Buddha gave only a new emphasis and new orientation to ideas which had been expressed before him in the Upanishads. The Hindu leaders eliminated all differences between the two religions by adopting several of the Buddhist practices which appealed to the human heart and imagination. Gautama was even regarded as an Avatar or incarnation of Vishnu who purified Hinduism by denouncing bloody sacrifices and other evil practices. Above all, the activities of intellectual giants of Neo-Hinduism infused a new life and fresh vigour into Hinduism and shattered the faith of the people in Buddhism. Sri Sankara by his invincible logic and rational approach defeated all Buddhist theologians in discussions and established the supremacy of Hinduism in different parts of the country. Sri Ramanuja and a host of other saints completed Sri Sankara's work by preaching a philosophy of love. Thus on the eve of Muslim invasions, Buddhism was suffering from the evils of complete exhaustion. It lingered on for a time and disappeared from the land of its birth like Paganism in the Roman Empire after Constantine the Great. In recent years, however, there has been a revival of interest in the teachings of Gautama and the enthusiasm with which the Buddha Jayanti is celebrated throughout the country is an index of the significance of the gospel of the Sakyamuni to the modern world.

JAINISM

Jainism like the other religions of the world, tries to fix the relation between Man and the Universe and to offer practical

solutions to the numerous problems arising therefrom. The fundamental principles of Jainism resemble the doctrines of Buddhism so much that Jainism was for a long time considered by some modern scholars as only another version of Buddhism. Both were rebellious sects, not against Hinduism in its essence, but against the traditional polytheism and the undesirable elements that had crept into the Hindu religion. Both were opposed to the caste system as it was practised, but in actual practice found it impossible to completely eliminate it. Both accepted the doctrines of Karma and Rebirth. The two religions regarded existence as an evil and tried to suggest a path leading to salvation. Both Mahavira and Gautama belonged to the Kshatriya clan and their original teachings were practical rather than philosophical. Both asserted the equality of man. But the fundamental differences cannot be overlooked. The similarities were mainly due to the common inspiration from the Upanishads and the circumstances under which they were developed.

The Jains divided the things of the Universe into two categories—living (Jiva) and non-living (Ajiva). The principle of life which is distinct from the body, is the soul which can be perceived by introspection. The Jivas are infinite in number and they are all alike and eternal, retaining their individuality throughout without destroying themselves or merging with other superior beings. Like a lamp which illumines the whole space whether placed in a small room or a large one, Jiva occupies the whole body according to the size of the physical body it inhabits.

The Ajiva, the lifeless substance on the other hand, lacks consciousness. It is of five kinds of which the first is matter (pudgala) which includes all that can be perceived by the senses; the sense organs, the physical mind, the Karmas etc. It constitutes the physical basis of the world and is capable of integration and disintegration and assuming innumerable forms and qualities. The material substances also possess the qualities of touch, taste, smell and colour. The smallest particles which combine to form substances and which cannot be further subdivided are called (atoms). The atomic theory of the Jains forms an impor-

tant contribution to the science of physics. Matter is as real and eternal as the soul and its total quantity remains the same in the Universe. Dharma, adharma, space (akasa) and time (kala) are also regarded as other forms of ajiva, the only difference being that while matter has form the other four have no form (arupa).

The Jiva, except in the final stage of liberation, is always in combination with ajiva. This contact of the soul with matter results in Karma which retards the liberation and perfection of the soul and subjects it to the miseries of birth and death. The passions, which infect the soul and allow the influx of matter (asrava) which results in bondage are anger, pride, greed and infatuation. "As heat can unite with iron and water with milk, so Karma, unites with the soul; and the soul so united with Karma is called a soul in bondage." "That Jiva which through desire for outer things experiences pleasurable or painful states, loses his hold on self and gets bewildered, and led by outer things. He becomes determined by the others". It follows therefore that if the soul is to be liberated, the inflow of the matter must be checked and the matter with which the soul is mingled must be completely eliminated.

This can be achieved by following the three jewels (triratna) of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. The cravings or passions flow from ignorance and therefore right knowledge (Samyug-jnana) is of utmost importance. Right knowledge consists in a correct understanding of the teachings of the omniscient tirthankaras. Right faith (samyug-Jnana) is firm belief in the infallibility and competence of the teachers and right conduct (samyug-charitra) consists of strict observance of charity, chastity, renunciation of all worldly interests, honourable conduct like not stealing, not uttering falsehood, and ahimsa or non-injury which implies not only the negative act of abstention from all injury to life but positive kindness to all creation. The Jains believe that all things, moving and non-moving including plants and even invisible beings like the smallest particles of the elements of the earth, fire, water, and wind are endowed with soul

and are moving towards the same goal. If every soul, however lowly can become as great as any other soul, then souls in all forms become sacred. Consequently respect for life, wherever found, must be recognised as a sacred duty. This ideal reminds one of Coleridge's famous lines:

"He prayeth well, do loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small.
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Like the Hindus, Mahavira recognised the efficacy of rigorous asceticism in destroying Karma and recommended self mortification, torture and even suicide. Thus while Mahavira showed a short-cut to salvation, he did not make it easy for the masses to follow it.

By faithfully following the triratna, the jiva becomes ablaze with omniscience, destroys the veil of ignorance and attains perfect, supersensual and infinite bliss. It becomes free from the effects of Karma. "Just as when a seed is totally burnt, no sprout comes forth, so also when the seed in the form of Karma is burnt, there is no more worldly existence". This stage of the perfect one (arhatship) corresponds to the Buddhist Nirvana and the Hindu Jivanmukti and can be attained only through self-exertion and self-help.

Jainism is atheistic in the sense that it does not believe in a supreme God as the creator and Lord of all things. The birth, development and death of the things of the Universe are explained by the doctrines of indefiniteness of being and inter-action of substances and are not the result of mere accidents. The Jains believe "There can be no destruction of things that do exist, nor can there be creation of things out of nothing." A blind faith in the divine will renders all scientific and philosophic enquiries futile, because it will be a repudiation of the fundamental Law of Universal Causation. In a chaotic world governed by the whims

and caprices of God, fire might cool one day and water might burn on another day. Again, if it is argued that everything that exists must have a cause, then the self-sustaining creator himself cannot be uncaused and thus there would be an endless regress or argument in a cycle. Acharya Jinasena sums up the arguments thus: "If God created the Universe, where was he before creating it? If he was not in space, where did he localise the Universe? How could a formless or immaterial substance like God create a world of matter? If the material is to be taken as existing, why not suppose the world to be itself existing? Is God self-sufficient? If he is, he need not have created the world. If he is not, like an ordinary potter, he would be incapable of the task, since, by hypothesis, only a perfect being could produce it. If God created the world as a mere play of his will, it would be making God childish. If God is benevolent, and if he has created the world out of his grace, he would not have brought into existence misery as well as felicity?"

Though they deny the existence of gods, the Jains believe in Arhats who, having conquered all Karmas, attain perfection, acquire divine qualities and enjoy the divine bliss of liberation. They become omniscient supreme souls who act as beacon lights for the spiritual aspirants. Contemplation of the divine qualities of liberated souls hastens the pilgrim's progress by generating the hope that his endeavours also would be crowned with similar spiritual triumphs. But there is no room for bhakti or worship in the sense of supplicating for mercy or pardon. The Arhats who are free from all emotions or connections with worldly affairs are utterly indifferent to all that happens in the world. They do not respond to prayers or lend a helping hand to the struggling spiritual aspirants, and the best way of worshipping them is to follow their example and advice. Jainism in this respect is a religion of self-help and preaches: "Man! Thou art thine own friend; why wishest thou for a friend beyond thyself?"

A unique contribution of Mahavira to Jaina metaphysics is the Syadvada or the doctrine of relative pluralism as against the extreme absolutism of the Vedantins and pluralism of the Bud-

dhists. The Vedantin asserts that the only reality is the Atman and all else are mere illusions. The various phenomena are only manifestations of the Atman just as entities such as the pot, jug, cup, doll etc., are only clay under various names and shapes. The Buddhists on the other hand argued that such a permanent entity is just a speculation and man's knowledge is confined to changing phenomena of growth, decay, and death. The Jains declare that beings are complex, and the infinite qualities of a thing cannot be predicated in one statement. All statements are only hypothetical and can express only a part of the truth. Everything must be considered in the four different aspects of matter, space, time and nature. This manner of speaking of a thing synthetically and from different points of views is called Syadvada. The various possibilities of such statements are analysed under seven heads (sapta-bhangi). This underlying principle of Syadvada developed a catholic outlook among the Jains and made them view other philosophical systems as different possible interpretations of the Universe from different points of view. Again, reality is of multiform and ever changing. Nothing can exist at all times and in all ways and places. Under such conditions, blind adherence to an inflexible creed appears to be the height of folly. It thus developed a spirit of endless scientific enquiry and a readiness to abandon discredited theories and accept new ones.

Jainism, like Buddhism, enjoyed a spell of popularity and later on declined due to causes which were more or less similar to those which influenced the fortunes of Buddhism. But unlike Buddhism, it did not die out in the land of its birth and even today the Jains form an influential section of Indian population. The distinctions between the Hindus and the Jains are, however slender. The Jains worship a number of Hindu gods and are even divided into Vaishnavites and non-Vaishnavites.

CHAPTER V

POST-VEDIC LITERATURE

For the purpose of this chapter, the term 'post-Vedic literature' is understood to include post-Vedic Sanskrit literature and literature in Pali and other Prakrit languages. To begin with post-Vedic Sanskrit literature, it must be, first of all, pointed out that, though Vedic literature and post-Vedic Sanskrit literature are, many times, regarded as together constituting what is generally known as Sanskrit literature, those two are different from each other in certain essential features. The Veda is, for instance, traditionally regarded as being 'apaurusheya'. It is claimed that it is not produced by any human agency, that it is god-given and not man-made. Naturally enough, we cannot consider Vedic literature in terms of its authorship; we have to consider it mostly from the point of view of the tendencies and attitudes represented in its different chronological strata. As against this, in post-Vedic Sanskrit literature we have to deal mainly with individual authors and their literary works. Again, in spite of the vastness of extent and diversity of form, Vedic literature represents a kind of unity in the sense that a thread of logical development of thought runs through the texts produced in the successive periods of the Vedic age. Further, whether it be the mythology and magic of the 'Samhitas' or the ritualism of the 'Brahmanas' or the spiritualism of the 'Upanishads', the Veda may be said to relate mainly to one single aspect of the cultural life of the people, namely, religion. In this limited sphere it reflects the contemporary life quite faithfully and thereby possesses great

historical value. Post-Vedic Sanskrit literature, on the other hand, is essentially diversified both in form and contents. Also, unlike Vedic literature, much of it is characterised by a large element of poetic imagination. It, therefore, requires to be studied mainly from the aesthetic and rhetorical rather than the socio-historical point of view.

Post-Vedic Sanskrit Literature

Post-Vedic Sanskrit literature must not, however, be regarded—as it is sometimes regarded—as being coextensive with poetical literature or 'Kavya'. The term 'post-Vedic Sanskrit literature', indeed, has a very wide connotation. For the present purpose, we may consider that literature under three main heads, namely, poetry or Kavya, literature relating to humanities, and literature relating to natural and technical sciences. The term 'Kavya' is here used mainly to include the ancient epics like the 'Mahabharata' and the 'Ramayana', the 'Puranas', epic-poems and lyrical poems, dramatic works, narrative and historical literature, and anthologies and other minor compositions in prose and verse. The literature relating to the humanities comprises works pertaining to the four traditionally recognised ends of human life, namely, 'dharma' or ethical conduct, 'artha' or material well-being, 'kama' or aesthetic pleasure, and 'moksha' or spiritual emancipation. Under the last head are to be included works on various sciences and arts, like mathematics and astronomy, chemistry and alchemy, medicine, and architecture. Post-Vedic Sanskrit literature is, thus, distinguished for its richness and variety. In a sense, Sanskrit literature has not ceased to be produced even now. It is, indeed, well and wisely said that Vedic literature has no beginning but has an end, while Sanskrit literature has a beginning but no end.

I. Kavya

(a) Epic

The Mahabharata, which is the earliest monument of post-Vedic Sanskrit literature, is unique in several respects. For one thing, it is the biggest epic known to the world. In its present

form it contains 1,00,000 stanzas. It is, thus, eight times as big as Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey* put together. It is, however, not merely its enormous size that distinguishes the *Mahabharata*. In point of contents also it is unique. It is rightly claimed that in the field of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*, whatever is embodied in this epic may be found elsewhere, but what is not found here it will be impossible to find elsewhere. The *Mahabharata* is a veritable encyclopaedia of Indian thought and life. Indeed, it may even be said to possess a kind of universality. For, there is hardly any human thought or feeling which has not found expression in it; and there is hardly any situation in human life which has not been conceived by its authors.

Obviously, this enormous literary work could not have been the creation of a single author or even of a single generation of authors. Before it attained its present form, the epic must have undergone several revisions and redactions. Its historical kernel is presumably derived from a cycle of ballads relating to the feud between the five Pandavas and the hundred Kauravas—both of them scions of the family of the Bharatas, which had been well-known since the Vedic age. This feud ended with the victory of the former over the latter. On account of the political importance and influence of the family, this bardic poem, which was called 'Jaya', seems to have become extremely popular. It, therefore, occurred to the promoters of the newly arisen Bhagavata religion that they could utilise that bardic poem as an efficient vehicle for the propagation, among the people at large, of their own religious ideology. Accordingly they revised the original poem by introducing in it their god Krishna as the central figure and representing the victorious Pandava brothers as his special devotees. And all this was accomplished with such great ingenuity and resourcefulness that hardly any traces were left of the personality of Krishna having been extraneous to the bardic kernel. The corner-stone of this Krishnaite revision was the famous 'Bhagavadgita' ("The Lord's Song"), which epitomises the religious, ethical and metaphysical teachings of the Bhagavatas. In course of time, the Krishnaite epic also underwent further revision and enlargement. It was now transformed into a repository of

the entire traditional Brahmanic knowledge and learning. Even after this, the epic continued to be subjected to poetic embellishments and sectarian and other kinds of revisions and enlargements until it assumed its present form.

Ramayana

The Ramayana is a different kind of epic. Unlike the Mahabharata, it is largely the work of a single poet, called Valmiki. The first part of this epic deals with the usual kind of court-intrigue, which, perhaps, has some historical basis. King Dasaraatha of Ayodhya had decided formally to proclaim his eldest queen's son, Rama, as the crown-prince. But at the very moment, he was prevailed upon by his youngest and dearest wife, Kaikeyi, in pursuance of some boons given to her by the king, to banish Rama to the forest for fourteen years and appoint her son, Bharata, as the successor to the throne. With the exile of Rama, in which he was accompanied by his charming wife, Sita, and his devoted brother, Lakshmana, the epic narrative enters quite a new phase. The poet now transforms the banished prince of Ayodhya into the hero of one of the most important events in ancient Indian history, namely, the Aryan expansion to the South. This expansion is represented as being the result of the colonising and civilising activities of Aryan missionaries, like Agastya, aided by military power, which is symbolised by Rama. The heroic Rama is shown to have rendered the hermitages of sages safe against the assaults by demons and to have thus ensured the uninterrupted continuance of their religious and cultural activities. However, in course of time, Ravana, the demon king of Lanka in the farthest south, kidnapped Sita. Thereupon, Rama, who had come to be recognised as the incarnation of the highest god, rallied round himself the various tribes of the south, like the Vanaras, and invaded Lanka. In the battle that followed, Rama was victorious. Sita was rescued and, after the stipulated period of fourteen years, Rama triumphantly returned to Ayodhya.

Deftly interwoven with these two strands of history is a third strand, namely, that of an agricultural myth. The names of some of the principal characters in the epic such as, Sita (ploughed land), Lava (corn), Kusa (grass), Maruti (son of

wind), etc., are very suggestive in this connection. It must, indeed, be said to the credit of Valmiki that he has succeeded, to a very large extent, in producing a unified pattern out of these mutually unrelated strands. The Ramayana also possesses many characteristics of the conventional classical poetry and is, therefore, aptly described as the 'adikavya' (first poem) in Sanskrit.

It may be interesting to attempt a comparative estimate of the two epics. While the Mahabharata portrays a full-blooded and vigorous national life, the Ramayana seems to glorify the quaint virtues of family relationships. It would also seem that the Ramayana generally represents a later and perhaps more sophisticated period of cultural history than the Mahabharata. So far, however, as the composition of the two epics is concerned, it may be presumed that, though the Mahabharata began much earlier than the Ramayana, the latter attained its final form while the former was still passing through the process of revision and enlargement.

Puranas

The Puranas were given their final literary form at a much later date than the two epics. But it would be proper to mention them in the present context, for, they claim to be the real repositories of all ancient legends and are thus closely akin to the epics. The term 'Purana' is traditionally explained as 'that which lives from ancient times'. The Puranas are traditionally said to deal with five subjects, namely, sarga (creation), pratisarga (dissolution and re-creation), 'vansha', (divine genealogies), 'manvantara' (ages of Manu), and 'vanshanucharita' (genealogies of human kings). Actually, however, they contain quite a large number of other topics pertaining to the ideologies and practices of popular Hinduism. The Puranas are, therefore, very appropriately characterised as 'the Vedas of the people'. There are eighteen major Puranas and eighteen minor Puranas and their names indicate their essentially sectarian character.

(b) Epic-Poems

It was once assumed that from the time when the two epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, attained their final literary

form (cir. 2nd century B.C.) up to the time when Kalidasa produced his immortal poems and dramas, there had been a more or less complete break in the production of Sanskrit Kavya. Max Muller, for instance, spoke of a Sanskrit renaissance, which according to him, occurred in the 6th century A.D. Such an assumption has, however, now been shown to be wholly unwarranted. For, some literary works of great merit, which can be definitely assigned to this intervening period, have now come to light. Similarly, many of the epigraphic records belonging to that period possess several characteristic features of classical Sanskrit kavya and thus testify to the tradition of Sanskrit kavya having remained unbroken. Kalidasa must, therefore, be said to symbolise not the resurrection of an extinct tradition but the culmination of a continuing one.

Asvaghosha

One of the most remarkable Sanskrit authors of the post-epic and pre-Kalidasian period, the entire literary output of which has, perhaps, not yet come to light, was Asvaghosha. Indeed, Asvaghosha may be regarded, in a sense, as a pioneer in the field of Sanskrit kavya and drama. The consensus of Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit sources seems to indicate that this Buddhist monk and teacher, who was also a poet of great merit, lived in the 1st century A.D. His 'Buddhacharita' has the distinction of being the earliest mahakavya (epic-poem) in Sanskrit, which has become known till now. Its available nineteen cantos portray the life of the Buddha from his birth up to his victory over Mara, the evil genius of temptations. Here is, verily, an example of a noble theme nobly treated. The poet bears in his heart intense devotion for the Buddha, but he shows admirable restraint in the presentation of the Buddha's miracles. Indeed, restraint may be said to be a characteristic feature of all Asvaghosha's writings. In point of sheer poetic beauty, however, Asvaghosha's other poem, the Saundarananda, perhaps excels the Buddhacharita. In its eighteen cantos, the Saundarananda narrates the story of the Buddha's half-brother Nanda, who was ordained as monk against his will, and his charming wife Sundari. As may be easily imagined, this theme affords ample scope for convincing character-

risation and for presentation of poetic situations. And Asvaghosha has certainly taken the fullest advantage of it. But the theme also affords scope for the propagation of the teachings of the Buddha. Indeed, at the end of the *Saundarananda* the poet claims that his poem essentially deals with the subject of salvation and that he has adopted the *kavya* style not to give pleasure but just to attract people towards religion. He very significantly compares his poem with sweetened medicine. In spite of such protestations, however, a discerning reader of the poems becomes convinced that Asvaghosha was a greater poet than monk.

Kalidasa

The high-water mark of Sanskrit mahakavya, of which Asvaghosha has given us two remarkable exemplars, was reached by Kalidasa (4th century A.D.), who is universally regarded as the brightest star in the firmament of Sanskrit poetry. Kalidasa is reputed to be the author of two mahakavyas (the *Kumarsambhava* and the *Raghuvamsha*), one long lyrical poem (the *Meghaduta*), and three dramas (the *Malavikagnimitra*, the *Vikramorvasiya*, and the *Sakuntala*). Another poetic composition (the *Ritusamhara*) describing the six seasons and the differing aspects of love which characterise those seasons is also attributed to him. Though most of the available versions of the epic-poem, *Kumarsambhava*, contains seventeen cantos, there are valid reasons to suppose that only the first eight are genuinely from the pen of Kalidasa. The epic-poem narrates the story of how gods brought about the marriage between Siva and Parvati, whose son, Kumara or Karttikeya, was to become their commander-in-chief and thus lead them to victory in their battle against the demon, Taraka. In this poem—as, indeed, in most of his literary works—the poet's forte is his superb delineation of love and nature. Parvati is represented to have failed in her earlier efforts to win over Siva, because she had then depended mainly on her physical charms. Later she succeeded because of penance. It is a favourite theme of Kalidasa's that physical love has to be sublimated through suffering and penance before it is transformed into spiritual love, which alone conduces to true and everlasting union of souls. The symbolism of Siva's having first

burnt Madana, the god of love, and then revived and reinstated him is unmistakable. As for nature, Kalidasa does not employ it merely as a material or physical background for human action. Nor does he exploit it merely to show off his powers of keen observation and description. For him, nature is a living entity, a soulful character, which has feelings and emotions and, therefore, is as sensitive as any other character in the poem or the drama. The *Raghuvamśa* is a more mature and sustained literary piece. In this poem, consisting of nineteen cantos, Kalidasa has used a very broad canvas to portray the history of thirty kings of the race of Raghu, in which the highest god had chosen to incarnate himself, as Rama, in order to put an end to the atrocities of the demon king Ravana as also to lay down the standard of domestic virtues. Though each of these kings is treated as a separate individual, the poet seems to have brought about a kind of unity of construction by depicting the fortunes of the family in the form of an arch—rising upwards with the victorious Raghu, reaching the apex with the noble Rama, and again falling down with the dissipated Agnivarna. It is also noteworthy that Kalidasa has treated all these kings—including Rama—as human characters, never trying to represent them either as super-human or sub-human. And who can fail to be struck by the beauty and appropriateness of the poetic imageries and wise and appealing epigrams which the poet has liberally interspersed throughout the poem?

Most of the characteristic features of Kalidasa's poetic genius may be said to have been revealed, in a concentrated form, in the lyrical poem, *Meghaduta*. A Yaksha, separated from his beloved as the result of a curse, commissions a cloud to bear a message of hope and reunion to his beloved pining away in the city of Alaka. The central theme may not be quite original but its treatment by Kalidasa certainly is. Indeed, every one of nearly 120 stanzas of the *Meghaduta* contains a remarkable picture and thus constitutes a lyrical gem. The unique success achieved by this poem may be very well gauged by the fact that it has set the pattern for quite a spate of poems written in imitation of it.

Other Epic-Poems

Rhetoricians often speak of five mahakavyas having been pre-eminent in Sanskrit literature. The first two places in that list obviously belong to Kalidasa's two epic-poems mentioned above. Among the remaining three, the 'Kiratarjuniya' of Bharavi (early 7th century A.D.), which narrates the story of the Pandava hero Arjuna's penance to secure from Siva the miraculous missile with which to overpower the Kauravas, can boast neither of the artistic portrayals of the Raghuvamsa nor of the sustained sublimity of the Kumarasambhava; but it is distinguished for its vigorous style and powerful descriptions. With Magha (cir. 700 A.D.), the author of the 'Sisupalavadha', Sanskrit mahakavya tended to become more and more artificial and pedantic, until at last the last well-known work belonging to this literary form, the 'Naishadhacharita' of Shriharsha (11th century A.D.) came to exemplify, to a certain extent, what the poet himself has characterised as 'poison of speech', namely, 'much verbiage with little meaning'.

(c) Sanskrit Drama

Sanskrit drama is essentially indigenous in origin and growth. There is sufficient evidence to show that dramatic art in ancient India evolved in conjunction with Vedic ritual. Reference to dramatists, dramatic compositions, actors, dramaturgical works, etc., found in several early texts, would also testify to the antiquity of Sanskrit drama. Unfortunately none of the ancient dramatic works are now available. As in the field of mahakavya so too in that of drama, we have to begin with the Buddhist author, Asvaghosha. The very fact that a Buddhist monk and teacher should have employed drama as a vehicle for the propagation of his religious ideology would speak for the popularity of drama in ancient times. Among the palm-leaf manuscripts discovered in Central Asia, in 1910, were found fragments of three dramas. In the colophon of one of them, namely, 'Sariputra-drama' and is written in full conformity with the conventional 'Prakarana', Asvaghosha is clearly mentioned as its author. The Sariputra-Prakarana belongs to the prakarana type of Sanskrit

rules laid down in the 'Natyasastra'. It presents in nine acts the story of the conversion to Buddhism of 'Sariputra' and 'Maudgalayana'.

Bhasa and Sudraka

Two years after the discovery of the Turfan manuscripts mentioned above, Pandit Ganapati Sastri of Trivendrum published a group of thirteen plays, discovered in Malabar, and thereby brought to light the dramatic compositions of another ancient Sanskrit dramatist, namely, Bhasa (2nd or 3rd century A.D.). Till then, students of Sanskrit had been familiar only with the name of this author, which was referred to in the works of Kalidasa, Bana, Vakpatiraja, Rajasekhara, and Abhinavagupta. It may be pointed out that, though doubts are still expressed by some scholars about the authenticity of Bhasa's authorship of the thirteen plays, a strong *prima facie* case can be certainly made out in favour of it. Out of the thirteen plays, which, incidentally, endow Bhasa with the distinction of having been a Sanskrit author with the largest number of dramas to his credit, two have drawn their themes from the Ramayana, five from the Mahabharata, one from the Puranic Krishna-legend, and two from the Udayana-legends in the Brihatkatha while the plots of the remaining two are presumably invented by the poet. From the point of view of dramatic construction also these thirteen plays are note-worthy, for they produce the impression of having been intended essentially as experiments in stage-craft. As indicative of the dramatic skill of Bhasa may be pointed out the dream-episode in the Svapnavasavadatta, the touching scene between Duryodhana and his son in the Urubhanga, the element of dramatic surprise in the 'Madhyamavyayoga', and the striking originality of the plot of the 'Charudatta'.

The last-mentioned play of Bhasa seems to have achieved great popularity, so much so that another dramatist Sudraka (cir. 3rd century A.D.), took up its central theme and enlarged it into one of the most successful dramas in Sanskrit, namely, the 'Mricchakatika' ('The Clay-Cart'). The Mricchakatika of Sudraka, the Sakuntala of Kalidasa, and the Uttararama-

charita of Bhavabhuti—each of them revealing dramatic excellence of a different kind—are regarded as the three most precious jewels in Sanskrit dramatic literature. The plot of the *Mricchakatika* is made up by skilfully blending together two strands of story—the romantic affair between the noble merchant Charudatta and the charming and devoted courtesan Vasantasena and the political revolution against autocratic Palaka, which was successfully brought about under the leadership of Aryaka. The success of the drama is largely due to the many-sided interest which this plot evokes. Again, in perhaps no other Sanskrit drama do we have such an exciting variety of characters. Attention may also be drawn to the remarkable stage-worthiness of this drama. These three factors may be said to be mainly responsible for the great popular appeal which this drama has always possessed.

Kalidasa

But it is again Kalidasa, who bears the palm also in the field of Sanskrit drama. It is said about classical Sanskrit literature that among its poetical works dramas are most charming and among these dramas the *Sakuntala* of Kalidasa is easily the best. The main theme of all the three dramas of Kalidasa may be said to be love. Indeed, it is possible to determine, by means of a comparative study of the treatment of love in these dramas, the chronological order in which they must have been written. In the *Malavikagnimitra*, love is represented as a more or less vulgar passion; in the *Vikramorvasiya*, it becomes a lyrical but an explosive and infatuating emotion; while, in the *Sakuntala*, which is obviously the product of the poet's maturity, love is shown to be an ennobling and abiding sentiment, which is sublimated and spiritualised through suffering and penance. The plot of the *Sakuntala* falls into three movements—the first union between Dushyanta and Sakuntala, which is the result of heedless and headlong love and which relates to physical attraction and earthly romance; the long period of separation and suffering through which the two lovers are required to pass; and the final reunion of souls brought about in the sacred heaven through their son. As Goethe has suggested in his matchless appreciation of the

drama, its theme is to portray the history of a development—the development of flower into fruit, of earth into heaven, of matter into spirit.

The plays of Kalidasa show him to be a great master of dramatic technique. He seems to have fully realised that conflict is the soul of drama. Generally, it is the inner conflict which he has chosen to depict. But there is also another type of conflict often presented in his dramas—conflict, which may, indeed, be said to be a common feature of many Sanskrit dramas—namely, that between man and omnipotent destiny. One can point to several dramatically interesting situations in Kalidasa's plays, such as, for instance, the trifocal scene in the third act of the *Malavikāgnimitra*, the opening scene in the *Vikramorvasiya*, and the scene of the first meeting of *Dushyanta* and *Sakuntala*. As for Kalidasa's characters, they never degenerate into types. Each one of them—even the minor one—possesses his or her own individuality. Then there is, of course, nature, which the poet enlivens and introduces as a character in his plays. In the hermitage of *Kanva*, for instance, *Sakuntala* actually has three companions—*Anasuya*, *Priyamvada*, and nature. It must also be remembered that the dramatic effect produced by Kalidasa's skilful plot-construction and convincing characterisation is considerably heightened by his superb literary style. Indeed, one sometimes wonders whether Kalidasa was not a greater lyricist than dramatist!

Post-Kalidasian Dramatists

As in the field of *mahākāvya* so too in that of drama, the authors who followed Kalidasa have suffered by comparison with him. Some of their dramatic works, however, do possess certain distinctive features. For instance, the *Mudrarākṣhaśa* of *Viśakhadatta*, who must have been a junior contemporary of Kalidasa, deals exclusively with a political intrigue. Exploiting the similarity and contrast in the characters of the two rival ministers, *Rākṣhaśa* and *Chanakya* and presenting a variety of incidents, *Viśakhadatta* has demonstrated that a drama can become successful even without a single female character in it. Similarly, one of the three plays written by *Shriharsha* (604-648 A.D.),

namely, the Ratnavali, has all along been regarded as a model of conventional dramatic theory brought into practice. But the dramatist, who could perhaps be reckoned as a rival of Kalidasa, was Bhavabhuti (cir. 700 A.D.). It is suggested that in his three dramas—the Mahaviracharita, the Malatimadhava, and the Uttararamacharita—Bhavabhuti has delineated respectively the three main sentiments (*rasa*), namely, valour (*vira*), love (*shrungara*), and pathos (*karuna*). He must, however, be said to have been essentially a poet of *karuna rasa*. The plots of Bhavabhuti's first two plays are unoriginal and often loosely knit together and the characterisation is not very impressive. His literary style also is rather too heavy. But in the Uttararamacharita he distinguishes himself in all these respects. For sheer tragic pathos it would, indeed, be difficult to find anything to equal the third act of that play. Bhatta Narayana, who followed Bhavabhuti, must be regarded as perhaps the last great Sanskrit dramatist. His Venisamhara, like the Ratnavali of Shriharsha, typically exemplifies the dramatic theory of the five *Sandhis*. Of course, creative activity in the field of Sanskrit drama can by no means be said to have ceased after Bhatta Narayana's times. We do come across versatile dramatists like Murari and Rajasekhara (both in the latter half of 11th century A.D.) and distinctive dramatic works like the allegorical Prabodhachandrodaya of Krishnamisra (second half of the 11th century A.D.) and the humorous Bhagavadajjukiya of an unknown author. But the touch of a master, like Kalidasa or Sudraka or Bhavabhuti, becomes no more evident.

(d) Narrative Literature

Two Types: Panchatantra

The beginnings of Sanskrit narrative literature may be traced back to the arthavada portions of the Brahmanas, which contain several ancient legends, like those of Pururavas and Urvashi, Manu and the flood, and Sunahsepa. The Buddhist counterpart of this Brahmanic tradition of story-telling may be said to have been reflected in the anecdotes preserved in the Avadanas and the Jatakas. Apart from these early legends, which posses-

sed some kind of religious significance, there must have been in currency also stories with a distinctly secular purport and background. These latter naturally fell into two types. Some of the secular stories, which were generally of the nature of popular tales or beast-fables, aimed at teaching man how to live successfully, by inculcating in him practical lessons of worldly wisdom. The other type of stories were intended mainly to appeal to the romantic side of man's mind. Man always hankers after a kind of life which is remote from the humdrum everyday-life in which he is buried. These romantic tales transport him into a magic world full of mystery and unexpectedness. A well-known collection of the first type of tales is the Panchatantra. The Panchatantra, as the name itself indicates, consists of five parts which deal respectively with five topics of a didactic character, namely, separation of friends, winning of friends, war and peace, loss of what has been acquired, and indiscrete and impatient action. Nothing definite can be said about the date and authorship of this work, which, incidentally, is the only collection of beast-fables available in Sanskrit. It would, however, appear that the central ideas of many of the stories had been transmitted through oral tradition, from generation to generation, in the form of floating literature pertaining to worldly wisdom and that they were given a fixed and homogeneous literary form by some ingenious author. In the Panchatantra, the author has employed a simple and direct style which suits the contents most admirably. The prose of the narration is interspersed with stanzas, which often epitomize the didactic teachings of the story. The great popularity, which the original Panchatantra must have achieved, might account for the various recensions in which its text has come down. It was one of these recensions out of which arose the Hitopadesa, which must be reckoned as the only other popular collection of didactic tales. The Hitopadesa is ascribed to one Narayana, who must be said to have succeeded in producing a more or less independent work out of the materials derived from the Panchatantra and the Kamandakiya Nitisara (which latter is a digest on Hindu polity).

Romantic Tales

The other type of narrative literature in Sanskrit is preserved either in the form of cycles of romantic stories or of full-length

romance. To the first category belong works like the *Kathasaritsagara*, the *Vetalapanchavimsati* and the *Simhasanadvatimsika*. The fountain-head of most of such cycles of romantic tales was presumably the *Brihatkatha*, which is traditionally attributed to Gunadhya. This work, which is believed to have been originally written in the Paisachi Prakrit, is unfortunately lost, but some idea about its extent and contents may be had from its two metrical adaptations in Sanskrit, namely, the *Brihatkathamanjari* of Kshemendra and the *Kathasaritsagara* of Somadeva (both of the 11th century A.D.). While these two works present mainly the legends connected with Udayana and his son, Naravahanadatta, the *Vetalapanchavimsati* and the *Simhasanadvatimsika* have Vikrama as their central figure. These collections of romantic tales amply testify to the high standard of the art of story-telling, which had been developed in Sanskrit. Their authors have fully exploited the elements of suspense and surprise, which, indeed, constitute the real source of narrative interest. They have also succeeded, in a large measure, in creating the necessary atmosphere of mystery and magic.

But far more significant from the literary point of view than these collections are the full-length prose romances. As in the case of Sanskrit drama, so too in the case of Sanskrit romance, scholars had once propounded the theory of Greek influence. However, taking into consideration the spirit and the method of these romances as also their literary history, one may characterise such a hypothesis as being wholly unwarranted. Perhaps equally unwarranted is the emphatic postulation by some rhetoricians of two kinds of romance showing certain essential differences, namely, the *Katha* and the *Akhyayika*. Actually, as Dandin has said, *Katha* and *Akhyayika* were originally two names given to one and the same literary form. It was presumably at some later stage that a distinction between the two came to be made by suggesting that the central theme of the *Katha* is imaginary while that of the *Akhyayika* is historical. Though romance, as a literary form, seems to have been referred to by as early an author as *Katyayana* (3rd century B.C.), its earliest available exemplar is the *Dasakumaracharita* of Dandin, who is believed to have

lived in the last half of the 6th century A.D. The *Dasakumara-charita* has obviously been left unfinished by the author, for, instead of presenting the adventures of ten princes, as the title of the work demands, it presents the adventures of only eight. Though *Rajavahana* is intended to be the hero of the romance, it is the story of *Apaharavarman*, one of the seven princely companions of the hero, which particularly holds the interest of the reader. It is full of incidents and intrigues in which are involved quite an assortment of characters. In this respect, it reminds one of *Sudraka's Mricchakatika*. The *Dasakumara-charita* is often—and rightly—described as a romance of roguery. It is, however, noteworthy that *Dandin* shows remarkable restraint in the handling of his rogues.

Though the prose romance written by *Subandhu*, who was presumably a junior contemporary of *Dandin*, is called *Vasavadatta*, it is in no way connected with queen *Vasavadatta* of the famous *Udayana*-legends. Its entire plot seems to have been invented by *Subandhu*, who, however, does not show much ingenuity or originality in this respect. We have here the usual motifs of a romantic story, namely, dream-damsel, magic steed, speaking birds, human beings turned into stone etc. Scholars sometimes characterise Sanskrit romance as prose *Kavyas*, thereby emphasising the poetic excellence rather than the narrative skill exhibited in them. In *Subandhu's Vasavadatta*, at any rate, it is the poet's melodious diction which appeals to us most.

Bana

The last half of the 6th century and the first half of the 7th seem to have been particularly prolific so far as prose romances are concerned. For, *Bana*, who must be regarded as the greatest master in this field, followed immediately after *Subandhu*. If a list were made of typical works in Sanskrit, the *Kadambari* of *Bana* would necessarily find a place in it. The story of *Kadambari* is highly complicated. For one thing, the author here aims at portraying the lives of two heroes and that too in their two or three incarnations. In addition to this there is considerable subsidiary material which is presented in the form of tale emboxed

within tale. But, in the *Kadambari*, the element of story is but subservient to poetry and delineation of sentiments. It may be that Bana's style is often laboured from the point of view of vocabulary, syntax, and rhetoric and reading his prose is like wading through a thick jungle, but the overall impression that the *Kadambari* produces is one of rich exuberance and dignified flamboyance. Bana's work may be characterised by lack of proportion, but it should be remembered that there is a peculiar kind of beauty in deliberate overdoing. As against the *Kadambari*, which he designates as *Katha*, Bana characterises his other romance, the *Harshacharita*, as *Akhyayika*, for, the *Harshacharita*, which, like the *Kadambari*, has remained unfinished, is a romance written on a historical theme. It is intended to be a biography of the author's patron, Harsha, who ruled between 606 and 648 A.D. But, in it, fact is freely mixed with fiction and history with legend.

Historical Kavya

It is often suggested that ancient Indians did not possess a true historical sense. Being perhaps more concerned with the spirit than with its material manifestations, they are said to have cared but little about the objective process of historical events. In spite of the fact that such a judgement is only partially true, there is, undoubtedly, a tragic dearth of genuine historical works in Sanskrit. What we actually have in this class—of course, leaving out of consideration the Sanskrit inscriptions, some of which possess great literary merit—comprises a historical romance like the *Harshacharita* and historical poems (with the accent on the word 'poems') like the *Navasahasankacharita* of Padmagupta (first half of the 11th century), which celebrates the Paramara king Sindhuraja of Dhara, and the *Vikramankadevacharita* of Bilhana (second half of the 11th century), which describes the career of the Chalukya king Tribhuvanamalla. There are, however, a few oases in the desert like, for instance, the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana (12th century), which constitutes a chronicle of Kashmir kings beginning with the legendary Gonanda, who is supposed to have been a contemporary of Yudhishtira of the *Mahabharata*, and coming to Harsha, who was assassinated in

1101 A.D. It must be pointed out that, while, in the earlier part of his work, Kalhana seems to depend mostly on tradition and hearsay, in the latter part, as he comes nearer to his own times, his accounts become more authentic. Mention may be made, in this context, also of the history of the Chalukyas of Gujarat, and the Prithvirajavijaya of unknown authorship, which describes the exploits of Prithviraja Cahumana of Delhi (12th century A.D.).

Champu

A special form of narrative literature, which may be referred to in passing, is the Champu. A Champu is made up of a mixture of verse and prose and thus claims some affinity both with epic poem and prose romance. But none of the available Champus can be said to approach even remotely the works of Kalidasa or Bana. The Yasastilaka-champu of the Jaina author, Somaprabha Suri (10th century A.D.), is frankly religious in purport, while Champus, like Ananta's Bharata-champu are of the nature of epitomes of earlier epic works.

(c) Miscellaneous Sanskrit Kavya

Miscellaneous works in the field of Sanskrit kavya, that is to say, works which cannot be described as belonging to any specific literary form, are, indeed, numerous. A common feature of most of these may be said to be that they are metrical compositions. They are normally of the nature of collections of stanzas—each stanza often being independent in form and thought, but all the stanzas being bound together by a common theme. There are, for instance, stotras or collections of devotional stanzas addressed to some personal god or some other object of worship. These stotras are infused with the various characteristics of bhakti, such as, exclusive glorification of a particular god, a sense of complete self-surrender on the part of the devotee, and his earnest longing for a personal communion with the divinity. In them, religious fervour is beautifully matched by poetic imagery and musical rhythm. To this class belong, for instance, the Buddhist Lokeshvarasataka (9th century A.D.), the Jaina Bhaktamarastotra (7th century A.D.), and the Hindu Gangalahari of Jagannatha Pandita (17th century A.D.). There is another type

of poems, like the *Krishnakarnamrita* of *Lilasuka* and the *Gita-govinda* of *Jayadeva* (12th century A.D.), wherein the sentiment of devotion is manifested in erotic terms and on an amorous background. The latter work is, indeed, unique in several respects. Its songs have been rendered in appropriate ragas (melodies) and the sentiments in it are intended to be brought to life by means of suitable dances. Apart from such erotic-devotion songs, there are also available collections of purely erotic stanzas, like the *Amarusataka*, which is wrongly ascribed by tradition to the philosopher *Sankara*. Of more or less similar nature is the *Sringarasataka* of *Bhartrihari*, though the emphasis in the latter work is rather on the ultimate futility of love than on the sensuous pleasures derived from it. Nothing can be definitely asserted about the date and personality of *Bhartrihari*, but it is not improbable that he was identical with the Buddhist grammarian *Bhartrihari*, the author of the *Vakyapadiya*, who is believed to have died about 651 A.D. The three *Satakas* (centuries) of *Bhartrihari*, namely, the *Sringarasataka* (century of Love), the *Vairagyasataka* (Century of Renunciation), and the *Nitisataka* (Century of Worldly Wisdom) must, indeed, be regarded as quite remarkable in the field of miscellaneous Sanskrit *kavya*. *Bhartrihari's* style is simple but piquant, and the sentiments which he expresses have a sort of universality about them and, therefore, make a direct appeal to the popular mind.

Finally, mention may be made of the several anthologies in Sanskrit, in which are collected single stanzas of known and unknown authors on miscellaneous subjects. These anthologies truly reflect the vast extent, the surprising richness and variety, and the inherent charm of Sanskrit *kavya*.

II. Literature relating to the Humanities

The concept of the four ends of human life (*purusharthas*) may be said to have been the result of the realisation by ancient Indian thinkers of the complex nature of man's personality. Man has his instincts and natural desires, his craving for power and property, his social connections and obligations, and his spiritual urge. To these four are respectively related the four *purusharthas*,

namely, kama, artha, dharma, and moksha. In view of the fact that a truly integrated personality implied a pattern of life in which these four purusharthas are properly coordinated and mutually regulated, Sanskrit authors have given a serious thought to this whole problem and have, as a result, produced considerable literature pertaining to it. Broadly speaking this literature may be classified under four heads: literature pertaining to science and art of love (Kamasastra), literature pertaining to religious and civil law (Dharmasastra), literature pertaining to polity and material welfare (Arthasastra) and philosophical literature (Mokshasastras or darsanas). All this literature relating to the humanities, though perhaps not quite as extensive as Sanskrit poetry, is fairly voluminous. Only a very brief indication of some typical works belonging to these four branches of knowledge is, therefore, possible here.

Dharmasastra

It will be seen that, though the term, Dharma, has to be interpreted differently in different contexts, there is a certain common essential idea suggested by it. Generally, Dharma may be said to aim at prescribing a way of life, which would resolve, as effectively as possible, the inevitable conflict between the individual good and the social good, between what is spiritual and what is temporal. Indications of such precepts are not wanting even in the Vedic literature, but the earliest literary works, which deal with the subject of religious and civil law more or less systematically, are the Dharmasutras. The Sutras represent a unique literary form developed in Sanskrit. It consists of aphorisms—brief, unequivocal, and embodying just the essentials of the subject. Presumably, they were originally intended as points for lectures, which the teacher used to expound orally and which the pupils could easily learn by heart. Many of the Dharmasutras are an offshoot of a larger movement of Brahmanic consolidation, which was started in order to counteract the influences of heterodox ways of life and thought. Though, like the Srautasutras (which dealt with Vedic ritual) and the Brihyasutras (which dealt with domestic life), the Dharmasutras also originated in specific Vedic schools, it seems that, in course of time, their authority came to be recognised by all schools.

The Dharmasutra of Gautama, which probably belongs to a period between 600 B.C. and 400 B.C., is the oldest available Dharmasutra. It deals, in its twenty-eight chapters, with the usual topics of Dharmasastra, such as, sources of Dharma, rite of initiation, duties of the four social orders in the four stages of life, sacraments, duties of kings, civil and criminal law, personal conduct, and expiatory rites. Among other Dharmasutras may be mentioned those of Baudhayana, Apastamba, and Visishtā. The general ideological pattern of these various Dharmasutras was more or less the same—a pattern which may be characterised as the Brahmanic pattern—though certain differences in details, arising on account of the provenance and age of the particular Sutras, were inevitable. The second stage in the evolution of the literature relating to Dharmasastra is represented by the metrical works called Smritis. As against are Srutis (from the root *Sru*=to hear), which implied the direct 'hearing' of the revealed word, the Smritis (from the root *smru*=to recollect) comprised traditional knowledge which had been preserved in memory by generations after generations. The most important work of this type is the Manusmṛiti. It would seem that, on account of their peculiar literary form, the Sutras gradually tended to become more and more understandable and that, therefore, many Brahmanic schools, which had produced Dharmasutras, elaborated and amplified those Sutras in the form of metrical Smritis. Presumably, the Manusmṛiti also was thus based on a Dharmasutra belonging to the school of Manu. It is necessary to remember in this connection that Dharma was never regarded as being static and that, accordingly, the changing social conditions did inevitably influence the precepts of Dharma in different periods. The Manusmṛiti, which is also known as *Bhṛiguśamhitā*, consists of twelve chapters and 2694 stanzas. It begins with a statement regarding the process of creation and then proceeds to lay down, in the next five chapters, rules of conduct of persons belonging to different social orders (*varṇa*) and different stages of life (*āśrama*). It then goes on to discuss the duties of kings (*rajadharma*) where, in connection with the administration of justice, it deals at some length with the 18 titles of law. It ends with the mention of some expiatory rites (*prayaschittas*) and a de-

sultory discussion of a few philosophical topics like karma, gunas etc. The author of the Manusmṛiti seems to put special emphasis on the sanctity and efficacy of the scheme of four social orders and exhibits a distinct bias in favour of the Brahmanas. By and large, this work may be said to have been the outcome of the Brahmanic revival, which was brought about, during the regime of the Brahmana dynasty of the Sungas (2nd century B.C.), after a fairly long interregnum dominated by heterodox currents of thought like Buddhism. If the Manusmṛiti was the law-book of the Sungas, the Yajñavalkyasmṛiti was the law-book of the Guptas (4th-5th centuries A.D.). It reflects the more liberal Hinduism which was sponsored by the Gupta monarchs. This may be seen from its attitude concerning the legal rights of women and the lower social orders. Though the Yajñavalkyasmṛiti may not possess the traditional sanctity and authority of the Manusmṛiti, it is perhaps superior to the latter from the practical point of view. It shows a distinct improvement in the arrangement of the various topics of ancient Hindu law, which is usually presented as a queer mixture of religious and secular law. The Yajñavalkyasmṛiti is divided into three clear-cut sections, namely, *achara* (religious law), *vyavahara* (civil law), and *prayaschitta* (penance). It is further noteworthy that, in *vyavahara*, this Smṛiti pays greater attention to private law than to criminal law. Several other Smṛiti texts—big and small—were produced in course of time, but it may be generally stated that they did not register any significant advance in the theory and practice of Hindu law.

We now come to the third stage of the Dharmasastra literature, namely, that represented by commentaries on the Sūtras and Smṛitis and independent treatises. Haradatta (12th century A.D.) has written an excellent commentary on the Dharmasūtras of Gautama and Apastamba. Many commentaries on the Manusmṛiti are available, perhaps the earliest and the most extensive being that of Medhatithi (9th century A.D.). It may be observed that the commentators often interpret the original Dharmasastra texts in the light of the conditions obtaining in their own times. Certainly the most important work belonging

to this class is Vijnanesvara's commentary on the Yajnavalkyasmṛiti, called Mitakshara (11th century A.D.). Indeed, this commentary has been given the status of an independent authority in Hindu law, particularly in Bombay. A similar status has been given in Bengal to Jimutavahana's Dayabhaga (11th century A.D.), which mainly deals with such topics as inheritance, partition, stridhana, reunion etc. The authority generally recognised in Madras courts is that of the Smṛitichandrika of Devanabhatta (12th century A.D.). This work is an exhaustive digest of Hindu law, which takes into account a large number of earlier texts. It is interesting to note that though Devanna generally follows Vijnanesvara, he differs from him in the interpretation of certain crucial passages in the Yajnavalkyasmṛiti. Among the treatises on Hindu law belonging to the later period the more well-known are Vyavaharamayukha of Nilakanta (first half of the 17th century A.D.), whose authority is recognised in Gujarat, the Viramitrodaya of Mitramisra (17th century A.D.), which is highly respected in Banaras, and Kasinatha Bhatta's Dharmasindhusara (end of the 18th century A.D.), which deals mainly with religious observances and which is generally followed in the Deccan.

Arthasastra

As has been indicated above, the ancient Indian concept of Dharma comprehends all aspects of man's relation with society. The political aspect of this relation—that is to say, the relation between the state and the subject—is covered by *rajadharma*, which may be generally regarded as representing ancient Indian polity and a section on which is incorporated in many Dharma-sastra works. Information regarding certain items of ancient Indian polity like, for instance, the origin and nature of kingship, may be gleaned even from the Vedic texts, particularly the Atharvaveda and the Brahmanas. However, with the growing complexity of political affairs and practices, the need must have been felt, at a fairly early date, to develop and systematise polity as an independent science. This science is variously known as Arthasastra or Nitisastra, or Dandaniti. Apart from the fact that Arthasastra deals with polity in a much more detailed and

comprehensive manner than Dharmaśāstra, there is also an essential difference in the attitudes of the two. While Dharmaśāstra emphasises the more or less spiritual character of both the means and the ends, Arthashastra ordains that one should steadfastly strive to achieve his only end, namely, material power and prosperity, by whatever means are serviceable to him. Dharmaśāstra and Arthashastra thus represent two distinct disciplines in ancient Indian social philosophy.

In 1909, Shamasastri of Mysore discovered and published the Arthashastra of Kautilya and thereby gave almost a new orientation to the study of the cultural history of ancient India. Though literature pertaining to Arthashastra must have presumably begun to be produced—perhaps in the Sutra-form—at a much earlier date, Kautilya's Arthashastra is the earliest treatise on the subject which has become available so far. This work, which consists of fifteen sections and which is mostly written in prose, deals with such topics as discipline of king, duties of departmental heads, administration of justice, security measures, civil service, city administration, interstate relations, elements of sovereignty, foreign policy and secret means. So far as the arrangement of these topics is concerned, the Arthashastra shows a remarkable unity of plan and execution. This would imply that it was produced by a single author or, at least, under the direction of a single person. Again, this author or director must have himself been a practical statesman and administrator, for, the Arthashastra deals more with governmental administration than with political theory and that too from an essentially practical point of view. There has been a lot of controversy regarding the date and authorship of the Kautiliya Arthashastra. But no satisfactory case has been made against the age-long tradition, which is supported by considerable internal and external evidence, namely, that its author was Kautilya or Chanakya or Vishnugupta, the chancellor of Chandragupta Maurya (320 B.C.). Therefore, the Arthashastra may as well be regarded as the authorised political guide and law-book of the Mauryas.

Unlike Dharmaśāstra, Arthashastra suffers from a lamentable lack of continuity of literary tradition. For, from the 4th

century B.C. we have to come down to the 4th century A.D. for a work treating exclusively of political theory and state administration. The *Kamandakya Nitisara* (cir. 400 A.D.) is but a metrical conspectus of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and its author shows no traces of originality in political thought or of experience in administrative practice. The same is the case with the *Sukraniti* (cir. 800 A.D.) with this difference that its treatment of government machinery and military organisation is fairly detailed.

Kamasashtra

One of the noteworthy features of ancient Indian thought may be said to be the polarity of mental attitudes exhibited in it. While, on the one hand, renunciation is glorified as the supreme way of life, on the other, mere sensual pleasures are regarded as being a fit subject for a serious treatise. A certain kind of sexuality does have a place in some ancient Indian religious cults, but that does not constitute *Kamasashtra*. It is purely the sensuous aspect of love which forms its main subject-matter. The beginnings of *Kamasashtra* may be traced back to those hymns of the *Atharvaveda* which are generally classified as *Strikarmani*. But the first regular full-length treatise on the subject, which has become available, is the *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana (cir. 400 A.D.). Of course the *Kamasutra* itself speaks of a long literary tradition beginning with the Vedic teacher, Svetaketu. The *Kamasutra*, which is divided into seven parts, begins with a general discussion of the *purusharthas* and then proceeds to deal with its special topics, such as enjoyment of love, romantic affairs with maidens and married women, courtezans and their art, and secret potions to win love. Even a cursory perusal of Vatsyayana's work would show that, both in its ethics as well as treatment of subject-matter, it is clearly influenced by Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Like Kautilya, Vatsyayana also seems to teach that what really matters is the attainment of the end, namely, winning of love of the desired man or woman, and not the kind of means employed for that purpose. The importance of the *Kamasutra* may be said to be twofold: firstly, the classical poets have depended on it, to a large extent, for the portrayal of their

love-scenes; secondly, the work provides the modern historian with quite an amount of material of sociological significance.

Philosophical Literature

Ancient Indians are said to have been essentially spiritually-minded. In the ideal scheme of the four purusharthas, for instance, kama and artha were meant to be achieved without violating dharma and all these three were to be regarded as being subservient to the fourth, namely, moksha. It was, therefore, but natural that ancient Indians should have produced extensive philosophical literature. Indian philosophical systems are usually divided into two categories, namely, the astika or orthodox systems which recognise the absolute validity of the Veda and the nastika or heterodox systems which do not recognise its validity. To the first category belong the Purva-Mimamsa, the Uttara-Mimamsa, the Sankhya, the Yoga, the Vaisesika, and Nyaya, while the prominent among the heterodox systems are Buddhism, Jainism, and Lokayata or Charvaka's materialism. A critical examination of the six orthodox system would, however, show that some of their teachings, such as atomism or yoga, could not have been derived from the Veda. Besides, it is possible to discover a distinctive ideological substratum which is common to some orthodox and heterodox systems. It may, therefore, be presumed that Indian philosophy as a whole owes its origin to two currents of thought—the Vedic Aryan and the indigenous Indian. As for the six orthodox systems it may also be pointed out that, though all of them claim allegiance to the Veda, only two of them, namely, the Purva-Mimamsa and the Uttara-Mimamsa, are more or less directly connected with the Veda, while the relation with the Veda of the remaining four is only superficial and in many cases forced. Further, not every one of these systems can boast of a distinct metaphysical content of its own. The Purva-Mimamsa, for instance, pertains to Vedic ritual and mainly concerns itself with the methodology of interpreting ritualistic texts. The Yoga teaches the discipline of the body and the mind, while the Nyaya enunciates a system of logic. The literature belonging to these systems normally falls into three stages: the Sutras, most of which may be assigned to the period of Brahmanic conso-

lidation and subsequent rise of Hinduism (600-200 B.C.); the expository works bearing on the Sūtras; and independent treatises. The expository works are mainly of two kinds, namely, *varttika* which undertakes a critical examination of 'what is said, what is not said, and what is wrongly said' in the Sūtras, and *bhashya*, which claims to interpret the Sūtras following their words and intention as closely as possible. While expounding the Sūtras, the *bhashya* arranges them in suitable topics (*adhikaranas*), which are then discussed under the following five heads: statement of the point at issue; doubt raised about it; the view of the opponent; its rebuttal; and the establishment of the conclusion.

Purva-Mimamsa

The *Purva-Mimamsa-Sūtras*, which are traditionally ascribed to Jaimini, maintain that the Veda is primarily ritualistic in character and that Dharma mainly consists of injunctions relating to the performance of sacrifice. With a view to expounding this Dharma, the Sūtras discuss the various details of sacrifice and lay down, in the course of such discussion, certain rules and principles of Vedic interpretation. It may be incidentally mentioned that these principles and rules are made applicable also to other texts, particularly legal texts. Sabara (cir. 500 A.D.) has written an elaborate commentary on the *Mimamsa-Sūtras*. Two distinct schools of *Mimamsa* have emerged out of that commentary—one represented in the *Brihati* of Prabhakara (600 A.D.) and the other in the works of Kumarila (700 A.D.). Two rather handy manuals of the *Purva-Mimamsa*, belonging to a later date, are the *Mimamsa-Nyayaprakasa* of Apadeva (17th century) and the *Artha-sangraha* of Laugakshi Bhaskara.

Vedānta

The *Uttara-Mimamsa*, which is more popularly known as the *Vedānta*, is by far the most widely known and the most generally accepted system of Indian philosophy. Indeed, philosophy, as a whole, is often identified with the *Vedānta*. Traditionally the edifice of the *Vedānta* is believed to have been raised on the three pillars, namely, the *Upanishads*, the *Brahmasūtras*, and

the Bhagavadgita. It is sometimes suggested that the Purva-Mimamsa and the Uttara-Mimamsa originally formed one single system. The frankly anti-ritualistic attitude of the Vedanta would, however, show the patent untenability of such a view. The relationship of the two systems implied by the terms, *purva* (prior) and *uttara* (posterior), seems to have been the result of some later attempt to bring about an adjustment between ritualism and spiritualism. The Brahmasutras of Badarayana aim at evolving a harmonious and unified system of philosophy out of the apparently inconsistent and self-contradictory teachings of the Upanishads. It is, indeed, curious that, from the same three basic texts of the Vedanta, different metaphysical doctrines have been derived, thereby giving rise to different schools of the Vedanta. Certainly the most prominent among these schools is that of absolute monism propounded by Sankara (end of the 8th century). Sankara resolves the apparent conflict in the teachings of the Upanishads by assuming two points of view, the absolute and the relative. From the absolute point of view, the only reality is the one impersonal Brahman, the manifold phenomenal world being just a figment produced under the influence of *avidya* (nescience). The philosophical ideology of Sankara, which is best represented in his *bhashya* on the Brahmasutras, called the *Sarirakabhaskya*, seems to have been influenced, on the one hand, by Buddhist nihilism through the *Gaudapadakarika* (7th century), which is perhaps the earliest Vedantic work to emphasize the illusory character of the world and whose author is said to have been the teacher of Sankara's teacher, and, on the other, by the Upanishadic monism. The literature dealing with Sankara's Vedanta is literally unfathomable. Quite a large number of works are ascribed to Sankara himself. Mention may, however, be here made of the *Panchadasi* of Madhava (14th century) and the *Vedantasara* of Sadananda (cir. 1500 A.D.).

Another important commentator on the *Vedantasutras* was Ramanuja (11th century) who, in his *Sribhashya*, has sponsored the doctrine of qualified monism. According to him, the relation between the highest reality on the one hand and individual souls

and matter on the other is similar to that between soul and body or between whole and parts or between substance and attributes or between fire and sparks. Ramanuja further emphasises that the highest reality is not something abstract and impersonal. It is a personal being, the Supreme God. Ramanuja's philosophy may, accordingly, be characterised as theistic. His monism implies not that the world as such is unreal and impermanent but that it has no existence separate from and independent of God. Two commentators on the Brahmasutras, Bhaskara (circa 900 A.D.) and Nimbarka (11th century A.D.), are responsible for what may be called dualistic non-dualism, which recognises monism so far as independent reality is concerned and multiplicity so far as dependent realities, like individual souls and matter, are concerned. A reference may be made, in passing, to two other commentaries on the Brahmasutras, namely, that of Madhava (13th century A.D.), who derived a dualistic philosophy from that work, and of Vallabha (1376-1430), who accepted both monism and reality of the world. A popular epic-Vedantic work is the Yogavasishtha (12th century A.D.), which attempts a synthesis of the various Vedantic schools.

Sankhya: Yoga

Kapila is traditionally believed to have been the original propounder of the Sankhya system, which teaches a metaphysical dualism. However, no work, which can be definitely assigned to him, has become available so far. Therefore, so far as the literature pertaining to the Sankhya is concerned, we have to begin with the Sankhya-Karika of Isvarakrishna (3rd century A.D.), which may be regarded as one of the basic texts of the system. This is a small work consisting of seventy Karikas (stanzas), but, on account of its excellent and almost complete treatment of the Sankhya metaphysics within such limited compass, it is often described as the 'pearl of the whole scholastic literature of India'. Another significant work on the Sankhya philosophy, is the Sankhya-pravachana-sutra, which is traditionally ascribed to Kapila but which is obviously a late production belonging to a period not earlier than the 14th century A.D. In the first three of its six chapters, the Sankhya-pravachana-sutra

expounds the main doctrines of the Sankhya, while the remaining three chapters are devoted respectively to illustrations, refutation of rival views, and recapitulation. Perhaps as important as this work is Vijnanabhikshu's commentary on it, called *Sankhya-pravachana-bhashya* (16th century A.D.). This commentary is, however, a tendentious work and seems to aim at bringing about a kind of rapprochement between the Sankhya and the Vedanta rather than at strictly adhering to the *Pravachanasutra*. The fundamental text of the Yoga system is the *Yogasutra*, which is attributed to Patanjali. This work is divided into four parts, which deal respectively with the nature of samadhi (perfect absorption into the Supreme Spirit), the means of attaining samadhi, the Yogic practices and their fruits, and the nature of moksha. The *Yogasutra* is commented upon by Vyasa (4th century A.D.), and this *Yogabhashya* by Vyasa is further expounded by Vachaspati (9th century A.D.).

Vaiseshika: Nyaya

Though from the point of view of basic metaphysical ideology, the Vaiseshika system is older than many systems, its *Sutra*, attributed to Kanada, cannot be dated earlier than the 4th century B.C. The *Vaiseshikasutra*, which is divided into ten books, deals with such topics as categories (*padartha*), evolution of the world out of atoms, which alone represent the ultimate reality, and logic. The *Padarthadharmanasangraha* of Prasastapada (4th century A.D.) cannot be, strictly speaking, regarded as a commentary on the *Vaiseshikasutra*. It is rather an independent treatise mostly based on the *Sutra* but not infrequently adding to modifying the original doctrine. Four commentaries are known to have been written on Prasastapada's work (10th-12th centuries A.D.), but Sivaditya's handy manual based on it, called *Saptapadarthi* (10th century A.D.), is perhaps more widely known. The Nyaya system is remarkable for the almost unbroken continuity of its literary tradition. The original *Sutra* of Gautama (3rd century B.C.) was commented upon by Vatsyayana (400 A.D.) in his *Nyayabhashya*, which, in its turn, was expounded and defended against the attacks of critics like Dinnaga by Udyotakara (6th century A.D.) in his

Nyayavarttika. The next link in this chain of expository works is Vachaspati's *Nyayavarttika-tatparya-tika* (9th century A.D.), which is based on Udyotakara's *Nyayavarttika* and is commented upon by Vardhamana (1225 A.D.) in his *Nyaya-nibandha-prakasa*. Several independent treatises on ancient Indian logic are available, the more popular among them being Kesavamisra's *Tarkabhasha* (end of the 13th century A.D.) and Annambhatta's *Tarkasangraha* (17th century A.D.).

Heterodox Systems

It may be generally assumed that Sanskrit literature on Buddhism began to be produced with the rise of Mahayanism. One of the most basic texts of the Madhyamika school of Mahayana is the *Mula-Madhyamaka-karika* of Nagarjuna, who is believed to have lived about the end of the second century A.D. The *Mula-Madhyamaka-Karika* is a systematic philosophical treatise in the form of *karikas*, on which the author himself has written a commentary. This commentary, called *Akucobhaya*, is unfortunately not available in Sanskrit, but is known only through its Tibetan translation. What Nagarjuna was to the Madhyamika school, Asanga (4th century A.D.), the author of the *Mahayana-sutralankara*, was to the Yogachara school of Mahayana. But Asanga's younger brother, Vasubandhu, was perhaps the most prolific Buddhist writer. Until recently, the Sanskrit original of Vasubandhu's principal work, the *Abhidharma-kosa*, was not available. However, in 1946, its *karika* portion was published and the *bhashya* portion also has now been taken up for publication. Vasubandhu's pupil, Dinnaga (400 A.D.), who was a reputed logician, is known to have written a work on Buddhist logic, called *Pramanasamucchaya*, but the text of that work is unfortunately not available. Mention must also be made of the renowned epistemologist, Dharmakirti (7th century A.D.), whose works, the *Pramana-varttika* and the *Alambana-pariksha*, are rated high in Buddhist philosophical literature.

Like the Buddhists, the Jains also had realised the necessity and desirability of writing in Sanskrit. We, accordingly, have from Jaina authors Sanskrit commentaries on the original

Prakrit canon as well as independent religious and philosophical treatises in Sanskrit. The most prominent work belonging to the latter type is the *Tattvadhigama-sutra* of Umasvati (2nd century A.D.). This work contains a systematic exposition of Jaina philosophy and religion. Side by side with their pluralistic-realistic metaphysics, the Jainas had developed a remarkable system of logic. The most popular expounder of that system was Siddhasena Divakara (5th century A.D.), whose *Nyayavatara*, though a small work consisting of only thirty-two stanzas, is lucid and fairly comprehensive.

No regular texts pertaining to materialism or the Lokayata system have come down to us. Tradition, however, attributes the origin of this system to Brihaspati and attempts have been made to reconstruct some of its texts on the basis of the sayings of teachers like Carvaka, which are quoted in other works. The main doctrines of Lokayata, such as that direct perception is the only means of knowledge, that there is nothing like soul as distinct from body, that there is no rebirth after death, etc., can be gleaned from the references occurring in the works belonging to other philosophical systems.

Grammar

A reference may be made, at this stage, to Sanskrit literature pertaining to the science of language and the art of literature. If there is any one branch of knowledge to which ancient Indian thinkers have made the most outstanding contributions, it is grammar. The *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini (cir. 600 B.C.), which is the most fundamental work on the subject, may, indeed, be regarded as one of the few marvellous productions in the field of scientific literature of the world. In about 4000 short sutras, this work, which, incidentally, must be assumed to mark the culmination of a long tradition of grammatical speculations, comprehends all aspects of such a complex and fully developed language as Sanskrit. Panini's insistence on brevity and unequivocality has made him employ in his work various remarkable devices, like *anubandha* or indicatory syllable or letter denoting some peculiarity in inflection, accent, etc., special and distinctive technical terms, and algebraic formulas replacing actual words. His morphological, phonological, and syntactical rules have given to Sanskrit

so fixed and thoroughly unalterable a form that he has to be looked upon as the most influential regulator of that language, if not its actual creator. The Varttika of Katyayana (3rd century B.C.) and the Mahabhashya of Patanjali (2nd century B.C.), which undertake to expound, amend, and supplement the Sutras of Panini, came to share, in course of time, the authority of Panini's work itself. Though these three works may be said to have exhausted almost everything that needed to be said about Sanskrit grammar, the tradition of grammatical literature did not by any means come to an end with them. Some excellent treatises have been produced also by later writers. There were, for instance, the Chandra-Vyakarana of the Buddhist Chandragomin (5th century A.D.), which took into account the linguistic changes which had occurred after Patanjali's time, the Vakyapadiya of Bhartrihari (600 A.D.), which dealt mostly with the philosophy of grammar, and the Kasika of Vamana and Jayaditya (7th century A.D.), which is perhaps the earliest available commentary on the entire text of the Ashtadhyayi. However, the most popular work on Paninian grammar, which is largely used even today, is the Siddhanta-Kaumudi of Bhattoji Dikshita (17th century A.D.).

Side by side with Sanskrit grammar, some significant work has been done also in connection with the grammar of the Prakrit languages. There is, for instance, the Prakrita-Prakasa of Vararuchi (circa 3rd century A.D.), which deals with Paisachi, Magadhi, and Sauraseni, but more particularly with Maharashtri Hemachandra (11th-12 centuries A.D.) also treats of Prakrits in the eighth book of his voluminous grammar. Unlike the Prakrit grammarians, who write in Sanskrit and regard the Prakrit languages as having been derived from Sanskrit, the grammarians of Pali write in Pali and do not recognise Sanskrit as the source of that language. However, the most famous of these grammarians, Kaccayana (11th century A.D.), is greatly influenced by Panini.

Another branch of linguistic study, in which considerable work has been done, is lexicography, the most popular text in this field being the Amarakosa (8th century A.D.). It is an

excellent dictionary of synonyms arranged according to different subjects. A mention may be made in this connection also of the *Abhidhanaranamala* of Halayudha (10th century A.D.) and the *Abhidhanachintamani* of Hemachandra (11th-12th centuries).

Dramaturgy

We now turn to what may be generally described as literature on literary criticism. It was but natural that when poetry, written in various forms, was so extensively produced in Sanskrit, there should have been developed also a well-thought-out theory of poetry. One of the earliest and the most comprehensive attempts in this direction is represented in the *Natyasastra* of Bharata. The *Natyasastra* is, as the name clearly indicates, a treatise on dramatic composition and representation and deals, in its 36 chapters, with such diverse subjects as origin of drama, different kinds of stage, preliminaries of a dramatic performance, eight sentiments (*rasa*) portrayed in drama, fourfold dramatic action (*abhinaya*), stage-accessories, dramatic speeches and delivery, types of drama, plot-construction, dramatic style, make-up, and music. Though no direct and conclusive evidence is available for determining the date of Bharata, it would not be very wrong to place him, on the strength of a lot of indirect evidences, somewhere in the first centuries before or after Christ. His work evidently presupposes quite an advanced state of dramatic art. From the purely literary point of view, however, perhaps the most important contribution of Bharata is his theory of *rasas*. The essence of drama is the portrayal of *rasa* or sentiment. Bharata has, therefore, thoroughly discussed the basic concept of *rasa*, dilating, at some length, upon the nature, source, and manifestation of *rasa*. It may be incidentally pointed out that though Bharata speaks of only eight *rasas*, namely, love, laughter, heroism, pathos, terror, fear, wonder, and loathsomeness, some more *rasas*, like tranquility, came to be added to the list in course of time. One of the most important commentaries on the *Natyasastra* is *Abhinavagupta's Abhinavabharati* (end of the 10th century A.D.), which marks a distinct advance in the interpre-

tation of the theory of *rasa*. The dramatic theory of the *Natya-sastra* is presented in a compact and popular form by Dhananjaya in his *Dasarupaka* (10th century A.D.). As the name of the book suggests, it deals mainly with the distinctive features of the ten types of drama, which are already mentioned by Bharata. It also elaborates the *Sandhi*-theory regarding the construction of the dramatic plot.

Poetics

Incidental references to different topics of dramaturgy are found also in most of the important texts on poetics. But the main purpose of these texts seems to have been to answer the fundamental question: What is the 'soul' of poetry? Bhamaha (7th century A.D.), who is one of the earliest writers on the subject, says in his *Kavyalankara* that it is some striking turn of expression which really produces beauty of sound and sense. The *Kavyadarsa* of Dandin (7th century A.D.) also attaches great importance to *alankaras* or figures of speech. This line of thought is further developed in Vamana's *Kavyalankara-Sutra* (8th century A.D.), where style (*riti*) is said to be the soul of poetry. In his masterly work, *Dhvanyaloka*, Anandavardhana (9th century A.D.) propounds the theory that *dhvani* or suggestion is the most essential element in poetry. Anandavardhana's lead is followed by Mammata (1100 A.D.) in his *Kavyaprakasa* and by Visvanatha (14th century A.D.), who, however, seems to combine in his *Sahitya-Darpana*, the theories of *rasa*, *dhvani*, and *alankara*. In his *Auchityavicharacharcha*, Kshemendra (11th century A.D.) maintained that poetry would lose all its charm unless poets showed a keen sense of propriety. Perhaps the last among these theoreticians, but by no means the least, was the erudite Jagannatha Pandita (17th century A.D.) who, in his *Rasa-Gangadhara*, has expounded and elaborated the *rasa*-theory of Bharata. There are, of course, quite a number of other authors who have written on the subject but they cannot be said to have had anything original to add to the already-existing thought. Mention may, however, be made of Rajasekhara's *Kavyamimamsa* (900 A.D.) and Kshemendra's *Kavikanthabharana* (11th century A.D.), which deal with the training of poets rather than

with poetic theory. A reference is due, in this section which relates to poetical and dramatic technique, also to works on music like the *Sangita-Ratnakara* of Sarangadeva (13th century A.D.) and on metrics like the *Suvrittilaka* of Kshemendra (11th century A.D.) and the *Chandonusasana* of Hemachandra (11th-12th centuries A.D.)

III. Natural and Technical Sciences

Medicine

The greatest significance from the culture-historical point of view of Sanskrit literature relating to natural and technical sciences perhaps lies in the fact that it effectively neutralises the popular misconception that ancient Indian thought was either entirely dominated by pessimism and other worldliness or it often tended to indulge in mere abstraction and schematic theorisation. That literature would clearly show that the ancient Indians could think both analytically as well as synthetically. Let us begin with medicine. The early Indian medicine as represented in the medical charms of the *Atharvaveda*, which, incidentally, constitute the most complete record of primitive medicine preserved in any language, is no doubt largely magical in character. But there, too, one hardly fails to be struck by the keen observation on the part of the ancient Indians of the symptoms of various diseases like *takman* (=malarial fever), by their bold hypothesis that most diseases were due to the presence of 'worms', and by their empirical knowledge of the medicinal properties of certain herbs. Unfortunately, after the *Atharvaveda*, the tradition of medical literature seems to have been interrupted until, in the 1st century A.D., Charaka produced a comprehensive work on medicine. This work, known as the *Charaka-Samhita*, which, in its present form, obviously represents a revision of the original text made in the 8th century A.D., deals with such topics as duties of physician, eight principal diseases, remedies against them, pathology, anatomy, diagnosis, general and special therapy, and diet. The *Samhita* of *Susruta*, which deals mostly with the same topics and which cannot be certainly dated later than the 4th century A.D., is another basic text on ancient Indian medicine. It is inte-

resting to note that while Charaka's work was translated first into Persian and then (circa 800 A.D.) from Persian into Arabic, the Susruta-Samhita had become popular in the South-Eastern Asian countries. In 1890, Bower brought to light an important birch-bark manuscript, which he had discovered at Kashgar, and thereby helped to establish a link between the early and the later periods of Indian medical literature. The Bower manuscript, which may be safely assigned to about 450 A.D., contains some metrical tracts on medicine. The first tract begins by mentioning the many medicinal properties of garlic and then proceeds to give various recipes, particularly for eye-diseases. The remaining tracts constitute a veritable pharmacopoeia of ancient Indian medicine. The Bower manuscript is important also on account of the fact that it cites several writers on medicine.

With Charaka and Susruta, Vagbhata forms the traditional trinity of ancient Indian medical writers. It is suggested that there were two Vagbhatas—one, the author of the *Ashtangasangraha* (7th century A.D.) and the other, perhaps the grandson of the first, who wrote the *Ashtangahridaya-samhita* (8th century A.D.). The latter work, which is certainly better known, deals with the various aspects of medical science with special emphasis on surgery. The *Madhava-Nidana* (8th century A.D.) is mainly a treatise on pathology, while Chakradatta's *Chikitsasara-sangraha* (1060 A.D.) gives an exhaustive description of various diseases and their treatment. This tradition of medical literature in Sanskrit, may, indeed, be said to have continued almost uninterruptedly up to very recent times.

Though the science of chemistry was developed mainly in conjunction with medicine, in its original form, it had essentially been of the nature of alchemy. Patanjali, who is presumably to be identified with the grammarian Patanjali of the 2nd century B.C., is traditionally known to have been an eminent alchemist and an authority on *Loha-sastra*. Similarly, Nagarjuna (7th century A.D.) has been referred to by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang (629 A.D.), as a great master of alchemy. It was Nagarjuna who had first used black sulphide of mercury for medical preparations. He is also credited with the discovery of the pro-

cesses of distillation and calcination. Unfortunately, however, no independent text on chemistry, belonging to an early period, has become available so far. Some Tantric works, like the *Rasaratnakara*, the *Rasarnava*, and the *Rasahridaya* (1100-1300 A.D.), can, on the other hand, be regarded as important compendia on the subject. In most of these works mercury is highly glorified.

Astronomy and Mathematics

Several positive sciences had been developed in connection with the Vedic ritual. Astronomy is one of them. Naturally enough, therefore, works on the subject, called *Vedanga-Jyotisha*, were produced as ancillary Vedic texts (600-400 B.C.). However, astronomy as a more or less fully developed science must be said to have been first represented in the work of *Aryabhata I* (499 A.D.), called *Aryabhatiya*. *Aryabhata* is perfectly original in his treatment of the subject. The *ardharatrika* system of astronomy may be regarded as his special contribution. As against *Aryabhata*, *Varahamihira* (550 A.D.) is mainly a collator. In his *Panchasiddhantika*, he has summarised the teachings of the four earlier systems, namely, *Paulisa*, *Romaka*, *Vasistha*, and *Paitamaha*, and has brought the fifth, namely, the *Surya-Siddhanta*, up-to-date with the help of the *Aryabhatiya*. Some years later, *Brahmagupta* (598 A.D.) wrote his *Brahma-sphuta-siddhanta* and the *Khandakhadyaka*. In the latter work, *Brahmagupta* has taught easier methods of computation of the longitude of planets. As for mathematics, some notions of that science—particularly of arithmetic and geometry—are incorporated in the *Shulba-sutras*, which are regarded as supplements to the *Kalpa-sutras* (600-200 B.C.). Coming to the premedieval period one has, first of all, to refer to a birch-bark manuscript, discovered in 1881 near Baksali in Peshawar district. It can be shown that this manuscript, which belongs to about 8th century A.D., is really a copy of a much earlier work, which has to be dated at least in the 3rd century A.D. It may, therefore, be presumed to have taken note of the developments in the mathematical science from the Vedic age up to the early centuries of the Christian era. The

Baksali manuscript contains information on a variety of topics, such as, computation of gold, quadratic equations, square-root approximations etc. The astronomical works by Aryabhata and Brahmagupta, which have been mentioned above, naturally include much material of mathematical interest. A special mention must be made also of the *Ganita-sara-sangraha* of Mahavira (9th century A.D.) and the *Lilavati* of Bhaskara (12th century A.D.). This latter work gives the various solutions of a right-angled triangle, the area of the surface of a sphere, the volume of a sphere, sines and cosines of compound angles, and the theory of surds.

Technical Sciences

Several technical sciences seem to have been developed in ancient and medieval India presumably as ancillaries to *Arthashastra*. There is, for instance, architecture, an encyclopaedic work on which subject, called *Manasara*, was produced round about 500 A.D. There are also available texts like the *Hastya-yurveda* and the *Matangalila*, which deal with elephants, and the *Asvavaidyaka* and the *Asvayurveda*, which deal with horses. It is, indeed, not possible within the limits of this brief survey, even to enumerate many such minor technical subjects which Sanskrit writers have tackled, much less to make any observations on the literature produced by them on those subjects. Suffice it to say that, for Sanskrit authors, no subject was too trivial or too fantastic to write about.

PALI LITERATURE

Pali

Linguistically Pali represents a composite of several Prakrit dialects. It would seem that the Buddha, who wanted to propagate his teachings even among the common people, preached originally in the dialect of his own region (Kosala) and then in Magadhi. But he had expressly permitted his followers 'to learn the word of the Buddha each in his own dialect'. The original sermons and sayings of the Buddha had, accordingly, been made current by his immediate disciples through the dialects of their respective regions. When, however, the Buddhist canon was

being compiled and finalised, the monks, instead of adopting any one of those dialects, seem to have used a literary language, which had been evolved out of those dialects. That literary language was Pali. Pali may, indeed, be said to have been used almost exclusively by the Buddhists and to have, accordingly, come to be recognised as the official language of early Buddhism, which was represented by the sect of the Theravadins. Even at a very early date, this sect had spread out in India's cultural outposts, like Ceylon, Burma, and Siam, where, consequently, considerable literature in Pali was produced in course of time.

Tipitaka

The Buddhist canon constitutes the major part of Pali literature. This canon, which is popularly known as the Tipitaka ("Three Baskets"), is believed to have been given its final form and shape in three stages: firstly, at the assembly of Buddhist monks convened at Rajagaha (modern Rajgir), just a few weeks after the death of the Buddha in 544 B.C.; secondly, at a Buddhist Council organised at Vesali about a hundred years after the Buddha's nirvana; and, lastly, at the third council, which was held during the reign of the great Asoka and which was presided over by Tissa Moggaliputta. Though the earliest reference to the Tipitaka is to be found in the Milindapanha (1st century A.D.), there is definite epigraphic evidence to show that it must have existed, in some form, even in the 3rd century B.C. It is interesting to note that many edicts of Asoka are similar to the Pali canon both verbally and in point of contents. The three Pitakas are of the nature of collections of sermons, sayings, legends, rules of the order of monks, philosophical discourses, historical narratives, etc., all of which had presumably been transmitted through oral tradition. Naturally, therefore, we find in the Pitakas materials which belong to various chronological strata and which are characterised by considerable repetition and internal contradiction.

Out of the three Pitakas, the Vinaya-Pitaka is generally regarded as the earliest collection. It comprises mainly of the rules of discipline of the Buddhist order (sangha). By far the most

important text included in the Vinaya-Pitaka is the Patimokkha, which deals with the possible violations of the rules of discipline and their atonement. In some portions of the Mahavagga, which is another work included in the Vinaya-Pitaka, stories are narrated which show how the Buddha used to be solicitous about the general well-being of the monks, who had joined the sangha, and who, therefore, 'had no mothers and no fathers to take care of them'.

The second canonical collection, called the Sutta-Pitaka, relates more directly to the religious doctrine of the Buddha and his early disciples and is believed to contain many discourses and speeches of the Master himself. The Sutta-Pitaka is made up of five nikayas (or sub-collections). Special mention deserves to be made of some of the striking sections in these nikayas, such as, for instance, the Maha-Parinibbana-Sutta (which records the last sayings and sermons of the Buddha) and the Sakka-Panha-Sutta (which symbolically represents the superiority of the religion of the Buddha over the Vedic religion) from the Dighanikaya and the Assalayana-Sutta (which seeks to establish the utter irrationality of the Brahmanic caste-system) from the Majjhimanikaya. The Khuddakanikaya is, however, far richer in contents than the other four nikayas. Its most important text is the Dhammapada, which is with reference to Buddhism what the Bhagavadgita is with reference to Hinduism. The Dhammapada embodies, in its 423 verses, the ethical teachings of the Buddha and generally constitutes one of the best examples of religious poetry. Some other significant works included in the Khuddakanikaya are the Theragatha and the Therigatha ("Songs of the Male and Female Elders in the Buddhist Order"), the Chariyapitaka (dealing with the 'perfection' of the Bodhisatta in his different existences), and the famous Jatakas ("Stories of the Former Births of the Buddha"). These last-named contain a large number of fables, fairy tales, anecdotes, romantic stories, didactic narratives, legends, etc., which originally, did not have anything specifically Buddhistic about them but were actually derived from the common stock of India's

floating narrative literature. A definite Buddhistic bias, however, came to be given to those tales and legends by turning one of the characters in them into a Bodhisatta. To a culture-historian, the importance of the Jatakas is three-fold: first, they throw quite an amount of light on the traffic of narrative 'motifs' between various lands and cultures; secondly, they have considerably enriched India's art; and, thirdly, they constitute valuable sources for the history of Indian civilisation from the 3rd century B.C. to the 5th century A.D.

The third Pitaka, called the Abhidhamma-Pitaka, claims to deal, as its name indicates, with the 'higher subtleties of religion'. Actually, however, this Pitaka, indulging in definitions and schematic classifications, presents, in a more scholastic garb, the same topics as are treated in the Sutta-Pitaka. Two texts included in the Abhidhamma-Pitaka have become particularly famous. They are the Dhammasangani and the Kathavatthu. The subject-matter of the first is the classification and definition of dhammas or psychical conditions and phenomena, while that of the second—which, incidentally, is the only work in the canon to be ascribed to any definite author (it is ascribed to Tissa Moggaliputta, who had presided over the third Buddhist council)—is the refutation of heretical doctrines.

While on the subject of the Pali canon, it may be pointed out that the followers of the Sarvastivada of Hinayana Buddhism, who had spread towards the North-West—in Kashmir and Afghanistan—and thence proceeded to Central Asia, Tibet, and China, had their canonical texts in Sanskrit. They are, however, available only in fragments but have otherwise become known either through Chinese and Tibetan translations and transcriptions or through quotations in Buddhist Sanskrit works like the Mahavastu and the Lalitavistara.

Milindapanha

Coming to the non-canonical literature, it must be, first of all, pointed out that, though this literature is traditionally regarded as non-canonical, it can by no means be characterised as secular. Indeed, in the whole range of Pali literature, we come

across but a few texts which are not related to Buddhism either directly or indirectly. The best-known non-canonical work is the *Milindapanha*. This remarkable compendium of Buddhist ethics and metaphysics is presented in the form of a dialogue between Milinda (who is to be identified with Menandros, the Graeco-Indian king who ruled at Sagal in the 1st century B.C.) and the eminent Buddhist teacher Nagasena. So far as its teachings are concerned, the *Milindapanha* is traditionally invested with the same authority as the canonical texts, but it is certainly superior to the latter in point of literary merits. The *Nettipakaraṇa* ascribed to Mahakaccana, a direct disciple of the Buddha, was perhaps the first attempt to present the teachings of the Master in a connected form. To Mahakaccana is also ascribed the *Peta-kopadesa*, which comprises instructions regarding the textual and exegetical study of the Pitakas.

Buddhaghosha and his contemporaries

A major part of the non-canonical literature has been produced by Buddhist monks in Ceylon and perhaps the most prominent name in the galaxy of Ceylonese authors is that of Buddhaghosha (5th century A.D.). Buddhaghosha has written learned commentaries on several texts included in the Pitakas, such as the *Samantapasadika* on the Vinaya-Pitaka, the *Sumangalavilasini* on the *Dighanikaya*, the *Papancasudani* on the *Majjhimanikaya*, and the *Atthasalini* on the *Dhammasaṃgani*. Apart from these exegetical works he has to his credit an independent manual on Buddhist doctrine, called *Visuddhimagga*. This work, which testifies to the great erudition of the author, may be said to embody the quintessence of all Buddhist knowledge of the preceding centuries. Mention must also be made of Dhammapala who lived a little after Buddhaghosha. He has written a commentary, called *Paramattha-Dipani*, on those texts in the *Khuddakanikaya* which Buddhaghosha had not tackled, such, as, for instance, the *Vimanavatthu*, the *Petavatthu*, and the *Theragatha*. About the same time, Buddhaddatta, who is said to have been a junior contemporary of Buddhaghosha, wrote the *Vinaya-Vinicchaya*, which is more or less of the nature of a summary of the Vinaya-Pitaka. If Ceylon was the centre of the study of the Vinaya and the Sutta,

Burma may be said to have been a centre of Abhidhamma studies. The authoritativeness of the Abhidhammattha-Saṃgaha, a work on Buddhist 'psychological ethics' written by Bhikkhu Anuruddha (12th century A.D.), is recognised in Buddhist countries even today.

Dipavamsa: Mahavamsa

Side by side with the exegetical literature, mentioned above, there were produced in Ceylon two rather remarkable historical works. The Dipavamsa (4th-5th centuries A.D.) presents, mostly on the basis of legendary tradition and in a pseudo-epic style, the history (vamsa) of the island (dipa) that is, Ceylon. Even from the literary point of view this work is not quite satisfactory. On the other hand, the Mahavamsa, which is ascribed to Mahanama (last quarter of the 5th century A.D.), is far better conceived and executed. Indeed, as a literary piece, it can stand comparison with some of the well-known court-epics in Sanskrit. However, even in the Mahavamsa, fables and myths are freely mixed with authentic political and religious history. The Dipavamsa and the Mahavamsa set the pattern for a number of other Vamsa works (chronicles) produced in Ceylon and other Buddhist countries—one of them, the sasanavamsa having been written by a Burmese monk as late as 1861.

Pali literature cannot boast of a regular Mahakavya, but there are, in Pali, some fine examples of religious poetry, such as the Jinalamkara of Buddhārakkhita (12th century A.D.), the Telakataha-Gāthā (cir. 12th century A.D.), and the Pajjamadhu of Buddhappiya (13th century A.D.). In this very context may be mentioned the grammatical works of Kaccayana and Moggallāna, the Abhidhanappadipika, a lexicographical work by Moggallāna, the Vuttodaya, a work on prosody, and the Subodhalamkara, a work on rhetoric. The two last-mentioned works are, however, but poor imitations of similar Sanskrit texts.

PRAKRIT LITERATURE

The Prakrits

It is generally believed that the Prakrit languages are derived from Sanskrit. It would, however, be perhaps more

collected together and formed into the last of the 12 Angas under the name *Ditthivaya*. From among the other Angas may be mentioned the *Ayaramga-Sutta*, which deals with Jaina monachism, the *Suyagadamga*, which seeks to refute the heretical views and to establish the Jaina metaphysical and ethical doctrines, the *Bhagavati*, which presents, in the form of a dialogue between Mahavira and *Indrabhuti* and in an encyclopaedic manner, the dogmatics of Jainism, the *Nayadhammakahao*, which consists mainly of holy-didactic legends, the *Uvasagadasao* and the *Panhavagaranaim*, which treat of the house-holder's life, and the *Vivagasuyam*, whose subject-matter is the retribution of good and bad deeds. The *Rayapasenaiya*, which is one of the 12 Upangas and which attempts a Purana-like elaboration of a philosophical kernel, teaches that the soul is independent of the body. It is also important from the literary point of view. Another Upanga, the *Nirayavali*, is a collection of didactic legends, while the *Jivabhigama* and the *Surapannatti*, which are also regarded as Upangas, deal respectively with living beings and cosmology. The *Tamdulaveyaliya*, which is a *Prakirna*, has for its subject-matter such topics as human physiology, anatomy, embryology etc. Among the *Cheda-Sutras*, perhaps the best-known is the *Ayaradasao*, which is ascribed to *Bhadrabahu*. Its eighth section, which is popularly known as the *Kalpa-sutra* of *Bhadrabahu*, gives a biography of Mahavira besides considerable information about the Monk-Elders and their rules. Two *Mula-Sutras* are particularly important—the *Dasaveyaliya*, which deals with Jaina ethics and metaphysics. The *Nandi* is believed to have been written by *Devarddhi* himself, and, in addition to the treatment of Jaina epistemology, it gives an encyclopaedic survey of Jaina canonical schools (*micchasuam*) and secular sciences (*loic*).

Besides the Agama of the Svetambaras, it is necessary to mention also the special canon of the Digambaras. This Pro-canon consists mainly of works based on the teachings of *Bhadrabahu*, which were recollected in some later period. From among these, the *Satkarma* and the *Kasaya-prabhrita* deal with the important doctrine of *Karman* and the *Mulacara* of *Vattakera* (1st century A.D.) and the *Aradhana* of *Sivaraya* with Jaina

monachism. A special feature of the religious literature of the Digambaras is the devotional songs in Prakrit, such as those written by Bhadrabahu, Manatunga, and Dhanapala (10th century A.D.).

Philosophy and Religion

Considerable exegetical literature relating to the Jaina canon has been produced in Prakrit. The earliest texts belonging to this class are the Nijjuttis on ten canonical texts ascribed to Bhadrabahu. These are brief commentaries, in Arya metre, written mostly in Jaina Maharashtri. From among the commentaries on these commentaries a special reference deserves to be made to Jinabhadra Kshamashramana's erudite Prakrit commentary on the Avassaya-Nijjutti (609 A.D.). To this same class belong the later bhashyas and curnis, which are often written in a peculiar mixture of Sanskrit and Prakrit. Besides these exegetical works, there are available quite a number of independent treatises in Prakrit which deal with different aspects of Jainism. The most famous and the most prolific author in this field was Kundakunda who presumably lived in the 1st century A.D. His Pancatthiyasara and Pavayanasara deal respectively with Jaina ontology and epistemology, while his Samayasara is a work pregnant with spiritual fervour. The Tiloyapannatti of Yativrishabha, which belongs to about the same period, is an encyclopaedic work treating of Jaina religion. One of the most significant contributions of Jainism to Indian thought as a whole is its doctrine of Karman. Naturally enough, therefore, several Prakrit works have been written on the subject. The original texts, which had dealt with this doctrine at some length, were presumably the lost Puvvas. Some idea of their view-point may, however, be had from the Dhavala, the Jayadhavala, and the Mahadhavala. The same ideological tradition is preserved also in some independent treatises like the Kammappayadi of Sivasarman, the Gommatasara of Nemichandra (11th century A.D.), and the Panchasamgraha of Chandarshi (13th century A.D.). Side by side with their doctrine of Karman the Jains had also developed quite a unique system of logic. A mention has already been made of Siddhasena

Divakara's small Sanskrit text on the subject, called *Nyayavatara* (5th century A.D.). His *Sammata-Tarka*, written in Prakrit, also deals, among other things, with the *nayas* and the *anekanta-vada*. Other typical Prakrit works on Jaina ethics and metaphysics are the *Savayapannatti* of Umasvati (2nd century A.D.), the *Paramappapayasu* and the *Yogasara* of Joindu (circa 6th century A.D.), and the *Dharmasamgrahani* of Haribhadra (705-775 A.D.).

Narrative Literature

However, far more extensive than the literature relating to Jaina religion and dogmatics is, perhaps, the narrative literature in Prakrit. Even in the canonical and the later religious texts of the Jains we come across many legends, parables, and historical and popular narratives. A conscious attempt was evidently made by the Jaina authors to carry their teachings to the masses, firstly, by adopting the popular dialects for their writings and, secondly, by making abundant use of popular narrative themes. Apart from this kind of narrative literature, Prakrit is very rich in what may be called secular narrative literature. To begin with, there are the Prakrit versions of Hindu epics. The *Paumacariya* of Vimalasuri (4 A.D.), for instance, re-tells the story of Rama, in 118 cantos, though its agreement with Valmiki's *Ramayana* is only partial. Jinasena's *Harivamsa-Purana* (8th century A.D.) presents the Krishna-legends in a Jaina setting. A reference may be incidentally made, in this very context, to the *Dhurtakhyana* of Haribhadra, which constitutes a marvellous satire on some legends contained in the Hindu Puranas. Apart from such Prakrit versions of Hindu epic legends, there is the *Mahapurana* of Jinasena and Gunabhadra (9th century A.D.), which gives the biographies of the 63 outstanding personalities of Jainism. A common theme of many of the stories included in this Purana is that Brahmanism and Hinduism represent but a degenerate form of the pure religion of antiquity, namely, Jainism. Another *Mahapurana* is written in Apabhramsa by Pushpadanta (10th century A.D.). The well-known *Karakandacariu* of Kanakamara, which narrates in a lucid style, the life of Karakanda, one of the Pratyeka Buddhas, may also be mentioned here. Among

works which may be compared with the historical kavyas in Sanskrit may be mentioned the *Gaudavaho* of Vakpatiraja (8th century A.D.), in which the story-element is very meagre but which possesses great literary merit, the *Kalakacarya-kathanaka* (10th century A.D.), which tells of Kalaka's victory over King Gar-dabhilla of Ujjain with the help of the Saka Satrapās, the *Kumarapalacharita* of Hemachandra (1089-1172 A.D.), which, under the pretext of presenting Kumarapala's biography, illustrates the rules of Prakrit grammar, and the *Kumarapalapratibodhe* of Somaprabha (1195 A.D.), which describes Kumarapala's conversion to Jainism through Hemachandra and some portions of which are written in elegant Sanskrit.

The lost *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya, which has already been referred to elsewhere, must, indeed, be regarded as a veritable fountain-head of many a romantic story in Sanskrit and Prakrit. As an interesting fairy-tale may be mentioned Dhanapala's *Bhavi-ssatta-kaha* written in *Apabhramsa*. The *Setubandha* of Pravarasena (4th century A.D.) is a fine example of an ornate court-epic in Prakrit. It derives its theme of the construction of the bridge across the sea by the monkeys from the *Ramayana* and the poet makes a felicitous use of different metres, figures of speech, and other poetic embellishments. The *Samaraiccakaha* of Haribhadra, which is a religious novel (*dharma-katha*) written in Jaina *Maharashtri*, has the literary form of a *Champu* and portrays the antagonism of two souls through their nine successive births. Comparable with the *Samaraiccakaha* in its ideological background is the *Kuvalayamala* of Udyotana (779 A.D.). Several other smaller kavyas have been written in the different Prakrit dialects—two fine specimens belonging to a comparatively late period being the *Kamsavaho* and the *Usani-ruddham* of Rama Panivada (18th century A.D.).

Sattasai

No statement on the representative literature in Prakrit would, however, be complete without the mention of the *Sattasai*—that unique anthology of 700 gathas compiled by Hala (2nd century A.D.). The gatha-form of literature, which is charac-

terised by a remarkable melodiousness, a clever portrayal of human sentiments, and great popular appeal, may, indeed be regarded as a special feature of the Prakrits. It is well known that several Prakrit gathas have been included in Sanskrit dramas. The gathas in the Sattasai relate mainly to the love-life of a rural community and are highly realistic; but they rarely offend against the cultural taste of sophisticated readers. The appeal of the striking poetic imageries and the charming suggestiveness of many of these gathas is, indeed, quite irresistible. The Vajjalagga by Jayavallabha, of unknown date, is another anthology, again consisting of 700 gathas, which treat of a variety of topics relating to Dharma, Artha, and Kama. It is noteworthy that this anthology is non-sectarian in character, though the author was a Jaina.

As regards dramatic literature it may be pointed out that Sanskrit dramaturgy has enjoined the use of certain specific Prakrits by specific characters in Sanskrit dramas. The observance of this rule, many times, results in the Prakrit portion in a Sanskrit drama being actually larger than the Sanskrit portion. Apart from this, one type of drama, namely, Sattaka, is composed entirely in Prakrit. Two representative examples of this type are the Kappuramamjari of Rajasekhara (circa 900 A.D.) and the Candaleha of Rudradasa (17th century A.D.) Lexicographical works (such as the Paiyalacchinamamala of the 10th century A.D.), works on rhetoric and metrics (such as the Alamkaradappana and the Svayambhucchanda), and works on sciences like medicine and astronomy (such as the Haramekhala of Mahuka and the Jambuddivapannatti-samgaha of Paumanandi), written in Prakrit, though but a few, are not altogether wanting. It may, indeed, be said that Prakrit authors have tried their hand at every literary form used by Sanskrit authors and have written on almost every subject which has been tackled by the latter.

CHAPTER VI

RE-ORIENTATION OF HINDU CULTURE

The rise of Jainism and Buddhism started a new epoch in the history of India through their attack on Vedic ceremonialism and by releasing a new spirit of enquiry. To meet the challenge, there was a need to broaden the foundations of Hinduism by reconstructing Hindu Philosophical and religious ideas and spreading them among the masses. Hence the Puranas or old tales or legends and Ithihasas or epics were created for the edification and entertainment of the masses.

Of these, the two great epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were wrought into the life of every Indian, man, woman and child. Griffith who translated the Ramayana into English in 1870 wrote: "We rise from its perusal with a loftier idea of almost all virtues that can adorn man—of truth, of filial piety, of paternal love, of female chastity and devotion, of meekness, of forgiveness, of fortitude, of universal benevolence." The Mahabharata which is an encyclopaedia of ethics, morals and state-craft is a vindication of the motto of the Pandavas that "where there is righteousness (Dharma), there, victory is certain." It is specially famous as containing the Bhagavat Gita or the Lord's Song in which Lord Krishna expounds the high truths of religion and philosophy. The simplicity of its teachings, majesty of its diction, universality of its appeal and poetic inspiration make it a sublime philosophic song. It forms the basis of popular Hinduism by synthesising the

fundamental ideas of contemporary philosophical schools and religious sects. In order to appeal to popular imagination it emphasises the religious rather than the philosophic abstractions of the Upanishads, and presents in an attractive way a theistic religion based on the idealism of the Upanishads. In short, it is a gospel of life, epitomising all that is of abiding value in Hinduism. It lays stress on the virtues of purity, self-control, detachment, truth, and non-violence.

The most essential teaching of the Gita is that God is the Most High. The seeker must turn his mind Godward, fix his mind in Him and believe in His supremacy. If we trust in God, He takes care of us. (II, 61). To incessantly work is our duty. The Lord Himself is ever engaged in work, in the three worlds, although there is nothing unattained by Him and nothing to be obtained by Him. He works for the order and progress of the world. "He lives and moves and has His being in action", (III, 22) Though He is ever present in action, He is unaffected by action. Krishna tells Arjuna: "Dedicate work unto Me and be devoted to God" "Be of courage—so as not to be affected by mundane things and earthly joys and griefs".

"Whenever languishment occurs of Dharma and the ascendancy of Adharma, then I create Myself". For the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked, "and for the purpose of establishing Dharma, I incarnate in Yuga after Yuga" (IV, 7 : 8) His incarnations are many and He knows them all. They appear and disappear at His will. Becoming visible is their only birth. Invisibility is their only death. The incarnations are non-material and identical in essence and composition with God Himself in every respect. God chooses to exhibit them or to veil them off from human vision at His own sweet will and pleasure. The Puranas tell us of the Ten avatars of Vishnu, Matsya (fish), Koorma (Turtle), Varaha (Boar), Narasimha (Man-lion), Vamana (Dwarf), Parasu Rama (Rama of the axe), Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kali. Actions do not affect Him. In Him, there is no desire for the fruit of action (IV, 14). Mahatma Gandhi adds, "Man has thus before him the supreme example of one who though

in action is not the doer thereof. And when we are but instruments in His hands, where then is the room for arrogating responsibility for action”.

Krishna tells Arjuna that true knowledge consists in the realisation that God is present everywhere to uphold everything. Not a blade of grass can move without His will. He who realises that the Lord is the support of all and the Inner Ruler of all, becomes fearless, for he knows that none has any real power and all their power belongs to the Lord. The life giving truth is this that the Supreme Lord exists in all beings and He dwells in them all from eternity (Isa Upanishad, 6:7, Gita IV 35)

God is the great Ruler of all the worlds, the friend of all beings and the bestower of salvation. He is the acceptor of all sacrifices and penances. One who knows Him thus obtains a glimpse of His vision. Mahatma Gandhi points out that in the Quran, He is again and again referred to as the Wali—the Patron and friend. “He verily is the Absolute, the owner of praise” (22:64), “He is your protecting friend, a Blessed patron, and a Blessed helper” (22:78). Such a glimpse was obtained by all mystics, in all parts of the world. (Cf. St. Catherine of Siena)

The seeker must believe in His Supremacy. (VI : 14). No true devotion to God is possible without a firm faith in His Supremacy and Greatness. True devotion is the be-all and end-all of meditation, because it is the only means of God-vision and the abiding after-result of God-vision. The Yogin, of controlled mind who unites the mind thus with God, attains the liberation which supervenes the extinction of the body. (VI. 15). This is the Brahma Nirvana, referred to in II 72. “He who rests in God dwells in security for ever” said Jalaluddin Rumi.

The true devotee comes to possess in God, his best philosopher, guide and friend. “He who sees Me in all things and all things in Me, to Him I am not lost, nor is he lost to Me”. (VI 30). The devotee is never lost to God as the former swerves not from faith and trust, whatever the trials may be that test his loyalty and homage.

The greatness of the Lord is dwelt at length in Chapters VII to XII. "Than Me there is nothing else higher, O Dhananjaya, and on Me all this stands even as series of beads do on a string (thread)" The Quran says: "He hath created the heavens and the earth with Truth. High be He exalted above all." (16:3). "And whatever are the products of Satva, Rajas and Tamas (harmonious, passionate and slothful states of being), know them all to be from Me: Know that they are in Me, but not I in them (VII 7. 12). God is not dependent on them. They are dependent on Him. Without Him those various manifestations would be impossible" (Gandhi).

What is the method of contemplation? (VIII. 13). "He who uttering the name of Brahman, the monosyllable Om, thinking upon Brahman, departs from the body—he attains to the highest goal". "The Mahatmas (Great souls) that have achieved the highest accomplishment having (once) reached Me do not again obtain birth, the abode of misery, the impermanent state." (VIII 15) The teaching of the Upanishads is repeated here. "Whose form and essential nature all the Vedas declare and in order to obtain Whom they prescribe austerities, desiring to know Whom the great ones perform the vow of celibacy, that symbol I will briefly tell thee, it is OM" (Katha 12. 15) "Take hold of the Mystic name as the bow, and know that the Brahman is the aim to be hit. Put on this great weapon (Om), the arrow (of the mind) sharpened by meditation. Withdraw thyself from all objects, and with the mind absorbed in the idea of that Brahman, hit the aim—for know, O Somya (O friend) That Imperishable alone to be the Mark". (Mundaka II. 2.5) "Om is the Lord, the nearest (or the eternal joy), the Udgitha i.e. the Highest, the most Adorable, and the All-pervading. He must be meditated upon: Him the Udgatri priest sings out as Om. About Him is (this whole book) the explanation". (Chandogya 1.11)

Om is the mystic name of the Deity, prefacing all prayers. It is the emblem of the Most High. Om forms the most sacred monosyllable significant of the Supreme Being. From Him proceed the creation, preservation, and destruction of the Universe. Om

denotes that he is Supremely excellent, Supremely high and Supremely wise: that He is all-pervading, all-protecting and all-knowing and that He is all-bliss, all-mighty and all-supporting.

All the ancient authorities affirm that there is a certain word of power by pronouncing which the adept subjugates all the forces of nature to His will. The word is not written, nor can it be written, nor is it over pronounced above the breath, nor is its nature known except to the highest initiates. No words ever have the slightest efficacy unless uttered by one who is perfectly free from all weakening doubt or hesitancy, is for the moment wholly absorbed in the thought of uttering them, and has a cultivated power of will which makes him send out from himself a conquering impulse.

The superiority and excellence of the path of devotion is indicated in Chapter IX-29. "Equally impartial am I to all beings (none that I hate or love more than one would deserve for his nature). But they that worship Me with devotion are under my grace, and I favour them in proportion to their devotion to Me." "Know it for certain that My devotee never perishes—so invaluable is devotion to Me" (IX 31) "Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer your sacrifice to Me and prostrate yourself before me. Concentrating your mind thus on me and regarding Me your supreme goal, you will come to Me". (IX. 34)

Pleased with our devotion, God enables us to obtain a correct knowledge of His greatness. With that knowledge we obtain the capacity for greater devotion. Pleased with our unalloyed devotion, God shows Himself to us. Arjuna obtained a glimpse of that Divine vision, so thrillingly described in Chapter Eleven. Amazed at that, he exclaims, "O Perfect One, I bow before and behind You, and on all sides, You are of infinite prowess and immeasurable might. You have pervaded everything and therefore you are All" (XI 40) Cf. Quran: ("Unto Allah belong the East and West and whither so ever ye turn, there is Allah's countenance, Lo! Allah is All-embracing, All-Knowing"). And Krishna tells Arjuna: "This form of Mine which you have beheld and which even the gods long to behold is hard to see. I cannot be

seen in the form now seen by you, either by the study of Vedas or by means of austerities, gifts and sacrifices. But O Paranthapa (Oppressor of enemies), by unswerving devotion to Me alone, I may be seen this wise, truly known and reached." (XI. 53 to 55). The characteristics of an ideal devotee are described thus:—

"He who regards with equal unconcern blame as well as praise, who does not talk about matters other than what relate to God, who is content with whatever is got unasked for, who permanently abides in the Lord and is of unshakable convictions and full of devotion—that person is dear to Me." Fenelon calls Bhakti "true simplicity". "The truly simple man is at ease with others and others are at ease with him" (V 15). "Being perfect, even as the Father in Heaven is perfect". (V 19). "I sleep but my heart keeps vigil".

The Thirteenth chapter gives the best and most perfect description of God in verses 14 to 17. "He has hands and feet everywhere, everywhere eyes, heads and mouths, ears on all sides, He makes us feel the effects of all the senses, but is Himself devoid of all the sense organs formed of matter. He is untouched by virtue or sin, is without any of the qualities or influence of matter and enjoys all excellency. He is within and without all beings, unmoving as well as moving, and incomprehensible by reason of His subtlety. He is far away and yet near. Undivided He is in all the separate beings, and yet appears divided. He is the supporter of beings, swallower of everything during destruction and producer at the time of creation. Thus He is to be known".

The Gita closes with verse 78, "Where there is Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yogas, wherever is Partha, the wielder of the bow, it is my firm belief that assured are there prosperity, victory, wealth, and justice". Gandhiji identified Krishna with the righteousness of the end and Arjuna with the purity of means, and said; "I have faith in the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our weapons. Where the means are clear, there God undoubtedly is present with His blessings; and where the two combine, there defeat is an impossibility."

The urge to revitalise the rationalistic defences of Hinduism also gave rise to the six systems of Hindu Philosophy (Shaddarsana) which are remarkable alike for their critical and logical treatment and speculative imagination. These six systems are Nyaya system of Gautama, the Vaiseshika systems of Kanada, the Sankhya system of Kapila, the Yoga system of Patanjali, the Purvamimamsa of Jaimini and the Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta of Badarayana. Of these the first two deal with the world of experience, and show the way to acquire knowledge about the ultimate reality. The third gives deep insight into Hindu psychology, while the fourth teaches how to discipline the mind and the senses in order to attain samadhi through meditation. The Purva Mimamsa deals with Karma Kanda or rituals, while Uttara Mimamsa deals with Jnana Kanda or supreme knowledge.

Though each system looks at truth from its own standpoint, each develops its own theory of knowledge, and expresses its philosophy in a language of its own, yet the six systems agree in the fundamentals. All of them draw their inspiration and sustenance from the common stock of Hindu philosophical heritage. All recognise the authority of the Vedas and assert that whatever is not sanctioned by the Vedas cannot be accepted as true. They are all opposed to barren scepticism and cold logic and emphasise the need for light which will dispel the darkness of ignorance. They believe in rhythmic progress towards cosmos. They also accept the principles of Rebirth and Karma and assert that death, far from being an end, is but the beginning of a new step on the long road to salvation. Man is thus given a chance to mould his own destiny. In short, all the systems assert that "He who knows attains God. The knower of the self only crosses the Ocean of Sorrow. There is neither hope of immortality in wealth, nor happiness in anything that is finite".

The revival of Hinduism also led to revival of sacrifices, which had lost much of their popularity consequent upon the spread of the teachings of the Buddha and the Jina. Pushyamitra Sunga who started a Brahmanic revival in 188 B.C. and a number of kings belonging to different ages and ruling over different parts

of the country performed the Asvamedha, Vajapeya and other sacrifices. The most important feature of the religious revival was the emphasis on Bhakti or faith in god and love of fellow-beings. Kings built a number of temples which developed into centres of religious and cultural activities. Worship of Siva and Vishnu became popular and to catch the imagination of the people, popular heroes like Krishna and Rama were included in the Hindu pantheon as avatars of Vishnu. Even the Buddha came to be regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu. Grand festivals and processions were arranged and Fa-hien gives a fine description of such festivals. He says that once a year, there was a great popular festival in which all sects joined. It was inaugurated by a great procession of beautifully decorated images of all gods placed upon four-wheeled temple cars. At the four corners of cars were shrines within which were placed images of the Buddha with a Bodhisatva in attendance. They were drawn into the city from the neighbouring monasteries in a magnificent procession accompanied by singers, musicians, priests and crowds of people. A number of games and amusements were arranged for the entertainment of the people, and in the evening the city was illuminated with lights. Recitation of the Vedas, and discourses on puranas and epics were also arranged.

But the revival of Hinduism was not followed by persecution of other faiths. The catholicity of Buddhism and the Neo-Hinduism of the early centuries of the Christian era, and the cosmopolitan culture that existed in North-Western India at that time are illustrated by the history of the Indo-Greek kingdoms that followed the conquests of Alexander the Great. The Indo-Greek king Menander is said to have embraced Buddhism and was known as Milinda. A well-known Pali Buddhist work, the *Milinda Panha* or the Questions of Milinda, gives a description of the royal capital, the city of Sakala, as one that welcomes teachers of every creed, the resort of leading men of each sect. The Sunga king of Vidisa in Central India, received the Greek Ambassador, Heliodorus, who described himself as a Parama Bhagawatha or worshipper of Vishnu. He erected a pillar bearing the image of Garuda, the bearer of Vishnu.

The foreign Sakas, who established their rule for some time became thoroughly Indianized and were Hindu or Buddhist in religion. It was in the time of Gondopharnes, the Pahlava ruler of Taxila, that the Apostle Thomas came to India to preach Christianity. The Syrian Christian church was established in South India early in the first century after Christ. The Pahlavas generally seem to have been followers of the popular Zoroastrian religion of Iran.

Through the great city of Alexandria, Indian ideas were carried to the west. Clement of Alexandria (2nd cent A.D.) had an intimate knowledge of Hinduism and Buddhism and introduced some of the ideas of monastic discipline of Buddhism into the Christian monasteries.

Asvaghosha, a gifted brahmin who became a convert to Buddhism is the author of the *Buddha Charita* or *Life of Buddha* in Sanskrit. He was responsible for the conversion of King Kanishka to Buddhism. Kanishka summoned a Great Council of eminent monks to settle disputed points in the Buddhist Church and the new Buddhism that emerged out of these discussions was the Mahayana or the Great Vehicle. Mahayana Buddhism called the historical Buddha the earthly shadow of an eternal Buddha, a Divine Being to be worshipped as God and Saviour.

There are several points of similarity between Mahayana Buddhism and Puranic Hinduism of the Gupta period. The *Bhagawatha Purana*, which gives a very detailed account of the life of Lord Krishna, the author of the *Bhagawad Gita*, belongs to this period. One of the essential features of Buddhism was its universality: The *Bhagawatha Purana* makes a similar appeal that the higher path is not the monopoly of the few. "All hail that Lord of Supreme Power, by depending upon whose grace, even the Kiratas, Hunas, Pulindas, Pulkasas, Abhiras, Kankas, Yavanas and Sakas become purified." (II. 4:18)

The Buddhist Dharma as illustrated in the Jataka stories resembles the *Bhagawatha Dharma* as depicted in the *Bhagawatha Purana*. The famous Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien came to India in

399 A.D. in search of Buddhist manuscripts and is said to have prayed to the Bodhisatva Avalokiteswara, with the sacred hymn or mantra "OM MANIPADMEHUM" for deliverance when he was overtaken by a storm on the voyage from Ceylon to China. Esoterically OM MANI PADME HUM signifies OM MY GOD within Me". We find a close parallel in the Bhagawatha Purana, where Prahlada teaches the Asura boys to worship and contemplate on Hari who is present in their own heart. This happy co-existence and commingling of the different religious strains that contributed to the making of Neo-Hinduism is best illustrated in the art and architecture of the period. The paintings in the Ajanta caves represent not only the story of the Buddha but also scenes from the Jataka stories of the Buddha in his previous births. Professor Winternitz points out that many of these stories are not genuinely Buddhist but belong to the common property of Indian ascetic poetry. The Viswanatara Jataka, illustrating the duty of generosity, finds an exact parallel in the Hindu story of Harischandra. The stories of great kings, who preferred service to the great saints in the forest to rulership of kingdoms, are common in Buddhism as well as Hinduism.

The Hyderabad Museum contains a valuable gallery of Jaina sculptures, mostly from Andhra Pradesh. The most beautiful sculpture in this collection is that of the goddess of learning or Vidya Devi from Mahur in the Adilabad district. The image has four hands, adorned with the book, the rosary, the lute, and the goad or vajra. There is a disc or chakra round the head.

The vedic deity, Indra, plays an important part in Jainism as one of the guardians of the quarters. One of the most striking of the Jaina caves at Ellora, is known as the Indra Sabha. Here is a colossal image of Indhra seated on an elephant, as also of his consort Indrani.

Turning now to the social set up of society during the period under review, it may be said that the caste system continued to be the basis of social organisation. Fundamentally this classification of society was based on the principle of social solidarity and not conflict. Professor Radhakrishnan in his Kamala Lectures on

'Religion and Society' has quoted several instances of interchange from one caste to another from the ancient epics. The ideal king Rama is said to have taken food in the same dish, with the aboriginal of the forest, Sabari, during his exile. Since Buddhism recognised no caste, reforming movements sprang up in Hinduism modifying the rigours of the caste system. In the twelfth century, Basava, the founder of the Lingayat sect in Western Deccan opposed the caste system. The Vaishnavite movements of medieval India also loosened the rigidity of caste distinctions.

Notwithstanding these attempts at reform, the caste system would not lessen its hold on the mind of the general masses. It put on a new visage. In place of the old four-fold division of society a new order consisting of a number of castes and sub-castes sprang up. Birth, occupation, residence, and such factors became the basis of division. Some of the foreign tribes which settled in India, the Sakas, Pahlavas, Kushans, Hunas etc. were also slowly absorbed into the Hindu society. As a result an undesirable feature of social organisation which became a blot on the fair name of Hinduism was the rise of the class of Chandalas. Fa-hien who visited India at the beginning of the fifth century tells us that they lived apart from others, because they were regarded as "wicked men". "When they enter the gate of a city or a market place they strike a piece of wood to make themselves known so that men knew and avoided them and did not come into contact with them". Bana, the Court-poet of Harsha, who ruled during the years 606 to 647 A.D., tells us that life in the locality where these chandalas lived "consisted of hunting the food of flesh, the ointment of fat, the garments of coarse silk, the couches of dried skins, the household attendants of dogs, the animals for riding, of cows, the men's employment of cattle. The place was the image of all hells".

The state of women shows a steady deterioration during the period. The law books assert that they did not deserve freedom because they were by nature weak and should be protected by their parents during their childhood, by their husbands after marriage, and by their sons in their widowhood. The life of seclusion

expected of women was, however, not accepted without protest, and Ratnaprabha one of the heroines in *Kathasarit Sagara* says: "I consider the strict seclusion of women is a mere social custom or rather folly produced by jealousy. It is of no use whatever. Women of good family are guarded by their own virtue as their own chamberlain. Even God himself can scarcely guard the unchaste".

The Hindus like the Buddhists began to emphasise the principles of Ahimsa and clean life. Fa-hien says: "Throughout the country no one kills any living thing, nor drinks wine, nor eats onions or garlic—In this country they do not keep pigs or fowls: there are no dealings in cattle, no butchers' shops or distilleries in market places. Only the Chandalas go hunting and deal in flesh". The pilgrim's observations on free hospitals are also interesting. He says: "This 'Magadha' has the largest cities and towns. Its people are rich and thriving and emulate one another in practising charity, and duty to one's neighbour... The elders and gentry of these countries have instituted in their capitals free hospitals and hither come all poor or helpless patients, orphans, widowers and cripples. They are well taken care of; a doctor attends them, food and medicine being supplied according to their needs. They are all made quite comfortable: when they are cured, they go away."

The *Mahabharata* speaking about the origin of state says that in the beginning people led a life of righteousness without violating the rights of others and discharging their duties and obligations faithfully. But in course of time people became wicked and the law of jungle began to prevail. Then Brahmadeva at the request of the people framed a code of laws and enforced it with the help of his son Virajas.

The *Digha Nikaya*, a Buddhist canonical work, also says that at first people were living in idealistic condition when the state was found to be superfluous. In course of time change in human character made life miserable and so the people elected a king by common consent (*mahasammata*) and requested him to

maintain peace and order. They promised to give him a part of their agricultural produce as a sort of compensation for the services rendered.

The Arthasastra says that before the state came into existence there was a state of *matsyanyaya*, the rule of the big fish swallowing the smaller ones. Life was "nasty, brutish, and short". Hence people chose one among themselves as their king to restore peace and order and promised to obey him and pay him taxes.

The first of these three theories gives a divine origin to the state while the other two suggest something of a "social contract". But they all emphasise that the state came into existence to preserve peace and order and promote the welfare of the people.

Hence the king was expected to be the guardian of the interests of the people. They in taking the coronation oath promised to work for the welfare of the people "considering always as good whatever is law and whatever is in accordance with ethics and whatever is not opposed to policy". Kautilya also emphasises that "in the happiness of his subjects lies the happiness of the King; it is no welfare to the King which is not the happiness or welfare of the people at large" Kalidasa and a host of other great writers of the period also assert that the duty of the ruler is to protect the people. Hence most of the monarchs regarded themselves as the servants of the people and did their best to promote their welfare. Hiuen Tsang, for example, speaking about Harsha's anxiety to govern well says "He was just in his administration and punctilious in the discharge of his duties... The king made visits of inspection throughout his dominion, not residing long at any place but having temporary buildings erected for his residence at each place of sojourn. ∴ He was indefatigable and the day was too short for him." But the greatest of the ancient Indian monarchs was Asoka whose ideals of kingship are stated in his famous inscriptions. Addressing his officers, he says in the Kalinga Edict. "All men are my children, and just as I desire for my own children that they may enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness in this world and in the next, so also I desire the same for all men.... You must make these people trust me and grasp the

truth that "the king is to us even as a father; he loves us even as he loves himself; we are to the King even as his children." By doing so, you may win heaven and also discharge your debt to me". Again in Pillar Edict IV, he says: "To my Governors set over many hundred thousands of people, I have granted independence in the award of honours and penalties in order that the governors, confidently and fearlessly, may perform their duties, and bestow welfare and happiness upon the people of the country. They will ascertain the causes of happiness or unhappiness. Just as a man having made over his child to a skilful nurse, feels confident and says to himself that 'the skilful nurse is eager to care for the happiness of my child' even so my governors have been created for the welfare and happiness of the country, with intent that fearlessly, confidently and quietly they may perform their duties".

The growing importance of kings is indicated by the titles assumed by them like Maharajadhiraja (Supreme King of Kings) Paramabhattacharaka (one who is supremely entitled to homage) Parameswara (Supreme Lord) etc.

Increase in the functions of the state and complexity of administration led to important changes in administration. A number of departments were created and a bureaucratic administrative machinery with graded officials was slowly evolved. We first come across this kind of organisation during the time of the Mauryas. It was also realised that the king could not administer the country without the assistance of his ministers. Kautilya holds that "Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move". Hence he says that the King should follow his advisers "as a student his lecturer, and a servant his master."

Decentralisation of authority and development of local institutions was another characteristic feature of ancient Indian administration. Megasthenes tells us that during the Mauryan period there was a mayor of the town called 'Nagarika' who was assisted by a number of subordinate officers. The general administration was carried on by a municipal board consisting of thirty members divided into six panchayats of five members each. These

committees looked after artisans, foreigners, census, trade and manufacture, and collection of taxes. There are many references in literary and epigraphic records which prove that the tradition of governing the villages with the help of a small representative assembly survived in North India down to the Seventh century. In the south, this institution persisted still longer and the two Uttaramerur inscriptions of Parantaka I (905 to 953 A.D.) describe in detail how the Brahmadeya villages were administered in the most democratic manner by a number of committees elected by the people. This balance between centralised control and local initiative encouraged communal life among the people, developed a fine sense of civic duties, fostered a love of liberty, and guaranteed a high standard of administrative efficiency and purity.

Sovereignty in the Ancient Hindu State was not monistic in the rigid Austinian sense of the term. It was pluralistic and was diffused among a variety of groups. The individual was merged in the group. His opinion was subordinated to the group opinion. The Ancient Hindu State was able to solve many social, economic and political problems by means of group organisation and devolution of powers.

According to Mr. Jayaswal, from the 7th Century B.C. we find a tendency to develop non-national territorial monarchies. Magadha is an example. The Kingdom is divided into Pura or Nagara, the capital city, and Durga, the fort. The country is called Janapada, with synonyms in Rashtra and Desa. The capital city has an assembly called the Paura. It was presided over by the President or Sreshtin. The assembly had an inner Council of Elders or Nagar Vridhdhas. The city had a Registrar, who had judicial functions to perform. He was known as the Lekhaka, who reduced to writing the allegations of the parties and the statements of the witnesses. The capital city had an association of city merchants which was called the Naigama. The Janapada was the assembly of the realm. Its president was called Janapada Mahattara (Lord High President). He is also called Rashtra Mukhya (Leader of the Realm). In all constitutional matters the Paura and the Janapada acted together.

Monarchy was not the only type of Government. Republics existed and were known as Ganas or Samghas. Agana meant a group of people. Alexander the Great encountered stout opposition from the tribal confederation of the Malavas and the kshudrakas. About 500 B.C. Panini mentions 10 Samghas. Buddhist literature discloses the existence of a large number of Republics. The sovereignty in these republics was vested in a very large central Assembly. They elected the members of the Executive and also their generals.

The concept of Dharma played a vital part in Hindu social and political outlook. Even the king was subject to Dharma, the eternal law. Refuting the materialist arguments of Jabali, Rama says: "The immemorial Dharma of kings is characterised by truth and compassion. Truth is the highest Dharma". Dharma was a conception of obligations, of the discharge of one's duties to one's self and to others. It is this idea that government should aim at the ideal of universal justice, that is symbolised in the Dharma Chakra or the Wheel of the Law, which is adopted as the emblem of India today. Thus the state in ancient India was a culture state which looked after the material and spiritual welfare of the people. The Mauryan state realised this to a great extent under Asoka whose ideal was government by Dharma, law by Dharma and progress by Dharma.

The Ramayana centres round the war between Rama and Ravana. The Mahabharata is the story of a great war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. In both cases, the wars were described as just and righteous wars. There was a code of laws governing Dharma Yuddha or righteous warfare. "When a conqueror felt that he was in a position to invade the foreigner's country, he sent an ambassador with the message "Fight or submit".

The person of the envoy that carried this message was held sacro-sanct. The Mahabharata states that the king who killed an envoy would sink into hell with all his ministers. Dikshitar mentions some of the rules which were observed on the battle field, as stated in the Mahabharata. (1) A warrior in armour must not fight

with a warrior who is not clad in a coat of mail. (2) One should fight only one enemy and cease fighting when the opponent became disabled. (3) If the enemy is clad in mail, his opponent should put on armour. (4) Warriors should fight only with their equals, viz, a horse warrior with a horse warrior and a chariot warrior with a chariot warrior. (5) Poisoned or barbed arrows should not be used. (6) A weak or wounded man should not be killed nor one who has no son. (7) He whose weapon is broken or whose bow string is cut or who has lost his car should not be hit. (8) A warrior who requests to be rescued saying "I am thine" or joins his hand in supplication or throws off his weapon, must not be killed. But he can be captured as a prisoner of war. (9) Aged men, women, children, the retreating or one who holds a straw in his lips as a sign of unconditional surrender, should not be killed. (10) The panic stricken and scattered foe should not be pursued hotly. (11) No one should kill the sleepy or the thirsty or the fatigued or one whose armour has slipped, a peaceful citizen walking along the road, one engaged in eating or milking, the mad, the insane, one who went out of the camp to buy provisions, a camp follower, menials and the guards at the gates.

Magasthenes, the Greek Ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, in the 4th century B.C. writes "whereas among other nations it is usual in the contest of war to ravage the soil and then reduce it to uncultivated waste, among the Indians on the contrary by whom husbandmen are regarded as a class that is sacred and inviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when battle is raging in their neighbourhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger from the inhabitants and either side in waging the conflict make carnage of each other but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain unmolested. Besides they neither ravage an enemy's land with fire nor cut down its trees." Nor would an enemy coming upon a husbandman at work on land do him harm.

There were three kinds of war, Dharma Vijaya, Asura Vijaya and Lobha Vijaya, mentioned in the epics and by Kautilya in his celebrated treatise on Polity, 'Arthashastra'. Asoka sent political envoys to distant rulers asking them to submit. If they

did so, war was avoided and diplomatic relations established. In the Asura Vijaya, the enemy was captured and deprived of his kingdom or was slain. In the Lobha Vijaya the aim of the conqueror was to covet the territory and treasury of the enemy.

By the middle of the seventh century the political conditions in northern India underwent great changes. Harsha was the last great Hindu emperor of Northern India, and with his death in 647 A.D. his empire was split into a large number of petty kingdoms. Then followed a period of nearly two centuries of confusion when the Rajputs pushed themselves into the political arena. These rulers were no doubt, great warriors, administrators and patrons of art and learning, but they were disunited, clanish, and incapable of united action even in times of great crisis. The proximity of the kingdoms and their ill-defined frontiers led to bitter struggles and the rivalry and jealousy of the rulers were so bitter that some states rejoiced at the destruction and humiliation of the other states by foreigners. Political disunion led to social and religious disintegration. The old atmosphere of religious tolerance and social harmony disappeared yielding place to sectarian rivalry and bitterness. Religious antagonism was so strong that votaries of one sect looked with extreme satisfaction at the destruction of the institutions of the others by the Muslims. The various occupational castes grew rigidly exclusive. It was at this juncture, when the various forces operating in different spheres of life in Northern India were all working towards the disintegration of society that the Muslims invaded India from the north-west.

During the closing centuries of this period things were, however, different in the South. Life was more settled here allowing opportunities for the establishment of fruitful commercial relations with the people from outside of India, particularly with the Arabs. The story of peaceful infiltration of the Arab influence in the South, after the rise of Islam in Arabia, resulting in fresh cultural impacts will be described in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER VII

CULTURAL INFLUENCE ABROAD IN EARLY TIMES AND REFLEX INFLUENCE

There is a general impression, even among educated classes, that India had very little contact with the outside world in ancient times. It is usually held that, shut off by the mountains and seas, she lived in splendid isolation and developed an unique civilization, neither influencing, nor being influenced by, any other country. Nothing can be a greater mistake than this. There are abundant facts to show that India had active intercourse, both by land and sea, with the outside world in Asia and Europe. Further, there is unimpeachable testimony to prove that cultural influence flowed from India in all directions. The debt which European civilisation owes to Greece and Rome is well-known to every school-boy in the west, but it is seldom realised, even by many educated Indians, that their country played a similar part in respect of a large part of Asia, and perhaps even beyond its limits. Many European scholars have tried to emphasise the Graeco-Roman influence on the civilization of ancient India. What they ignored is the fact that the influence was mutual and the cultural flow was at no time an one-way traffic. It is the object of the present chapter to develop this thesis in as popular a form as possible. For the sake of convenience we shall treat of India's contact with the west, north, east, and south-east, separately, irrespective of chronological considerations.

India's contact with the west, both by land and sea, goes back to very remote times. It no doubt began in trade and commerce, as is proved by the familiarity of the west with Indian articles in their Indian names. Among these may be mentioned ivory, almug, peacock, ape, cotton, rice, aloes, cinnamon, ginger, pepper, and the beryl stone. We find, besides, Indian teak in the temple of the Moon at Mugheir, the Ur of the Chaldees, and the figures of Indian elephants on the obelisk of Shalmaneser. On the other hand 'the presence of the African Baobab (*Adansonia digi tata*) in western India has been traced to early traders from Africa. A more interesting example is that of tin, called 'kassiteros' in Greek, and 'Kastira' in Sanskrit. But it is difficult to decide which of these was derived from the other; in other words, whether tin came from the east to Greece or vice-versa.

During the later period, beginning from Alexander's invasion (325 B.C.) there was a close contact between India and the west. There was a regular trade and a large number of Indians settled in Alexandria and other places. On the other hand there were regular Roman settlements in South India. It is a well known fact that thoughts and ideas travel along with mercantile wares. It is certain that the commercial inter-course between India and the western countries led to the exchange not only of material products, but also of intellectual and cultural elements. But here we do not always stand on firm ground, for resemblances, even though very striking, do not always imply borrowing on the part of one from the other, and in cases of borrowing, it is not easy to decide who borrowed from whom. This is the reason why there are differences of opinion among scholars regarding the influence of India upon the west, and vice versa. Subject to this general caution we may mention a few of the more important ideas or aspects of culture which India is supposed by some to have derived from the west in early times. Some have traced the influence of the Babylonian story of the flood in the account of the fish incarnation of Vishnu as in the 'Satapatha Brahmana'. According to others, the Indian concept of twenty-seven lunar mansions and the division of the week into seven days named

after the sun, moon and five planets are derived from Babylon. Some elements of Mauryan art, particularly the bell-capital and the lion pillar, are also supposed to be derived from Assyrian prototypes. A claim has also been made by Weber and others that Indian drama, if not Indian philosophy, owes a great deal to the drama of Greece. The 'Brahmi lipi', the oldest script in India, is also traced to Phoenicia.

But all these views rest upon very weak and insufficient grounds and hence have not received general assent. There are, however, certain matters in respect of which the indebtedness of India to the west is clearly proved by adequate and satisfactory evidence.

As regards art, the Greek technique may be clearly seen in what is known as the Gandhara sculpture. Numerous images of Buddha and Buddhist gods, found in the North-West Frontier and Western Punjab, betray clearly the Hellenistic influence. How far they influenced the subsequent development of Indian art cannot be determined with certainty, but it is undeniable that during the early centuries of the Christian era the Buddhist art was greatly influenced by the Greeks, and the images of Buddha and Bodhisatva etc. were fashioned after Greek gods. The suggestion that the very idea of making images of gods was derived from the Greeks is no doubt plausible, but cannot be definitely proved.

In the matter of coinage the debt of India to Greece is much greater still. The beautiful coins of the Graeco-Bactrian rulers in India form a class by themselves, and offer a strong contrast to the punch-marked and cast coins of India. The idea of issuing coins with the name and portrait of the king engraved on it was altogether unknown to India and learnt by her from the Greek coins. In the science of astronomy the Indians derived much useful information from the west and had the candour to admit it frankly. This is evident from the following passage in the 'Gargi Samhita' 'The Yavanas are barbarians, yet the science of astronomy originated with them and for this they must be revered like gods.'

We may now pass on to some important traces of Indian influence upon western countries. The earliest and most interesting records in this respect have been found at Boghaz Kei in Armenia. These are Hittite records of about 1400 B.C. containing the names of Vedic gods Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and Nasatya, and also India numerals. Many scholars have inferred from this that even at this remote period the Vedic culture made its influence felt in this region of Western Asia. It must be pointed out, however, that this conclusion is not agreed to by all.

Coming down to historical period, there is clear evidence that the Greek philosophy was strongly influenced by Indian philosophy.

Since the early days of Indological research, the western scholars have pointed out the analogy between the Sankhya system and the philosophy of Pythagoras, and many eminent scholars are of the opinion that the latter was derived from the former. In recent times, some scholars have demurred to this view, but as Schroeder has pointed out, not one or two chance ideas but almost all the doctrines ascribed to Pythagoras were current in India. As the most important of them appear in Pythagoras without connection or explanatory background, whilst in India they are rendered comprehensive by the intellectual life of the times, Schroeder pronounces India to be the birth-place of the ideas. This view was also emphatically asserted by Celebrooke and Garbe, and the latter has also pointed out numerous coincidences between Indian and Greek philosophy. Later writers have emphasised the fact that Clement (2nd-3rd century A.D.) possessed a real knowledge of Indian philosophy and that there were resemblances between Neo-Platonic and Indian philosophy, particularly the Yoga system. It is to be noted that according to the Greek tradition a number of Greek philosophers visited Oriental countries for studying philosophy, and such a contact makes it very probable that the Greeks borrowed the philosophical ideas from Indians.

Those who oppose this idea are mostly influenced by the consideration that there could not possibly be any contact between Indian and Greek philosophers before the route between the two countries was opened by Alexander. This has however proved to be illusory. Rawlinson has brought to our notice a statement of Eusebius which runs as follows: 'Aristoxenus, the musician, tells the following story about the Indians. One of these men met Socrates at Athens, and asked him what the scope was of his philosophy. "An enquiry into human phenomenon" replied Socrates. At this the Indian burst out laughing. "How can a man enquire into human phenomena", he exclaimed, "when he is ignorant of divine ones?"'

Aristoxenus was a pupil of Aristotle and lived in 330 B.C. He might therefore have heard of the dialogue between Socrates and the Indian philosopher from some of their contemporaries. The dialogue itself is highly characteristic of the difference in the Indian and Greek attitude of mind. But whatever we might think of it, the anecdote quoted by Aristoxenus leaves no doubt that even in the fifth century B.C. Indian philosophers travelled in the west and learnt Greek language and philosophy sufficiently well to be able to hold discourses with eminent philosophers like Socrates.

We have got abundant evidence to show that Buddhism flourished in western countries. Reference may be made to the efforts of the great Maurya Emperor Asoka in spreading Buddhism, and therewith Indian culture, to the western countries.

Asoka specifically refers by name to five Hellenistic rulers whose courts were visited by his missionaries. These were Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Magas of Cyrene, Antigonus of Macedonia, and Alexander of Epirus. Asoka claims that as a result of his missionary efforts Buddhism obtained a definite footing in those Hellenistic monarchies of Asia, Africa, and Europe, and there is no reason to discredit this claim altogether.

Alberuni (C. 1000 A.D.) definitely states that in former times, Khurasan, Persis, Irak, Mosul and the country up to the frontier

of Syria were Buddhist. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Manichaean religion which flourished in the third Century A.D. contains unmistakable traces of Buddhist influence.

We have also a very interesting evidence that Brahmanical religion prevailed in Western Asia. According to the Syrian writer Zenob, there was an Indian colony in the Canton of Taron on the Upper Euphrates, to the west of Lake Van, as early as the second century B.C. The Indians built there two temples containing images of gods about 18 and 22 ft. high. When about 304 A.D. St. Gregory came to break these temples, he was strongly opposed by the Indians. But he defeated them and broke the images.

It may also be pointed out that there is a great resemblance between the interior of the Christian Church and a Buddhist Chaitya. It has also been suggested by many that the extreme form of asceticism among the early Christians, their theory of monasticism, metempsychosis, relic worship and the use of the rosary might all have been borrowed from the religious ideas and practices of India. It is unanimously believed that the Gnostics were strongly influenced by Indian ideas.

In addition to Religion, Indian literature also made a deep impression upon the people of the west. Reference may be made to the 'Panchatantra' or a book of fables containing wise maxims. It was translated from Sanskrit into Pehlevi and then from Pehlevi into Arabic and Syrian. This Arab translation introduced the book to the western world and it was translated into numerous languages of Europe and Asia. Other Indian folk-tales also were introduced to Europe and their influence can be traced in medieval collections and stories. According to some scholars the basis of the famous 'Thousand and One Nights' was a Persian work containing several stories of Indian origin.

St. John of Damascus (8th century A.D.) wrote 'Barlaam and Josaphat' which contained numerous Buddhist legends and portrayed the life of Buddha as a pious Christian saint. As a

result of this, Gautama, the Bodhisatva, under the guise of Saint Josaphat, was included in the Martyrology of George XIII (1582).

Indian medical science and arithmetic were also highly cultivated in the west. The decimal system or the place value of zero was discovered by the Hindus and through the Arabian sources it was borrowed by the whole world and thereby revolutionised the science of mathematics. The Arabs also made a serious study of Indian medicine and various medical books of India were translated into Arabic. These included, among others such famous works as those of Charaka, Susruta and Vagbhata. Along with medicine, Hindu philosophy, astrology, astronomy, algebra and arithmetic were studied by the Arabs and many Hindu scholars in these branches of study lived in the court of the Caliphs as instructors and medical practitioners. Several works on mathematics were translated into Arabic by Arabic scholars. Later Greek physicians are believed by many to have been acquainted with the medical works of the Hindus. Iran also derived a great deal of knowledge of medicine and other sciences from India.

There are good grounds to believe that the game of chess was introduced from India into Persia. From Persia, it passed to Arabia and thence to various parts of Europe.

It would be obvious from what has been said above, that India exercised considerable influence upon the culture of Western countries, though its extent is somewhat indeterminate, and the evidence is sometimes indirect, and not always conclusive. We are however on a more solid ground in respect of Central Asia. For we have definite archaeological and historical evidence of the missionary and colonizing activities of the Indians all along the two roads, on the northern and southern fringes of the Takla-Makan desert, which formed the highway of communication between India and western countries on the one hand, and China on the other. Archaeological expeditions sent by various western countries in modern times have excavated many old sites situated on or near these two routes, and the antiquities exposed by them,

deep under the beds of sand, have revealed a new world of old times in these inhospitable regions. These include ruins of large cities, containing sanctuaries, images of gods, manuscripts of religious texts, and various written documents. It is not possible to give a brief account of each of the old sites unearthed by the archaeologists, or even of the most important of them. It will suffice to give a general description of the antiquities, and draw broad conclusions from them.

The general appearance of these ruined cities is so strikingly Indian in every respect that Sir Aurel Stein who carried on excavations at certain sites in this region remarked that when he was in the midst of these ruins, thirty feet or so beneath the surface, he often forgot that he was not in his familiar surroundings in India, and far away from it. The sanctuaries in ruins were the remains of Buddhist temples, stupas and viharas all built in Indian style. The images, mostly of Buddhist with a few Brahmanical deities, were exact replicas of Indian models. The manuscripts are also mostly Buddhist religious texts. They are written in Sanskrit, Prakrit and various other languages current in the localities, and the script of most of them is Brahmi or Kharoshthi which was in use in India during the early centuries of the Christian era, roughly speaking, the first half of the first millennium A.D.

In addition to religious texts a large number of secular documents were found in various places. These are written on wooden tablets, leather, paper, and silk, and their script and language are Indian. These are mostly letters with the names of the addressees written on the covering tablet. Many persons who wrote these letters, or to whom they were addressed, bore purely Indian names such as Bhima, Bangusena Nandasena, Syamasena, Sitaka, Upajiva, etc. or were Indian adaptation of foreign names such as Kushanasena, Angacha, etc. Indian official designations such as 'Chara' (spy) and 'duta' (envoy) are also met with in these documents. It has been pointed out by Sir Aurel Stein that the style of writing in these records follows closely the instructions given in the Kashmirian manual 'Lokaprakasa'.

These documents of administrative character testify to the political authority exercised by Indians in this region. They leave no doubt that the Indians settled in large numbers as far at least as Lop-Nor to the extreme east of the Tarim basin, and set up small colonial kingdoms. They introduced Buddhism and, along with it, Indian languages, script and other elements of culture which took deep root in the soil and profoundly modified the local culture and civilization of the vast region from Pamir to the borders of China.

Two localities in this region deserve special notice and may serve as typical examples of Indian colonies in Central Asia in general. The first is Khotan which figures prominently in Tibetan literature. It records a tradition to the effect that Khotan was colonized by the Indians and ruled by Indian chiefs, and gives a long list of these Indian rulers. According to other Buddhist traditions, Kunala, who was blinded by orders of his father Asoka, the great Maurya Emperor, left the country with his followers and set up a kingdom in Khotan. Whatever we might think of this legend the archaeological evidence supports the tradition that Khotan was an Indian colony. A Kharoshthi inscription refers to "Maharaja Rajadhiraja Deva Vijitasimha" of Khotan, and about forty coins found there bear legends in Chinese on the obverse and in Prakrit, in Kharoshthi character, on the reverse. Khotan continued to be an important centre of Buddhism and Indian culture down to the seventh century A.D., if not later still. We have got a detailed account of it both from Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang who stayed there for some time. Both describe the flourishing state of Buddhism in this country. It had fourteen large monasteries of which the 'Gomati-Vihara' was the most renowned. It was a famous centre of Buddhism in Central Asia. A number of Indian scholars permanently lived there and some texts composed by the monks of this Vihara were regarded as almost canonical. Fa-hien also describes in detail large religious processions of Buddhists which remind us of the car-festivals in India.

Another important centre of Indian culture was Kuchi (modern Kuchar). We know a great deal about it from archaeologi-

cal excavations as well as from the accounts of Hiuen Tsang. Some of its ancient rulers bore Indian names like Suvarnapushpa, Haradeva, Suvarnadeva etc. It was a flourishing centre of Buddhism and the study of Sanskrit was regularly cultivated there. The whole process of learning this difficult language is revealed to us by the discovery of texts used by them and other documents. Astronomical and medical texts in Indian language have come to light amid the ruins of this place. The famous Bower manuscript (named after the discoverer), found near Kuchi, contains three Sanskrit medical treatises written in the script of the Gupta period (c. 4th or 5th century A.D.). Along with Buddhism other elements of Indian culture were also introduced in Central Asia. Reference has been made to Indian astronomical and medical texts. Not only was Indian musical system introduced in the country, but Indian musicians visited the locality and some of them permanently settled there. Indian art, particularly sculpture and painting, also made its influence felt in these regions. Reference may be made in this connection to the Caves of Thousand Buddhas excavated on the southern slopes of the Tian Shan mountains. They were decorated with mural paintings (about seventh to tenth century A.D.) and the style of execution and the discovery of Sanskrit manuscripts in the caves clearly indicate Indian influence.

A few words may be said regarding the region between India and the region of Central Asia described above. The territory between the Indus and Hindu Kush was both politically and culturally a part of India until its conquest by the Muslims in the tenth century A.D. Beyond Hindu Kush we get clear traces of Indian culture down to the seventh century A.D. Both Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang give a graphic description of the dominance of Buddhism and Indian culture over that part of this region through which they passed. The latter was cordially received by the great Khan of the Western Turks who was initiated into Buddhism by an Indian monk and held that religion in great reverence. Balkh (old Bactria), to the south of the Oxus, was a great centre of Buddhism and had a famous convent called Nava-Sangharama. Kha-

lid, the Wazir of Caliph Al-Mansur, was the son of the High Priest of this convent.

From Central Asia, Buddhism spread into China and had a definite footing there by the first century A.D. The phenomenal progress of Buddhism in China is a matter of common knowledge and need not be dilated upon. The Chinese have preserved the names of hundreds of Indian Buddhist missionaries who visited China and thousands of Buddhist texts carried there and translated into Chinese. According to an official catalogue these Buddhist texts numbered about 5,400 separate works. A voluminous body of Sanskrit Buddhist literature, almost entirely lost in India, has thus been preserved only in China,—thanks to the elaborate arrangement for their translation on a colossal scale.

Along with Buddhism other elements of Indian culture were also introduced in China. The most important of these was art which produced a new school of what may be called Sino-Indian art. Indian music was introduced by Indian musicians settled in Kuchi in Central Asia, and a musical party went direct from India to China in A.D. 581. Indian astronomy, mathematics and medicine were also very popular in China, and a number of Indian texts on these subjects were translated into Chinese.

Buddhism was introduced into Tibet in the first half of the seventh century A.D. Since then a large number of Indian monks visited the country and the whole religious system of the country was developed by them. The art of writing was introduced along with Buddhism and the present Tibetan alphabet is derived from Indian script. A large number of Buddhist texts were taken to Tibet, and a vast literature, now lost in India, has been preserved in the two voluminous collections known as Bstan-hgyur and Bkash-hgyur, popularly known as Tanjur and Kanjur.

From Central Asia, Tibet, and China, Buddhism, and, along with it, Indian culture spread to other parts of Asia, notably Mongolia, Korea and Japan. Buddhist missionaries also directly proceeded from India to Japan. The Japanese syllabary, comprising fifty phonetic sounds, was based upon Indian alphabetic system.

Lessons in Indian music and dancing, with practical demonstrations, were given in the famous Nara University in Japan.

From this rapid birds' eye view of the influence of Indian culture in the north and west we pass on to the eastern countries, comprising Indo-China and Indonesia which practically owe their entire culture and civilization to India.

In dealing with the spread of Indian culture in this vast region, we are fortunate in having not only Chinese accounts, mostly contemporary, but also, what is more important, a large number of inscriptions written in Sanskrit, and hundreds of monuments, many of which are still in a fair state of preservation. It is not possible here to give an account of each country separately, though we possess enough materials for the purpose, and we shall therefore attempt only a general picture embracing the whole region.

In the first place, we can trace the existence of a large number of Hindu kingdoms in Burma, Thailand (Siam), Malay Peninsula, Cambodia and Annam on the main land, and in Sumatra, Java, Bali, Borneo and a few other islands.

The rulers of these kingdoms, of which several existed side by side in almost each of the above countries, bore purely Hindu names, and the local traditions in many of them traced the origin of the royal dynasty to India. These legends are not, of course, very trustworthy, but there is hardly any doubt that the rulers of these kingdoms were either Indians or Hinduised aborigines. There was a large influx of Indians all over the region. They came for trade, adventure, missionary work or similar purposes, but many of them permanently settled in the new country and intermarried with the local population. In this way, the whole region was dotted with small Indian colonies in the early centuries of the Christian era. Sometimes by right of marriage or other peaceful means, sometimes by virtue of superior knowledge of political organisation and military skill, many Indians made themselves rulers of existing states or founded new kingdoms. The fusion of Indian colonists with the native population brought about a

great change in the culture of the aboriginal people. It is a law of nature that when a less developed primitive civilization comes into close contact with a highly developed one, it almost merges itself into the latter. So in this case, Indian civilization fully triumphed over the primitive civilization of the land and changed its character beyond recognition. In order to give some idea of the great transformation it will suffice to state that in one of the earliest Indian colonies in Cambodia, the natives, both men and women, went about naked, when the Indians came, but within a few centuries, we find a high type of civilization flourishing there. This civilization was, of course, almost purely Indian. The Indian language and script, religion, manners and customs, art and architecture prevailed there and a new India was developed with only a few traces, here and there, of the old primitive civilization typical of the neolithic age.

Among the kingdoms that flourished in this region, mention may be made in particular of the kingdoms of Sankissa (Tagaung) in Upper Burma, Sriksheṭra, near Prome, Sudhammavati (Tha-ton), Hamsavati (Pegu), and Ramannadesa, in Lower Burma, Dvaravati in Thailand, Fu-nan in South Cambodia, Champa in Annam, several small States in different parts of Malay Peninsula, Taruma in Western Java, and Kadiri and Singhasari in Eastern Java, Bali (island) Srivijaya in Sumatra and two states in Borneo in the valleys of the Mahakan and Kapuas rivers. Out of these grew, in course of time, powerful empires, like Arimardanapura (Pagan) which included the whole of Burma, Kambuya which at its greatest extent comprised the whole of Annam, Cambodia and large parts of Thailand and Malay Peninsula, and Majapajit (Java) which extended over nearly the whole of Indonesia. The most powerful empire, however, was that of the Sailendras which flourished in the eighth century A.D. and comprised at one time nearly all the territories which were included in the Dutch Empire in the eighteenth century A.D. The contemporary Arab writers have left a glowing account of the vast extent, wealth, and grandeur of this empire whose ruler is referred to by them as Maharaja, the Indian title for a great king. These Hindu

empires continued in full glory till the end of the fourteenth century A.D., when some of them were conquered by the Tnais and the Annamites from the north, and others came under Muslim rule.

The rulers of these kingdoms bore Hindu names. Aniruddha of Pagan (Burma) was a very powerful ruler whose conquests and religious activities are known to us in some detail. A long line of powerful emperors flourished in Kambuja such as Jayavarman II, Indravarman, Yasovarman, Suryavarman I and II and Jaya Varman VII, the Grnd Monarch, whose activities are known from numerous Sanskrit inscriptions discovered in the country. Kings Bhadravarman, Rudravarman, Sambhuvarman, Harivarman, and many others of Champa (Annam) are also known from their epigraphic records. The Sailendra emperors are known from Chinese chronicles as well as Indian inscriptions. One of them, Balaputradeva, sent an embassy to King Devapala of Bengal (9th century A.D.), asking for the grant of a few villages with which he endowed a Buddhist Monastery founded by him at Nalanda. Two other Sailendra Emperors, Chudamanivarman and his son Sri-Mara-Vijayottunga-Varman sent embassies to Chola emperor Rajaraja (11th century A.D.) for a similar grant for endowing a Buddhist monastery constructed by him at Nagapattana (modern Negapatam). Rajendra Chola, the son of Rajaraja, however, sent a naval expedition against them across the Bay of Bengal, and his inscriptions give a detailed account of the various parts of the oversea empire of the Sailendras conquered by him. The struggle continued under his successors, but peace was concluded after nearly a century.

The numerous inscriptions discovered in Kambuja and other countries prove that Sanskrit was highly cultivated all over the region and formed the court language and the language of the learned. Under its influence, local native languages also were sufficiently developed, and in some cases, as in Java, produced in course of time a high class of literature, based on the models of Sanskrit. The Sanskrit inscriptions, numbering nearly two hundred in Kambuja alone, clearly demonstrate the high develop-

ment of that language and literature in these far-off colonies. Many of these records are composed in beautiful and almost flawless Kavya style which would do credit to an Indian scholar even in ancient times. Some of them run to great lengths. Several contain fifty to hundred verses, while two inscriptions of Rajendravarman contain respectively 218 and 298 verses. The authors of these inscriptions were well versed in the rules and conventions of Sanskrit rhetoric and prosody and show an intimate knowledge of the Indian epics, kavyas, smritis, Puranas, grammar, philosophy, astronomy, medicine and other branches of Indian literature. Even the difficult treatises like grammars of Panini and Patanjali were studied and a king of Kambuja wrote a commentary on the latter.

The different forms of Indian religion, such as vedic, Buddhist and Puranik, specially Saivism and Vaishnavism, prevailed in this region. There are still thousands of images of Indian gods and goddesses, and ruins of hundreds of temples where these were worshipped. Indeed there is hardly any divine image in India of which we do not find any counterpart in these colonies. The Brahmanical religion is still popular in the island of Bali, and Buddhism prevails in Burma, Thailand and Cambodia. They show how thoroughly the religious ideas and practices of India were transplanted to these far-off lands.

The same thing may be said of the social usages, customs and institutions, though these were somewhat modified by local condition. The caste system prevailed, though in a less rigorous form, and women enjoyed larger degree of freedom and legal rights than in India. But barring these and similar modifications, we find the entire system of Indian society guiding the lives of the peoples in these countries.

The general principles and conventions of Indian art were so thoroughly adopted in these colonies that the early phases of colonial art were hardly distinguishable from the contemporary art of the motherland. But new technique was developed in course of time, and though always inspired by the fundamental principles and the essential spirit of Indian art, the colonial art

surpassed in magnificence and grandeur even the art of India. The massive stupa of Barabudur in Java and the great temple of Angkor Vat in Cambodia have no parallel in India, and some of the images in Java are hardly inferior to the finest sculptures that India can boast of.

Considerations of space do not permit us to give a detailed account of the literature, religion, society, and art of the Indian colonies. But there are good books dealing with these, and any one who reads them cannot but look upon these far-off colonies in South-east Asia as so many replicas of the motherland, and feel that we are justified in including them within the cultural zone of India extended beyond the sea. All this is summed up in the conception and designation of Greater India. The neighbouring island of Ceylon, the only colony in the south, which still retains the language, religion and other elements of Indian culture also forms a part of it. In this zone it is not a question of cultural influence, but cultural conquest, and India may feel proud of the fact that she played the same role in civilizing large parts of Asia, at least in the north-east, south-east and south, as Greece did in the case of Europe and Western Asia.

PART TWO
IMPACT OF MUSLIM CULTURE.

CHAPTER VIII

IMPACT OF MUSLIM CULTURE

The richness and vitality of Indian culture have been to a great extent due to a synthesis and reconciliation of different strands; and this aspect of our culture is best illustrated in the meeting and mingling of two strongly developed and radically dissimilar cultures, as the Hindu and the Muslim. The numerous foreign tribes, who settled in ancient India, soon came under the assimilative influence of Hinduism and Buddhism, and were absorbed into their folds. But, absorption or assimilation in toto of Islam by Hinduism, or vice versa, was not possible because of the sharp contrast in their respective outlooks. Hinduism developed an ascetic other worldly attitude, and concentrated on the redemption of man from the oppressive process of re-births. The affairs of this world were of secondary importance, and assumed significance only as aids to the final emancipation. Islam, on the other hand, was non-ascetic and concentrated on a vigorous social philosophy of life in this world, as a preparation for the Life-Hereafter, marked by an incessant forward movement, steadily equipping the human soul to acquire the talent to behold the beatific vision of God, and continue to live in bliss in that state. The greatest achievement of the mediaeval period was the reconciliation of these conflicting and contrasting cultural outlooks and the evolution of an Indo-Muslim culture.

The Arabs were the first people of the Middle Eastern or West Asian countries to have approached and contacted the

Indian soil. They were a sea-faring people, who had developed the art of navigation long before the rise of Islam, though their naval activities were considerably expanded by their association with the new religion.

Early Contact of Arabs with India.

The early contact of the Islamized Arabs with the Malabar coast dates back to the first century of Hijra. Sarqafi, who governed Oman under Omar, the second Khalif, sent an expedition to Thana and Barouch, on his own initiative, without seeking permission from the Khalif. But, the latter, being loath to overseas expeditions, disallowed further action. Osman, the third Khalif, took a different view, and sent an expedition to gather information about the land and the people. But the expedition was not a success. The report submitted by Hakim bin Jabilla, the head of the expedition, was not encouraging, and, therefore, the scheme of expansion was dropped. But, the fourth Khalif Ali appointed an Arab officer, Muhallab, to pursue the mission. According to Rowlandson, the first Arab settlement on the coast of Malabar was established at the end of the Seventh Century. A similar statement is available in Francis Day's work on South Kanara. Eliot refers to the Arab settlement of Malabar as one of the factors contributing to the conquest of Sindh.

The history of the Arab movement in South India forms a fascinating sociological study. It was promoted by peaceful means, unaided or backed by any political power such as the Muslims enjoyed in the North in subsequent stages of Indian history. The Muslim Arabs through the way in which they conducted themselves amidst an alien population slowly brought themselves into favour with the new peoples among whom they chose to settle down. The confidence which they inspired among them gave them the opportunity to control the trade between South India and the West. Not merely this, the leaders among the Arab settlers were raised even to the position of ministers, admirals, ambassadors and farmers of revenue. Living thus peacefully and making themselves useful to the people around

them, the Arab settlers had the chance, both by precept and example, to propagate the tenets of their faith, and attract to their way of thought and living many people, the descendants of whom are now known as Ravuttans and Labbes.

Speaking of this period, Barth in his 'Religions of India' says: "The Arabs of the Khilafat had arrived on these shores (Malabar and Coromandel) in the character of travellers and had established commercial relations and intercourse with these parts long before the Afghans, Turks or Mongols, their co-religionists, came as conquerors. It is precisely in these parts that from the ninth to the twelfth century, those great religious movements took their rise which are connected with the names of Sankara, Ramanuja, Ananda Tirtha and Basava, out of which the majority of the historical sects came and to which Hindustan presents nothing analogous till a much later period." Dr. Tara Chand in his 'Influence of Islam on Indian Culture' clarifies: "Most of the elements in the southern schools of devotion and philosophy, taken singly, were derived from ancient systems; but the elements in their totality, and in their peculiar emphasis, betray a singular approximation to Muslim faith, and, therefore, make the arguments for Islamic influence probable".

Fawcett, in his description of the people of Malabar, notes the growth of the Bhakti cult in the South, as a re-action to Islamic influence. But Dr. Bandarkar is of opinion that its two leading elements, viz., 'Prapatti' and 'Guru Bhakti', may be traced to the influence of Christianity. Dr. Tara Chand thinks otherwise. Says he, "certain other characteristics of South Indian thought from the ninth century onwards, however, strongly point to Islamic influence. These are the increasing emphasis on monotheism, emotional worship, self-surrender (Prapatti), and adoration of the teacher (Guru Bhakti), and, in addition to them, laxity in the rigours of the caste system and indifference towards mere ritual". "Both (Prapatti and Guru Bhakti) were very prominent features of that religion. The word Islam means surrender, and the Muslim is verily a 'Prapanna'. It has been shown that submission to the will of God is an essential part of the Mus-

lim religious consciousness. Historically also, there is no insuperable difficulty in supposing that Ramanuja adopted it from Islam. Absorption in God, through devotion to a teacher, is again an important Muslim conception. It was started by the Shias and from them taken by the Sufis. The Sufi conception of the deified teacher was incorporated in medieval Hinduism."

Of the communities in South India, who reacted to the influence of Islam more powerfully than others, were Lingayats or Jangamas and the Siddhars. Speaking of the former, says Dr. Tara Chand: "It is difficult to resist the inference that Lingayatism was a result of the influence which these Muslims exerted in these parts of India. No other hypothesis appears sufficient to explain the revolutionary character of its doctrines and customs. The abandonment of such a deep rooted Hindu idea as that of metempsychosis, and of such customs as cremation and purificatory death ceremonial, the abolition of inequalities of caste and sex, and the reform of marriage, the conceptions of the community of brave warriors led by their sanctified perceptor of God (Allama), whose very name is probably of Muslim origin, point unmistakably to the source of inspiration, that is Islam".

The Muslim influence spread further and deepened, when Sind was incorporated into the Arab Empire in 712 A.D., during the reign of Khalif Walid (705-715) of the Ummayyids. Whatever might have been the causes for the Arab invasion of Sindh and their rapid advance in the region, it went a long way in forging lasting cultural ties between the two races. Sindh and Makran may, therefore, be cited as the second direction from which the Muslims entered India. There was, however, a vital difference in the way in which Islam spread from these two bases. The spread of Islam in Malabar was due to the peaceful work of enterprising merchants and zealous missionaries, whereas its spread in Sindh followed the political and military conquest by Muslim imperialists.

The history of cultural reciprocity between the Arab Muslims and the people of India may be divided into two periods. During the first which is covered by the Ummayyid Khilafat, although

the Arabs were slowly acquainting themselves with the literary treasures of the Hindus of India, they were largely influenced by the thought and literature of the Greeks and Romans, since the Ummayyid central seat of administration, Damascus, was situated close to the West.

It was only when, under the Abbasid Khalifs, the capital of the Arab empire shifted to Baghdad, that relations between the Arabs and the Hindus became closer than before. The reign of Mansur (754-775 A.D.) opened a new chapter in the cultural relations of the two countries. Mansur's zeal for learning attracted many Hindu Pandits to the Abbaside court. The memorable deputation of Sindhi representatives to the court of the Caliph in 771 A.D., may be regarded as the first intellectual contact between the two countries. One of the members of this deputation was a scholar noted for his knowledge of astronomy and mathematics. The Pandit presented to the court a copy of "Siddhant". It was translated into Arabic by Ibrahim Fazari. The Arabic rendering disclosed to the Arab learned circles its valuable store of knowledge, on astronomy and mathematics, and impressed them of the intellectual qualities of the Hindus.

When the Barmicide family assumed the reins of 'Wazarat' or Premiership at Baghdad, they gave a fresh impetus to the interchange of thought and culture between the two races. Yahya, the Barmicide, Prime Minister of Mansur, invited many Indian Pandits to Baghdad and elevated them to high positions. According to Allama Sulaiman Nadvi, the Barmicides were of Indian Buddhist origin, and, therefore, animated by their old ancestral associations with India, they brought the Indian intellect into close contact with the Arab mind. Since then, large numbers of Indian Pandits and Sanskrit books poured into Baghdad and enriched the Arabic learning in astronomy, mathematics, astrology, medicine, literature and ethics. Among the Pandits, who earned renown in the literary academies of Baghdad, were Manka, Shashrat, Bahla and Dahan, who were erudite scholars in various arts and sciences. The Sanskrit books which were translated into Arabic under their auspices were widely circulated

and read in the Islamic world; and some of these books, especially 'Siddhant', travelled as far as Spain and were studied with keen interest. That is why famous Arab writers like Jahiz, Yakubi, Abu Zaid Sarafi, who flourished in the 3rd century of the Hijra are loud in their praise of the Indian mind and its intellectual attainments.

Advent of Turks.

The Arabs were followed during the tenth century by the Turks, whose emergence from Central Asia and penetration into the East and West is a historical event of great significance.

The rise of the Ghaznavis and the Ghoris in the neighbourhood of India foreshadowed an inevitable contact. Mahmud of Ghazna, who directed his forces to India, was the first great Turk to influence the country. Although he burst out on India like a storm, at home, in the land which he directly governed, he served as a force for civilization. In the din of his military engagements, he took care to establish a literary academy at his capital, which radiated rays of knowledge in Central and Western Asia. The great savants of the time like Alberuni, Ansari, Farukhi and Firdawsi promoted the literary activities of his academy and received fabulous rewards from the royal patron. Many of those who followed Mahmud to India took keen interest in the life and traditions of India and undertook a deep study of India's literary treasures. The 'Kitabul-Hind', an epoch making work of Alberuni, represents the noble efforts of Mahmud's followers in this direction. The graphic account given by Alberuni about Indian life and culture, introduced the country to the outside world, and brought it closer to the Middle Eastern countries.

'Tabaqat-i-Nasiri' records that a number of Hindus who followed Mahmud served under him in the different departments of administration. They fought side by side with the Ghaznavis against the Suljuks, when the two tribes fought with each other for political domination over Turkistan. The battle fields, where these tribes faced each other, looked like the Indian theatres of war. In the capital, Ghazna, where the Rajputs mixed with the

Ghaznavis, buildings were erected in the Indian style by Indian masons, and Ghazna put on an Indian appearance. The Turks absorbed some of the Rajput traditions with the same enthusiasm as the Rajputs assimilated the strains of the Turkish culture. When the later Ghaznavids shifted their capital to Lahore, they perpetuated the tradition of their predecessors. Abul Faraj Rumi, Masud Sa'ad Salman, and Hakeem Sanai, constituted the trio among the scholars who flocked to the Lahore Court. Sahai's 'Hadiqa' which inspired later Persian poets, is a living monument.

Almost all the Pathan kings from Aibak to Sikander Sur, stand out as earnest patrons of learning. The Delhi Sultanate, which was founded by Aibak and Altamash, was in fact a "culture state", which stood for the noble cause of intellectual advancement. No branch of knowledge known to the Medieval times was left uncultivated, and no scholar of repute born in, or who migrated to, India was left un-noticed. Special mention may be made of Feroz Shah, the cousin of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. In spite of his pre-occupation with the arduous task of maintaining law and order in the land, he did everything in his power for the intellectual uplift of his people. He repaired old schools and gave new grants of land for their upkeep. He was as much interested in the Sanskrit language and learning, as he was in the Arabic and Persian languages and literatures. A number of Sanskrit books, which embodied higher knowledge of science and arts, were translated into Persian in obedience to the royal wish. 'Kitab-Ferozshahi' was one of the many works written during his reign dealing with physics. Amir Khusraw alone is enough to represent the literary spirit of the age. His mastery in almost all the branches of Medieval knowledge, and his voluminous productions, in prose and poetry, are the proud heritage of the Pathan period. 'Ejaz-i-Khusraw-i-Khazai-ul-Futuh', 'Nuh Sipher', 'Qurrat-ul Kamal', 'Tuhfatus Safa', are but few of his works which deal with various aspects of Indian life. The literary spirit thus created by the kings furnished inspiration to later generations in the 16th and 17th centuries. The travelling library of Humayun, the Naw Ratan of Akbar, and the academy of

Abdur Rahim Khan Khannan, were but the echo of the Pathan enthusiasm for learning.

The impetus given by Feroz Shah, and accelerated later on by Sikander Lodi, resulted, on the one hand, in the zealous employment by Muslim poets of Hindi as a vehicle of poetic expression, and on the other, in the translation of many Sanskrit books into Persian dealing with mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and Yoga. Of the poets who distinguished themselves in Hindi during the Pathan and Moghul periods, particular mention may be made of Amir Khusraw, Masud, Qutb Ali, Akram Muhammad Shah, Malik Muhammad Jayasi, Faizi, Md. Abdur Rahim Khan Khannan. They wrote poetry of marked excellence. Malik Muhammad Jayasi's 'Padmavat' and 'Akhrawat' indeed are regarded as classics. Among the books translated from Sanskrit into Persian, the noteworthy were those dealing with medicine, and these were collected under the title of 'Tibb-i-Sikandari'. Even the learned Hindus, who had hitherto not associated with the new literary movement, came forward to associate themselves with it by producing learned works. The Hindus "did not disdain", says Dr. Tara Chand, "to incorporate what they found new with their own systems. Thus, for instance, the Hindu astronomers took from the Muslims a number of technical terms, the Muslim calculations of latitude and longitude and various other items of the calendar (*zich*) and in horoscopy, a whole branch which they called 'tadjik'. Many of the crafts and arts introduced in India by Muslims were assiduously practised by the Hindus, chief of these being the manufacture of paper, of enamelling and faience, many woven stuffs and damascening."

The rule of the Turks or Pathans, eventually gave place to that of the Moghals; but great were the changes wrought during their period in the intellectual and social spheres of life both of the conquering neighbours and the natives of the soil. Unlike the previous invaders of India, the Muslim Turks treated India as their own home and not as a colony of a foreign country. They came to live here and share the life of the land of their adoption. Mahmud of Ghazna may be regarded as a foreign invader, but

not Shahabuddin Ghori and his successors. In fact, no Turk, who had entered India ever looked back on Iran or Turkistan as his home land. On the other hand, the Turks loved India and loved it ardently. Amir Khusraw hailed Delhi as 'Hazrat-i-Delhi' (or the Holy Delhi), and as the second heaven and a great centre of justice, and not Bukhara, Naishapur, or Samarqand from where his fore-fathers had migrated. Thus, the rule which was established in the land under the Turkish or Pathan auspices, slowly tended to break up the far too many centres of independent power and "thus to create political uniformity and a sense of larger allegiance". It enabled the followers of the two faiths to live as friendly neighbours slowly working together for a more or less common way of living. The impact, therefore, took a normal course. While the Hindu population assimilated the niceties of Turkish culture and public life, the Muslims adopted a variety of Hindu traditions and customs in their day-to-day life. "It is hardly possible", observes Dr. Tara Chand, "to exaggerate the extent of Muslim influence over Indian life in all departments. But, nowhere else is it shown so vividly and so picturesquely as in customs, in intimate details of domestic life, in music, in the fashions of dress, in the ways of cooking, in the ceremonials of marriage, in the celebrations of festivals and fairs, and in the courtly institutions and etiquette of Marathi, Rajput and Sikh princes." The reflex influence of the Hindu culture on Muslim social life was equally pervasive, so much so, that when Babur, the founder of the Moghul empire, found the Islamic way of life in India different from that which prevailed in West Asia, he designated it as "the Hindustani way", and which, in the words of Dr. Tara Chand, the successors of Babur "so gloriously adorned and so marvellously enriched that India might well be proud today of the heritage, which they in their turn have left behind".

Of the several factors which have contributed to the "Hindustani way" designated by Babur, the leading or most important are (1) the system of administration, (2) the rise of a common language, (3) the Sufi and Bhakti Movements, and (4) the development of the Indo-Persian literature.

The first of these needs no detailed description here. From the stand-point of cultural development, what is to be noted is that a common central administrative arrangement extending over a lengthy period and over the greater part of India was bound to influence the minds of everyone on certain specific common lines. This community of interests which grew and heightened in the Moghul period was a decided factor in the promotion of "the Hindustani way". The change wrought was clearly noticeable in every section of society; so much so, that it encouraged and even emboldened that far-sighted statesman, the Moghul Emperor Akbar, to propose a common religious or spiritual ideology for the whole land.

A more lasting factor in the promotion of Hindustani way is to be noticed in the field of languages. The language which the Muslim invaders spoke or employed in the administration was Arabicised Persian mixed up with Turkish. Naturally, during the days of their rule in the country their vocabulary permeated Indian languages, chiefly Punjabi, Western Hindi, Eastern Hindi, Bengali, Gujarathi, Sindhi and Marathi. To what extent this infiltration has taken place in some of these languages may be gauged from the fact that in some of the literary works written in Marathi of the 18th century, according to Dr. Tara Chand, nearly 30 per cent of the words used were Persian in origin. The percentage in Punjabi and Sindhi is also high. Dr. Sunithi Kumar Chatterji, speaking of Bengali in this connection, states that "towards the end of the 18th century, the Bengali speech of the upper classes, even among the Hindus, was highly Persianised". A modern dictionary compiled by Jnanendra Mohan Das lists nearly two thousand five hundred Persian words which have been thoroughly naturalized in Bengali. The greatest entry is in that developed form of Khari Boli known as Urdu, a dialectical form of which, originally known as Decani, flourished in the South, at the courts of the Deccan Muslim rulers, assimilating certain peculiarities of the local languages, and in which famous poets like Mulla Nusrati, Wajhi and Khawasi, and kings like Ibrahim Adil Shah, Muhammad Quli

Qutub Shah and Muhammad Quli Shah made immense contribution to the thought and literature of the Deccan.

The Urdu language or Hindustani, which is treated in a separate chapter, was cultivated and developed both by Musalmans and Hindus, as their common language. Its growth and development have been so remarkable that there is no exaggeration to say that it has served, in the last few centuries, as a powerful vehicle of literary expression, alike for the Hindus and the Muslims, and also served as a common speech for a large number of people, both in the North and in the Deccan. As for the Indo-Persian contribution to the literature of India, which again is treated in a separate chapter, it is enough to observe here that it served in the middle ages as a means of dissemination, on the one hand, of Islamic thought in the fields of religion, Sufi philosophy, ethics and sciences as cultivated by Muslims of West Asia, particularly the Unani or the Greek system of medicine perfected in the days of the Moghals, and, on the other hand, of the ancient Indian thought emanating particularly from the Upanishads.

Reference has already been made to the reactions to the Islamic religious and social thought as manifested themselves in South India, particularly through the Arab agencies. A continuation of this movement may be noticed in the religious life of the people in the North as developed, by way of reaction to Sufi and other Islamic influences, and which powerfully expresses itself in the noble efforts of the saintly figures of Ramanand, Kabir, Dadu, Nanak, and Bhallay Shah in North India, and Namdev and Tukaram in the Maharashtra, and a host of other earnest souls, to bring about a unity of life between Muslims and Hindus, particularly at the spiritual level. Among the great names of the Sufi orders, who worked in India in this period, may be mentioned Ali Bin Osman al Hujwairi, Khaja Moinuddin Chisti, Jalaluddin Maqdoom Jahanian Jahan Ghasht, Nizamuddin Aulia, Khaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Baba Farid Gunj Shakar, Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Delhi, Syed Muhammad Gesu Daraz, Qadar Wali, Nathar Wali, Baba Hayat Qalander, and others.

Architecture.

A process of synthesis is found in the field of architecture, even as in the social sphere. Long before the Muslims invaded India, they had developed a good style of architecture adopting the architectural designs of Western and Central Asia, North Africa, and South West Europe. The Hindus had also developed their own style, whose ideals and designs differed from those of the Muslims. A synthesis of these two types, however, was soon evolved due to a number of factors. The early Muslim invaders freely employed Hindu master craftsmen for designing and constructing their buildings. These craftsmen naturally introduced the characteristics of Hindu architecture, like solidity and grace, while adopting Muslim features, like arches, domes, minarets, geometrical devices etc. They also restrained the plastic exuberance of the Hindu and toned down the simple austerity of the Islamic architecture. Likewise, the workmanship and design of Hindu buildings, combined with Muslim arches, plain domes, smooth faced walls and spacious interiors. This continued to be the artistic quality of most of the buildings of Northern India, from the thirteenth century to almost the close of the last century. We find the best synthesis of the Muslim ideas and Hindu methods in the tombs of Isa Khan and Humayun, and also in the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri, which stand to this day as silent witness to Akbar's dream of uniting the Hindus and Muslims into one nation.

The painting of human figures or of anything that has life is not agreeable to the orthodox Muslim. The early Muslim kings were indifferent to this art. But, it was not completely neglected, because some of the Muslims, who had imbibed Persian ideas, were interested in it, and some of the Hindus, who embraced Islam, did not give up this old hobby completely. The Mughals were great patrons of this art and under their patronage it developed rapidly. On the eve of Babur's invasion, Behzad was honoured as a perfect master of this art and his paintings became models for artists, through the encouragement given by the Chag-tai nobles. A new style was evolved by engrafting the traditions

and elements of the Timuride school upon those of Ajanta. "Upon the plasticity of Ajanta were imposed the new laws of symmetry, proportion and spacing imported from Samarkand and Herat. To the old pomp, new splendours were added, and to the old free and easy naivete of life, a new sense of courtly correctness and rigid etiquette." In the result, "a certain amount of the energy and dynamic of both the Hindu and Muslim were sacrificed and a stiff dignity was acquired but along with a marvellous richness of colour and subtlety of time". (Dr. Tara Chand). This Hindu Muslim style developed rapidly and a number of sub-styles came into existence. The predominating influence of the one or the other of the parent style was the main differentiating factor. For example, the Rajput and Pahadi styles of Jaipur, Kangra, and the Hindu states of the Himalayan regions, were influenced more by ancient Hindu ideals, while the styles of the Deccan, Lucknow, Kashmir and Patna had predominantly Muslim characteristics.

Music.

Indian Music, as developed in the Pathan and Mughal periods, is a true symbol of Hindu Muslims amalgamation. India is a home of music. Its very atmosphere is full of musical rhythms. Hindustani music in all its ramifications, Ghazal, Thumri, and Dadra and other forms, has a charm of its own. It represents the union of two races and two minds, the Rajput and the Turk. One cannot do justice to the subject without due reference to the grand contribution of Amir Khusraw, who occupies the same place in the realm of music as in those of literature and history. It is not easy to determine as to what extent Indian music owes to the inventive brain and melodious mind of Amir Khusraw. He raised the standard and enhanced the charm of Indian music by his vocal and instrumental contributions. Tansen of Akbar marks the climax.

The Role of the Deccan.

The cultural influence of the Muslims in the Deccan was of a like nature as that in the North, although the climate, geographical conditions, and racial alignments here were entirely

different from those of the North. The Turks found here a mild and pleasant climate and contacted mostly Dravidian races, such as Kannadigas and Telangas, who spoke languages of their own and followed modes of life, which differed from those which obtained in the North. The impact of Turkish influence in the Deccan assumed, therefore, a pattern peculiar to the Deccan, marked by new styles of dress, ornaments, furniture and houses.

The aesthetic contribution of the Deccan in the field of fine arts is much more than what is generally imagined or recognized. The Deccan is a land of music, painting and architecture. The genius which produced the wonders of Ellora and Ajanta, played its usual part in inspiring the later generations to build the Ibrahim Rowza in Bijapur, Farah Bagh in Ahmednagar and Char Minar in Hyderabad. These monuments, which display exquisite artistic refinement, redound to the exquisite taste of the Deccan Kings and the people. It is no wonder that the suggestive structure of Farah Bagh built by Salabat Khan, the Nizam Shahi Minister in Ahmednagar, inspired Shah Jehan to design his world renowned Taj at Agra; and the masons, who had designed Ibrahim Rouza at Bijapur, were invited to give their finishing touches to the same Taj. These monuments display both the Persian, as well as, the local influence.

CHAPTER IX

THE RISE OF A MIXED NEW LANGUAGE

The most reliable evidence of two different culture-groups coming in contact with, and influencing each other, is seen in their languages. If we find that the languages spoken by the two groups bear the stamp of a profound mutual influence, we can safely conclude that the closest cultural relations must have existed between them. Where the extent of mutual influence is so great as to have given rise to a mixed new language, this linguistic amalgam is obviously the symbol of a cultural fusion.

The first phase of the contact of Muslims with India begins towards the end of the 7th century A.D., when Arab traders started settling down on the Eastern and Western coasts of the Peninsula. Later, in the beginning of the next century, Arab Muslims conquered and colonised Sindh and Multan, and their influence extended as far as Kathiawar and Gujerat. The relics of this contact, among other things, are a number of Arabic words in the Indian language spoken in the maritime regions of Western and Southern India, which seems to have come direct from Arabic and not through Persian by way of Northern India. If writings of Arabs living in South India, Sindh, Gujerat, and Cutch during the 7th and 8th centuries were available, we could see the other side of the picture in the words from the Indian languages which had infiltrated into Arabic as spoken and written by them.

But, the second phase of this contact, beginning in the 11th century in Northern India, is much more significant for the cul-

tural history of India than the first one, because during the second phase, the cultural relations between the emigrant Turkish and Persian Muslims with the older inhabitants in the vast area extending over Northern India and the Deccan, grew slowly but steadily closer and closer, until their respective cultures fused into one—the Moghul or Hindustani culture—which is most clearly reflected in the Hindi-Urdu-Hindustani language. So, the story of the growth of this language must be of great interest to those who would like to study the cultural history of India.

The tract of land between the Ganges and Jumna and the area immediately surrounding it, called the Madhya Desh, is the heart of Northern India. Since the beginning of the reign of Harsha Vardhana till the end of that of the Rajput Raja, Jai Chand, successive ruling families ruled over Madhya Desh and sometimes over the whole of Northern India from the capital town of Kanauj, and the language spoken here continued, side by side with the various local dialects, to be the common language of the North. This language derived from Sanskrit, through the first and second Prakrits, was called the Saurseni Appabhramsa and was used as the *lingua franca*, as well as the common literary language, over the greater part of Northern India as far as Bengal. By the beginning of the 11th century A.D., when the first wave of Turkish and Persian Muslims came into India from the North-west, Northern India had fallen a prey to political disintegration, Kanauj had lost its political supremacy and been reduced to one of the numerous smaller independent states. The bond of common literary language could not survive the disappearance of political unity for any length of time, and the Saurseni Appabhramsa started disintegrating into local speeches. As these had inherited many common characteristics from the Saursenic Appabhramsa, they are grouped by philologists under the common name of Western Hindi. They were (1) Khari Boli (2) Hariyani, Jatu or Bangru (3) Braj Bhasha (4) Kanauji and (5) Bundeli. Later the Pahari and Rajasthani dialects also came into the sphere of influence of Western Hindi.

Of these, Khari Boli is the most important, as historical circumstances helped it to spread over larger and larger areas as lingua franca, and to serve as the basis of the literary language, which today is current in the whole of Northern India in two distinct forms, Urdu and Hindi, the latter being designated as the official language of the Indian Union.

Khari Boli is spoken as mother-tongue in the following areas:—

(1) **East of the Ganges**, in the districts of Rampur, Bijnor and Moradabad.

(2) **Between the Ganges and the Jamuna**, in the districts of Meerut, Muzaffar Nagar, Saharanpur and the plain region of the district of Derah Dun.

(3) **West of the Jamuna**, in the urban areas of Delhi and Karnal and the eastern part of Ambala district.

With the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate, political unity was restored in Northern India and the process of the evolution of a common language started anew. Persian, which the Delhi Sultanate had made its official language, was in course of time adopted as the common medium of literary expression but being a foreign tongue it could not become the lingua franca. This position could only be occupied by one of the dialects of Western Hindi spoken in the region round about Delhi, the capital of the Sultanate.

Delhi was then, as it is now, situated at a point where regions of four different dialects, those of old Khari Boli, Harijani, Braj Bhasha and Mewari, meet. So, most probably all the four dialects were spoken in the city. But, the language which the gentry and the middle class used was old Khari Boli, mixed with Harijani, which Amir Khusraw called "Zaban-i-Dehlaui", the speech of Delhi. As the army of Aibak, the founder of the Delhi Sultanate, consisting of hereditary Muslims or new converts to Islam, spoke either Persian or Punjabi, (which was closely related to the dialects spoken in Delhi), a number of Punjabi and Persian words infiltrated into "Zaban-i-Dehlaui". This "speech of Delhi",

also referred to as Hindi or Hindavi in Persian books of those days, was carried by Imperial troops, traders and Sadhus, to Punjab in the North West, Bihar in the East Rajasthan, Central India, Deccan and Gujerat in the South and South-west, and soon developed into a lingua franca for almost the whole of the country, except the extreme South and the extreme East. But, as the language of literary expression, it could not make any headway in the North where Persian reigned supreme, and, therefore, very few traces of poetry or prose in the mixed new language written before 17th century are found except the versified riddles of Amir Khusraw. "The Speech of Delhi", or Khari Boli, is only found mixed with Braj Bhasha in the verses of Mandeo, the great exponent of Bhakti, with Avadhi in those of Kabir, and with Punjabi in the chants of Guru Nanak. For about three-quarters of a century during the reign of Akbar and Jehangir, Agra had wrested from Delhi the proud position of the capital of the Mughal Empire, giving a fillip to Braj Bhasha, the speech of the region round Agra and Mathura. The choice of Mathura by Vallabha Acharya, the great teacher of Krishna Bhakti, as the centre of his movement and the adoption of Braj Bhasha by his disciples as the language of their preaching, added to its popularity and it became the language of poetry in the North. Khari Boli retained its position as the 'lingua franca', but it was strongly influenced by Braj Bhasha.

But historical circumstances helped Khari Boli, which virtually remained a mere spoken language in Northern India up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, to develop into a literary language, as early as the beginning of the 15th century in Gujerat and the Deccan. It was brought into these regions by the armies of Allauddin Khilji and other Delhi kings, as well as by Hindu sadhus and Muslim sufis. Under the Bahmani Sultanate and its successor states and at the court of independent Muslim kings of Gujerat, "the speech of Delhi" received the protection and encouragement such as was never extended to it at home. This was obviously due to reasons of state. Completely cut off from the centre of Muslim power, as the Muslim rulers of the Deccan and Gujerat were, they could not

feel secure unless they forged strong links of unity with Hindu soldiers and civil servants, whom they had brought with them from the regions round about Delhi. One of the most effective means of achieving this unity was to raise their mother-tongue, "the speech of Delhi", to the status of the common literary language and, also according to the historian Farishta, to that of the official language in the Deccan. So, in this favourable atmosphere, Khari Boli, adopting the Persian script, soon grew into a fairly respectable medium of poetry, and to a lesser extent, of prose. In the process of expansion, it borrowed many words and expressions from Persian and some from Sanskrit, as well as, from the regional languages of the Deccan and Gujerat.

In the second quarter of the 17th century, Shahjehan shifted back the seat of the Mughal Empire from Agra to Delhi. The restoration of Delhi to its old position, as the political, cultural, and commercial centre of India, was favourable to Khari Boli. In the course of a century or so, "the speech of Delhi" developed into a literary language in the North, as it had done in the Deccan and Gujerat. Already current throughout Northern India as the lingua-franca, the new literary language left not only Braj Bhasha, but also Persian in the race for popularity. It should also be mentioned here that during the reign of Shah Jehan, "the speech of Delhi" being the language of "Urdu-i-Shahi" or of royal camp, came to be known by a new name "Urdu", in addition to its old name. In course of time all these old names, Zaban-i-Dehalavi, Hindi, Hindavi, Rekhta, were given up. Only the name "Urdu" remained in use.

Up to the beginnings of the 19th century, literature in Khari Boli Urdu, and in other branches of Western Hindi, like Braj Bhasha, written in Dev Nagari script, was practically limited to poetry. No doubt, Sufi literature and some other religious and secular books existed in Persianised Khari Boli or Urdu, the religious tracts of the Gorakh Panthis and of those of Vallabha Acharya in Braj Bhasha, and a few religious writings and fairy stories in pure Khari Boli, were mostly in verse, those in prose being negligible both in quantity as well as in quality. About

1800 A.D., when the East India Company, which had become the virtual ruler of most of Southern India and Bengal, thought of adopting some Indian language for official purposes, it chose Khari Boli, and the first organised attempt to produce prose literature in Khari Boli was started at the Fort William College. But the current literary form of Khari Boli or Urdu was found to be over-Persianised and was written exclusively in Persian script. The movement associated with Fort William College took special care to reduce the element of Persian in literary Khari Boli and bring it closer to the spoken language, using both the Persian and Dev Nagari scripts. To underline the new trend and texture of the language, it was given a new name, Hindustani. The linguistic policy of the East India Company soon changed, and English was adopted as the official language in place of Hindustani, but as the latter fulfilled a popular need, it continued to flourish both in Persian and Dev Nagari scripts. The growing British domination gave rise to a cultural crisis. The common Hindustani culture of Northern India, which had been fostered by the Mughals, seemed to stand in danger of being swamped by the Western culture which the English had brought with them. This sense of danger produced a sharp reaction both among Muslims and Hindus. As stated in a previous writing of mine, the "National Culture of India", "some of them, specially Muslim divines, rightly thought that in order to re-inforce their moral and spiritual power of resistance against the domination of English culture, they should look back to the sources of their religious and cultural consciousness and draw new inspiration and strength from them. In this they succeeded. But this throwing back of the mind to the distant past had an undesirable effect. The near past and its fairly valuable heritage, the Hindustani culture, lost all significance in their eyes. In course of time, the common culture, which had been evolved by the blending of Hindu and Muslim elements, in the rising phase of the Moghul Empire, was disowned by all but a small section of Hindus and Muslims, and was liable to be dissolved into its constituent elements."

This cultural separatism manifested itself most clearly in the field of language. A spoken language does not change so easily,

but a literary language is more sensitive to the changing moods of cultural groups. Written Hindustani began to show two opposite trends. Many Hindus used for Khari Boli Hindustani, Dev Nagari, instead of the Persian script, and purged it as far as possible of Persian and Arabic words, replacing them by unfamiliar Sanskrit words. Other Hindus as well as most of the Muslims, not only stuck to the Persian script, but increasingly Persianized the language, so that Hindustani again relapsed into Urdu-i-Mualla, High Urdu. Thus arose the unique phenomenon in the history of Linguistics that mere difference of script and high vocabulary, turned what would, by ordinary canons of philology, have been regarded as but two styles of one and the same language, into what are for all practical purposes regarded as two different languages—Hindi and Urdu.

We shall now attempt to give a very brief survey of the development of poetry and prose in Hindi and Urdu, and their contribution to the common fund of Indian literature, during the last 150 years.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Urdu poetry, which had taken its themes, style, imagery, and prosody, mainly from Persian, had made considerable progress. As an instrument of artistic expression, it had attained a fairly high degree of maturity. It was rich in Tasavvuf (mystical love poetry) and Tagazzul (lyrical love poetry) to which great masters like Wali, Mir, Sauda, Dard, Hasan, Mushafi and the erratic genius of Insha had made valuable contributions. But, having grown up in close association with the decadent royal court, it had many shortcomings. 'Qasidah', the medium of conventional and often insincere praise of kings and nobles, had been developed into a distinct branch of poetry, to which many poets devoted as much time, energy and skill as to the expression of genuine, spontaneous feeling. 'Hija' or satire had degenerated into downright lampoon in the worst possible taste. Landscape poetry, pastoral poetry, heroic or epic poetry and folk songs, were practically non-existent. During the larger part of the nineteenth century, Urdu poetry continued to follow the beaten track, the only difference being

that, on the whole, mystic poetry lost ground to a more mundane, more robust type of lyrical poetry. Poets like Nasikh, Atash, Ghalib, Momin and Zauq, wielded the Urdu language with power and skill to portray delicate emotions and succeeded, within the narrow limits of convention and tradition, in developing their individual modes of artistic feeling and expression. They gave to Urdu verse more solemnness and dignity of tone, a greater depth and subtlety of thought. Further, the narrow scope of poetry was widened to cover new fields. The great poet Anis, and the consummate artist Dabir, elevated 'Marsiya' or dirge into a blend of epic and elegy peculiar to Urdu, and the genial bard Nazir Akbarabadi sang songs of the joy and suffering, hope and aspiration, of the Indian masses, and told tales of their labour and drudgery, of their feasts and festivals, making poetry the mirror of social life.

During the last three decades of the 19th and the first half of the present century, Daghi, Amir, Safi, Saqib, Hasrat, Fani and Jigar, on the one side, represented the old style of poetry with all its integrity of feeling and expression, and, on the other side, Azad and Hali founded the school of New Poetry characterised by realistic observation, restrained feeling, simplified expression and wider interest in all aspects of individual and social life. Poetry ceased to function exclusively in the limited field of tender human emotions, but ventured to mirror Nature, interpret life, stir patriotic and philanthropic sentiment and goal to action. This new poetry gave us the herald of freedom Chakbast, the King of satire Akbar, the philosopher-poet Iqbal and the rebel poet Josh Malihabadi.

For the last quarter of a century, many of the younger generation of Urdu poets have taken to the socialistic revolutionary line of poetry known as Progressive Poetry. Its most prominent representative in India is Sardar Jafari and that in Pakistan, Faiz.

Urdu prose was up to the end of the 18th century limited to some religious books and a few fairy stories. It was in the

beginning of the nineteenth century that various circumstances quickened the pace of its progress. The East India Company backed Urdu against Persian and engaged the best writers available to write for the Fort William College a large number of books on History, Biography and 'Belle's Letters', in the simple style called Hindustani, and to translate classical works from Sanskrit and Persian. About the same time, Shah Rafiuddin and Shah Abdul Qadir published their Urdu translations of the Quran and Syed Ahmed Bareilvi and Mawlvi Ismail Dehlavi made Urdu the medium of their popular writings in connection with their powerful movement of militant reform. Christian missionaries also published the translation of the Bible and religious tracts in Urdu; and the Delhi College which had been established for the teaching of modern sciences, prepared text-books for various subjects in that language.

The progress of simple Urdu prose, (interrupted for a short time during the period when Rajab Ali Beg Saroor and other Lucknow writers tried to revive ornate rhymed prose), continued throughout the century. The letters of Ghalib and the writings of Syed Ahmad Khan are important links in the chain. Sir Syed and his literary associates Hali, Shibli, Zakaullah, as well as Nazir Ahmad and Mohammad Husain Azad, made it the vehicle of serious and scientific thought and enriched it with modern literary criticism, liberal religious literature, History and Biography. Later, the work of Sir Syed was carried on by Anjuman-i-Taraqqi-i-Urdu at Aurangabad, Hyderabad and Delhi, under the devoted care of Mawlvi Abdul Huq, and is still going on though on a smaller scale at Aligarh.

Abdul Halim Sharar and Ratan Nath Sarshar laid the foundation of the modern novel in Urdu on which Premchand, Mirza Hadi Ruswa and Mirza Mohammad Sayeed erected a fairly imposing structure. The Short Story flourished in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and produced several good writers like Premchand, Ali Abbas Husaini, Manto, and Krishna Chandra. Drama made less headway in Urdu. Though a great number of plays were produced, very few of them have

any artistic or literary value. Some dramatists attached to commercial theatrical companies like Aga Hashar Kahsmiri won popularity as writers of the old type of melodrama, and a good specimen of modern play was written by Imtiaz Ali Taj.

Humour and satire were wielded with success by an unbroken line of writers from Sajjad Hussain to Rashid Ahmad Siddiqi and Kanaya Lal Kapoor. Urdu prose was considerably enriched with translations from English, French, German, Arabic, Persian and other European and Asian languages, by Syed Ali Bilgrami, Aziz Mirza, Maulvi Enayatullah and Dr. Abid Husain. The Osmania University, on a vast scale, and Jamia Millia, on a small scale, enriched Urdu with translated and compiled text books on all subjects of academic study. For various reasons, which it is not possible to mention here, Urdu prose is passing through a period of stagnation. Critical literature is being produced, but the springs of creative literature seem to have dried up. But, there can be no doubt that they will begin to well up again as soon as the temporary obstacles in their way are removed.

As we have said, the mixed common language, which had been growing up in India for hundreds of years, developed two radically different styles and scripts and thus divided itself into what may be called two cognate languages—Urdu and Hindi. Having briefly surveyed above the growth of Urdu literature during the last 150 years, we may now take a brief survey of Hindi literature as produced during this period.

Modern Hindi poetry was born in the second half of the last century, when **Khari Boli** was used for poetic expression even as it had been employed in prose writing in the beginning of the century. But, though adopting Khari Boli as medium, it tried to assimilate the peculiarities of the other four dialects of Northern India—Dingal or old Rajasthani, Pingal or Braj Bhasha, Avadhi, and Maithli, comprising the heroics and the epics of Chand and other bards, the effusions of Indo-Islamic mystic poets like Jayasi, the songs of love and devotion sung by the votaries of Krishna Bhakti and Ram Bhakti like Namdeo, Nanak, Kabir, Vidyapati,

Nand Das, Mirabai and Ras Khan, the monumental works of Surdas and Tulsidas and the chiselled and ornate verses of Rahim, Keshav, Bihari, Bhushan, Dev, Raslin and Padmakar. As Hindi poetry took its prosody, some of its vocabulary and the whole of its imagery, from these purely Indian languages, it was driven apart from Urdu poetry, which had taken most of what it had, except its basic vocabulary and idiom, from Persian, even further than Hindi prose from Urdu prose.

The herald of the modern era of Hindi poetry was Bhartendu Harishchandra, who elevated the theme of Bhakti from the erotic to the spiritual level, shook the Hindu community out of its torpor, and goaded it into life and activity. To propagate his ideals, he started a movement and formed a group of poets, who felt and thought as he did.

Bhartendu Harishchandra and his associates wrote in Braj Bhasha. Shri Dhar Pathak was the first modern Hindi poet, who used Khari Boli as his medium and composed rhymed verses after the Urdu model. But, Aydhya Singh Upadhyaya adopted Sanskrit blank verse for Khari Boli Hindi poetry and used an over Sanskritized language. The greatest poet of classical school is Maithili Saran Gupta, but occasionally the romantic spirit of a resurgent India bursts through his measured and restrained expression. The founder of the romantic school of poetry was Jaya Shanker Prasad. After him Hindi poetry has generally assumed a romantic air, to which Subahdra Kumari Chouhan has given a dominant note of patriotic passion, Sumitra Nandan Pant, one of aesthetic enjoyment of beauty in Nature and man, Mahadevi Verma, one of mystic ecstasy, Bachchan, one of fatalistic resignation, Bhawati Charan Verma, one of grief and wrath over bitter and social and economic realities, and Dinkar, one of hope and faith in spite of these realities. Unlike Urdu, Hindi poetry has not so far offered a congenial climate for the socialistic revolutionary or "progressive" poetry. No "progressive" poet of any distinction is known to us.

The real dawn of prose in Hindi came, just as it did in Urdu, in the beginning of the 19th century, as a part of the

Fort William College movement. The language of the Hindi writers of this group is very close to the spoken Khari Boli (Hindustani or simple Urdu). They were followed by Christian missionaries who from their printing press at Serampore and their educational societies at Monghyr, Mirzapore, Agra and other places, published translations of the Bible, Ramayan, and other religious books, as well as, text-books on the various subjects of study. Raja Shiv Prasad also rendered a great service to Hindi prose by writing text books and starting the newspaper "Benaras Akhbar". But, his Hindi was also Hindustani written in Dev Nagari script. About the same time, however, a new trend of Sanskritizing Hindi could be seen in Tara Chandra Mitra's newspaper 'Sudhakar'. and Raja Lakshman Singh's Hindi translation of 'Shakuntala'.

Standard books in Hindi prose were written by Bhartendu Harishchandra, who is called the father of modern Hindi prose, as well as of modern poetry and drama. He wrote many books on History and Biography, as well as a large number of plays, and inspired a group of writers, who had gathered round him. His services to Hindi literature are invaluable. As far as the language of his writings is concerned, he struck the middle path between Sanskritized Hindi and Persianised Hindustani.

The first Hindi novel written in Hindi is said to be Raja Shiv Prasad's "Raja Bhoj Ka Sapna". But, Hindi novel, like its Urdu counter-part, rose to its full stature early in 20th century, thanks to the same writer, Premchand, who had developed the Urdu novel. Premchand, Jaya Shanker Prasad and Kaushik, made the novel the instrument of social reform. Ila Chand Joshi, Jainendra Kumar and Bhagwati Chandra Verma went further and raised the cry of social revolution. Very good historical novels were written by Hazari Prasad Dwivedi and Rahul Sanakaritayana. Among "progressive" novelists the outstanding figure is that of Yashpal.

Short story found a fertile soil in Hindi. The first stray short stories had begun to appear in the literary magazine "Saras-

wati", since 1902. But Jaya Shankar Prasad was the first great writer to take to it, along with novel and drama, as an independent branch of literature. The greatest in this field in Hindi, as in Urdu, was Premchand. He was followed by a number of writers, who wrote hundreds of short stories warmed up with the breath of life, and illuminating all aspects of Indian life. The leading Hindi magazines, 'Maya' and 'Sarita', published good short stories from many well-known and some less known writers.

Literary criticism in Hindi began in a sense, with Grierson, but he wrote in English. The first notable figure in the field of critical and general essay-writing in Hindi is that of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. Besides many individuals, a literary society served the cause of Hindi, by writing standard books on literary criticism, History of literature, Grammar and Lexicography. This was the Kasi Pracharni Sabha, founded by Shyash Sunder Das, for fighting the battle of Hindi on the political front and working for its expansion and consolidation in the literary field. Through the efforts of Ram Chandra Shukla, Ram Kumar Verma and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, the Sabha rendered invaluable service to the cause of Hindi by making it a vehicle of expression for higher literary and, to some extent, of scientific thought.

Drama flourished better in Hindi than in Urdu, because here the stimulus came not only from outside western influence, but also from within under the inspiration of classical Sanskrit drama. Except for a few stray plays, Hindi drama was like other branches of literature virtually initiated by Bhartendu Harishchandra, who tried to blend the atmosphere, as well as, the technique of the classical Indian with that of the modern European drama. Jayashanker Prasad, among the writers of the full-fledged drama, and Bhuweneshwar Prasad, Ganesh Prasad Dwivedi and Ram Kumar Verma, among the writers of one-act plays, are well known. The general trend is to write historical or religious or problem plays, dealing often with social themes.

After the Constitution of free India in 1950 having prescribed Hindi as the official language of the Union, it has been assured of a bright future. Efforts and resources of the Union

Government and some State Governments are being devoted to its literary and scientific enrichment. But, these efforts have so far been made without any plan or co-ordination. But, now it is hoped that, as a result of the report of the First Official Language Commission, a new planned and concerted drive will be made for the advancement and propagation of Hindi, so that, along with the many regional languages, it might flourish throughout the country and serve as the common language of the country.

The above is the story of a language which permanent historical and geographical forces made it the common spoken language of a large part of the country, but temporary political and cultural movements split it into two separate literary languages. One of them, i.e. Hindi has been assigned by the national Constitution the position of the All India Official language. But one thing is clear. If this language is to fulfil the great function adequately, it requires a great deal of improvement and expansion. The first natural step towards expansion seems to be that Hindi should re-absorb its 'alter-ego', Urdu, and become one complete set. Let us imagine for a moment that Hindi with its time-honoured traditions of Vedic, Sanskrit, the Prakrits and the later dialects, and Urdu with its living contact with spoken Khari Boli, its wealth of homely idiom, and the whole heritage of Persian, are fused into one language, which borrows freely from the sister Indian languages mentioned in the 8th schedule of the Constitution, as well as, from its adopted sister English, what a vastly rich and powerful language it would make! Surely, Urdu is, except for a part of its higher vocabulary and some literary embellishments, which it has taken from Persian, nothing, but Hindi. This Persian element too cannot be regarded as foreign, because it has been domiciled in India for at least 700 years. To superficial observers, Persian seems to be quite alien to Sanskrit and 'Khari Boli', but it is by no means more alien than Latin and Greek are to the Anglo-Saxon. Yet, historical forces have blended Anglo-Saxon, Latin and Greek into one great language—English. If Hindi has to compete successfully with English for the proud position of the common language of cultural exchange in India,

and eventually to find a place of honour among world languages, it should get rid of the present mentality of exclusiveness. Every speaker of Hindi should take pains to acquire a command over Urdu and every speaker of Urdu over Hindi, so that each can help in healing the psycho-pathological trauma, from which Hindi and Urdu are suffering and in re-integrating the split personality of the common language. Hindi should take for its motto the following words of Gandhiji, and open its doors not only to Urdu, which is a vital part of itself, but to all languages:

"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any".

Purism is detrimental to the healthy growth of all languages at all times. But for Hindi, at the present time, when it aspires to be a bond of unity in the cultural diversity of India, the common voice, of a great composite nation, purism is suicide, pure and simple.

CHAPTER X

INDO-PERSIAN LITERATURE IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

یکانه بودن و یکتا شدن ز چشم آموز
که هر دو چشم جدا جدا نمی نگرند

"Being one and becoming one, learn from the two eyes,

For though they are separate from each other, they do not
see differently".

The author of this graceful Persian distich is a Hindu Poet, Manohar by name, who flourished during the reign of Akbar, the Great. Besides the originality of thought and the beauty of expression, the verse mirrors, as all true literature does, the spirit of the age and the social conditions of the times. The verse reveals the complete fusion that had taken place between the culture of the Hindus and that of the Muslims of that great age. It also establishes the fact that the Hindus had taken unreservedly to the study of Persian as a mental discipline along with their compatriots, the Muslims, and had acquired a felicity and charm of expression that was worthy of their great past. This was a flowering period of Indo-Persian literature, but the process had begun several centuries before it. In the following pages, we shall endeavour to trace that development.

It should be noted at the very outset that Sanskrit and Persian are cognates, belonging to the same family of languages, viz., the Indo-European family. Mark, for instance, the word Gatha,

an old Persian word, and Gita, which is Sanskrit; the words Asp and Asva for horse, and innumerable other basic words common to these two languages. This linguistic affinity between Sanskrit and Persian was to be further stimulated by the vicissitudes of history. Thus was India to be irresistibly drawn towards Persia, culminating in that cultural re-union which the immortal verse of Manohar, quoted at the beginning of the chapter, reveals.

Within two centuries of the Arab occupation of Persia, the Persian language became a rival of Arabic in beauty and richness of expression. That fair critic Waiz Lal, writing in his book, "An Introductory history of Persian Language", makes the following observation: "Intellectually it (Persian) did not lose, but gained. For, the unrivalled literature of the Arabs gave dignity and compactness to the Persian language, and made it the *Lingua Franca* of Asia" (page 19). The Persian and Turkish dynasties that arose on the partial dismemberment of the Abbasid Empire of Harun and Mamun, had adopted Persian as their court language, though Arabic still retained its place of pride as the language of culture and diplomacy. A member of one of the new dynasties, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, was a great patron of learning, art and culture. He had found Ghazna a mere township of huts, but had left it a city of marble palaces. At this court flourished Firdausi, whose immortal Epic, the 'Shah Namah', had fixed thereafter the standard for the Persian language more than any other single work. The famous historian Al Beruni also flourished at his court. It should be noted that Al Beruni spent most of his time in India, studying Sanskrit and interpreting in Persian to his co-religionists the customs and manners of the Hindus. Sultan Mahmud's patronage of this great historian tells a different tale. Had the Sultan been the fanatic that he is often represented to be, he would not have encouraged and not even actively supported the literary activity of Al Beruni.

Sultan Mahmud annexed the Punjab to his vast dominions which comprised of Afghanistan and Persia. It had been fairly established by historical research that the Hindu nobility of the Punjab held positions of trust under the Sultan and his successors.

The historian Ferishta states that Ghazna, the capital of Mahmud's dominions, looked almost like a part of India, as quite a large number of Hindu artisans, traders and others were inhabited there. The historian Baihaqi makes mention of Hindu officers and men employed in the armies of the Sultan. The author of 'Tabaqat-e-Akbari' makes mention of a Hindu dignitary, Tilak, son of Jai Sen, who, starting life as an ordinary man, rose to be the interpreter at the Court, and then to a greater name and fame. He was well versed both in Hindi and Persian, and was an exquisite calligraphist. He rose to be the Commander of the Sultan's forces and enjoyed the princely honour of using 'Nowbat and Naqqara' (the kettle drum), at his palace. It would, therefore, be safe to conclude that Persian must have generally infiltrated into the Punjab, and that the Hindus, who formed the bulk of the population, should also have taken to learning the language, as it opened for them, as for the Muslims, greater opportunities of service. An Arabic Proverb has it:

الناس على ساولك ملوكهم

"People follow the lead of their rulers", and this seems to be a universal truism.

Besides Tilak, there were numerous other Hindu dignitaries in the Ghaznavid Court, e.g. Sunder, Bijay Rai, Nair Nath, and several others. And all these officers must have spoken Persian, which was the court language of Gazna.

But, great as the share was of the Ghaznavids in the spreading of Persian in the Punjab, it was reserved for Sultan Sikandar Lodi to have systematically popularized Persian in India. It was in his reign that both the Muslims and the Hindus took unreservedly to the study of Persian, not merely because of the cultural discipline that it provided, and also for the benefits that its knowledge offered in the administration of the realm. It was the 'Kayasths' among the Hindus, who first availed themselves of this opportunity. This explains the preponderance of this particular group in the offices of the State, both during the days of Sikandar Lodi, as well as, during the Mughal Period.

It was in the days of Sikander Lodi, himself a poet of no mean merit, who wrote under the pen name, 'Gul Rukhi', that we come across a Hindu poet of the Persian language. The historian Badayuni states that Brahman, (for that was the poet's name), was so proficient in Arabic and Persian that he used to teach these languages to the Muslims. The following couplet is taken from his verses, and it speaks of the high proficiency and literary standard that this poet had attained in the Persian language:

دل خوں نہ شد ے چشم کو خنجر نہ شد ے کر
رہ کم نہ شد ے زلف کو ابرو نہ شد ے کر

"How should the heart bleed, when thy eyes have not turned into a dagger? How should I lose my way, when thy locks are not flung about."

It is difficult to bring out in a translation, the beauty of the original. Even so, one is not likely to miss the charm of the verse, which was so characteristic of the poetry of the age. Such an advance made by a Hindu writer in classical Persian, speaks, on the one hand, of the assimilative quality of the Hindu mind, and, on the other, of the patronage of letters by Sikandar Lodi. This was a turning point in the history of Indo-Persian literature, as developed in the Medieval India. It marks the beginning of a New Era of literary activity that was to blossom forth with such exuberance in the years that were to follow. The Pathan phase of the Indo-Persian literature was dominated by the fascinating personality of the mystic poet, Amir Khusraw, who was a prolific writer both in Persian and Hindi. He devoted his genius to the development of vernacular literature and will, therefore, have fuller treatment in another chapter.

The Kashmiri Pandits.

A word about Kashmir, before we refer to the development of the Indo-Persian literature in the days of the Great Mughals. That beautiful valley on which Providence has bestowed all its manifold beauty, and which has been the theme of many a poet, could not escape coming under the cultural and linguistic influence of its neighbours, because of its geographical contiguity to

the Punjab and Ghazna, where Persian had already acquired a firm foothold. Under its celebrated ruler, Shahi Khan, better known to history by his title Sultan Zainalabideen, Kashmir became a great centre of art and culture. The Sultan was a munificent patron of the learned and was himself an accomplished musician. In pursuance of his policy of tolerance, he had decreed that in his dominions, there should be no discrimination between one and another on the basis of religion. His court, was; therefore, thronged by learned men, both Hindu and Muslim, with whom, like Akbar the Great, he loved to hold converse. Musicians from all over India flocked to his court, due to his inordinate love for music, and converted Kashmir into a veritable fairy land. The Sultan also ordered the translation of several Sanskrit works into the Persian language. He also invited the Hindus to learn Persian. According to Pandit Kachar in his "*Majma-ut-Tawarikh*", (a manuscript copy of this is said to be still extant in the library of the Punjab University), the Hindus took advantage of the offer, and took to the study of the Persian language. According to the same authority, such of the Hindus as were reputed for their piety and for their religious devotion, attained a remarkable degree of proficiency in this language. The same facts are corroborated by other works like '*Mahatmani Kashmira Mandal*' and '*Gulzar-e-Kashmir*' by Kirpa Ram, (page 167). According to this writer, the first to take to the study of Persian in Kashmir were the Sapru Pandits. The word '*Sapru*' itself, it is said, cannotes "he read his lesson", and in this context, the lesson in Persian. The Sapru Pandits were also called the "Sultan Pandits", because of their early association and intimacy with the rulers of Kashmir.

But, be that as it may, one thing is fairly established that Sultan Zainulabideen, who is rightly called by the Kashmiris "*Bud Shah*", i.e., the Great King, had popularized Persian in Kashmir and that the priestly order were the first to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Sultan. In course of time, Kashmir was Persianised to the core. The Historian Ferishta makes mention of a Kashmiri Brahman, Bodi Bhatt, who not

merely knew by heart the whole of Firdausi's *Shah Namah*, a book of 60,000 verses, but rendered the whole of this voluminous book into Hindi verse. He was also the author of a Persian work on Music, which he called 'Zain', after his patron Sultan Zainalabideen. Mention should also be made of another Pundit, Soum by name, who composed verses both in the Kashmiri and the Persian languages. He wrote a history of the life and times of the Sultan, called "Zain Charitar". This work was presumably in the Kashmiri language. Thus, it is fair to conclude that the contribution of Kashmir to Indo-Persian literature was noteworthy.

With the advent of the Mughals in India, an era of great splendour and literary effulgence set in. Timur, the great ancestor of Babur, was no mere military prodigy. His character was a paradox. Ambitious as he was, he wished to excel Alexander the Great in his conquests. In the pursuit of this urge, he swept across Asia, and brought under his influence the Turkish Sultanate of Bayazid who then held sway over a major portion of Europe. But curious as it might appear, this power-intoxicated potentate was a great patron of art, literature and culture. His rule marks one of the most glorious epochs in the history of Persian literature. Poets like Hafiz, Salman Sawji, and a host of other learned men, historians, philosophers and mystics, flourished in the days of Timur. Professor Browne in his masterly work, 'History of Persian Literature', has devoted a whole chapter to the contribution to Persian language under 'Timurid domination'.

The Great Mughals were thus the proud inheritors of the culture and traditions of the Timurids. Babur himself, in the words of Lane Poole, "was an accomplished poet in Persian, the language of culture,—the Latin of Central Asia,—and in his native Turki, he was master of a pure and unaffected style, alike in prose and verse", (Lane Pole, Babur, page 10). And, according to Beveridge, "his autobiography is fit to rank with memoirs of Gibbon and Newton. In Asia, it stands alone". (Calcutta Review, 1879).

Of his sons, Humayun, who succeeded him, was a poet in Persian. He has left a *Diwan*—an anthology of his verses which is still extant. He was an ardent student of geography, mathematics, and astronomy. He was so fond of books that he always carried with him a select library even in his expeditions. His poetic genius was displayed in his 'Mathnavis', 'Rubais' and other metrical compositions. Of the poets, who flourished in his reign, the most important was Mawlana Muhammad Qasim, who wrote under the pen name 'Kahi'. It was he who composed the best chronogram on the death of this emperor, which took place as a result of a fall from his library, and which was a fitting climax to a life, which was more of a scholar than that of a soldier. That famous chronogram reads thus:

ہمایون بادشاہ از بام افتاد

"King Humayun fell from the balcony"

This is one of the most ingeniously devised chronograms in the Persian language, the words conveying the fact of the fall, while the year is to be found in the numerical value of the letters used, and this is 963 A.H.

Humayun's sojourn to the Persian Court was a blessing in disguise. He invited to India many Persian poets and artists. A large majority of scholars like Mir Abdul Latif Qazwini, the Poet Kahi, and several others from the Persian Court itself came to India. Of those who were already attached to his Court, was his personal friend, Jauhar, the celebrated author of "*Tazkiratul Waqiat*". Mention may also be made of Humayun's own sister, Gulbadan Begum, who had inherited something of her illustrious father's love of learning and was the author of "*Humayun Namah*" which is a source book on the life and work of Humayun.

The brief interlude provided by Sher Shah, the Afghan, who, by the way, was known for his uncompromising justice, and who forced Humayun to flee for life, provided India with a poet of epoch making significance. This was Malik Muhammed Jayasi. He combined in him a rare scholarship, both in Persian and Sanskrit. But, he chose to write in terse Hindi, inter-

scattered occasionally with Persian. His great work "Padmavat" is a great contribution to Hindi by a Muslim. This poet, as well as the famous Amir Khusraw of Delhi, of an earlier age (14th century), really belong to the chapter dealing with the growth of Vernacular literature in India, and, therefore, we pass on to the age of Akbar, contenting ourselves with this brief reference to them, for purposes of historical continuity.

Akbar's regime marks the most glorious epoch in the annals of the Timurids. His magnificent conquests, and his administrative reforms, inaugurated a new era, "an age of exuberant imagination, of gorgeous display and romance, which called forth the best in man". It could be compared to the Elizabethan period in English literature, when the genius of the English people unfolded itself in several branches of art and letters.

Indo-Persian literature in Akbar's reign may be classified broadly under the following main heads: (1) Histories, (2) Prose and Poetry and (3) Translations.

Of the histories written in this period, "Tarikh Alfi" of Mulla Dawud, the 'Ain-e-Akbari' and 'Akbar Namah' of Abul Fazl, 'Muntakabatul Twarikh' of Nizamuddin Ahmed, 'Akbar Namah' of Faizi Sarhindi, 'Ma'athir Rahimi' of Abdul Baqi, prepared under the patronage of Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khanan, are some of the most important. Shaik Abdul Fazl was the most accomplished and famous of all these writers. His fame rests on his 'Ain-Akbari' and 'Akbar Namah', which together with his 'Ruq'aat' (Letters), are regarded as classics in the Indo-Persian literature of the times. The elegance of his 'Ruq'aat' is inimitable. The 'Ain' and 'Akbar Namah' give the minutest details of Akbar's life, and mirror the society of which the Emperor was the centre.

Of the poets of Akbar's reign, according to Abul Fazl, there were a legion; but the most important of them were Faizi, Abul Fazl's talented brother, who was also the poet-laureate at the Court, Gazali, who was a poet of very great merit and who also attained to the rank of poet-laureate, Muhammad Husain Naziri

of Naishapur who wrote 'ghazals' (lyrics) of exceptional merit, and Syed Jamaluddin Urfi of Shiraz, who was the best writer of the 'Qasida' (Odes) of his time. Faizi, though he opted for a humbler position in social life than his celebrated brother, Abul Fazl, was even greater in certain respects than him. Blochmann held the view that "after Amir Khusraw of Delhi, Muhammadan India has seen no greater poet than Faizi". Faizi's claim to fame rests on a commentary of the Quran, which he called "Sawati-ul-Ilham" in which the poet has not used a single letter which has a dot, and this is a marvellous piece of scholarship indeed. Faizi stands unique and unrivalled in this rare species of composition. Besides, he was a versatile genius. He was as proficient in Sanskrit, as he was in Arabic and Persian. His translations into Persian of Bhagvad Gita and Lilavati, a work in Sanskrit on Mathematics, have earned for him great fame. His Mathnavi, 'Nal Daman', elicited praises even from his rival and critic, Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni.

A small anecdote of a reparte between the poets Urfi and Faizi may here be given, as it will provide an insight into the day to day relations which subsisted among the scholars at Akbar's court, and the delicate sense of humour which characterised the cultured conversation of the times. Urfi and Faizi were rivals. One day Urfi called on Faizi and found him fondling a pup. Urfi asked him *نام این صاحبزاده چیست* "what is the name of this darling son?" Quick came the reply from Faizi *عربی است* "It is Urfi". There is pun on the word 'Urfi,' which, besides being the name of the poet, also meant "well known". To this Urfi quietly rejoined *مبارک باشد* "May it prove auspicious". Even there is pun on the word "mubarak". It is a term of congratulations. It is also the name of Faizi's celebrated father. Examples of such witty exchanges which enlivened the society of the times may easily be multiplied.

That prince among financiers, Raja Todar Mull, who was one of the brightest jewels of Akbar's Naw Ratan', (The nine gems of the Court), issued in 990 A.H. his famous reforms by which, among other things, he decreed that Persian would be

the language of administration throughout the empire. This decree gave a great impetus to the spread of the Persian language among all classes in India, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. Thus, if this age produced a Faizi and Abul Fazl, it also produced a Todarmull and Birbal, both of them administrators and poets. Todar Mull was also an exquisite calligraphist. By far, the most important of the Hindu poets of the court of Akbar was Raja Manohar, son of Raja Lown Karan of Sambar. Mulla Badayuni, the celebrated historian of Akbar, refers to Manohar thus: "His name is Manohar, son of Lown Karan Raja of Sambar. This is a salt producing region and it appears as though the salt of his poetry (its charm) is derived from the place of his origin!" Emperor Jehangir himself makes touching references to him in his famous Memoirs. He was the first Hindu poet of Persian, whose poems were sent to Persia and were praised for their elegance and poetic charm. It is this poet, Manohar, whose verse adorns the beginning of this chapter. He is also the author of a Mathnavi, reference to which is found in the book 'Anisul Ashiqin'. I quote below a few verses from his Mathnavi:

اے ہی سونم کن با عشق و مساز - دلے دے معدن گنجینہ راز
 امید من ز تو انعام عام است - کہ تو میدی ز در گاہت حرام است
 نمی دانم خدا یا کفر و دین چیست - کز فشار کمال این و آن کیست

Lord! Bestow on me a heart that is wedded to thy Love;
 Endow me with a mind that shall be a treasure-house of
 divine secrets.

My hope is rivetted in thy universal grace. To lose hope
 in thee is infidelity.

O Lord! I do not know what 'religion' or 'ir-religion'
 is; nor know who is enmeshed in the one or the other."

Translation does not convey the pathos of the original verses, nor can it, for obvious reasons, convey the beauty and excellence of the original. It was a tremendous achievement of the times that India should have been converted into a nursery of mighty intellectuals, whose compositions could rival even the Iranian Poet

Urfi at the Court of Akbar. Manohar was the Hindu counterpart of the Muslim Faizi.

Now, we pass on to the translations that constitute an important contribution to Indo-Persian literature of the period. Like Al-Mamun of early Abbasid period, Akbar strove for reconciliation between the ruler and the ruled and succeeded in an enormous measure. His scheme of translating Sanskrit works into Persian was a decisive step in that direction. They were also in the best traditions of Islam, the Holy Prophet having observed: "A thing of wisdom was like unto the lost property of the Faithful; he should get it back wheresoever he finds it." Faizi, as has been noticed earlier, translated the Gita and Lilavati into Persian, Badayuni translated the Ramayana and several sections of the Mahabharata into Persian. The Atharvaveda was translated by Ibrahim Sarhindi; Tajak, a treatise on Astronomy, was done into Persian by Mukammal Khan Gujrati. Moulana Shah Mohammed translated the Sanskrit History of Kashmir. Abul Fazl translated the Arabic Kalila-wa-Damna into Persian. Certain other Greek and Arabic works were also rendered into Persian. These translations, apart from widening the intellectual and moral outlook of the people, should also have certainly gone a long way in enriching Indo-Persian literature of the period.

The sixteenth century which produced Akbar the great, was a great century. It created great men and women all over the world. It was the century of Sulayman, the Magnificent of Turkey; it was the century of Queen Elizabeth of England. Even the pirates of that age, like Drake, were great men. And Akbar was the greatest of them all, except perhaps Sulayman, who held sway over larger areas both in Asia and Europe. But Sulayman was not favoured with the society of such gems as had gathered at the court of Akbar. The famous 'Naw Ratan' the "nine gems", threw brilliant lustre around him. Tansen, the famous musician, is one of them. Abul Fazl in his *Ain-e-Akbari* states that a man of his genius in music was not born for a thousand years in India. He was both a poet and a singer, but the singer in him eclipsed

the poet. He hailed from Gwalior and was a close friend of Sur Das, another immortal bard of the same place.

Akbar's lively interest in Hindi gave a great impetus to the growth of literature therein. Indeed, the quality and volume of literature in Hindi produced in this period, and the great galaxy of writers, poets, and mystics devoted to the language during his reign is so vast that, even by itself, it is sufficient to justify Akbar's age as the Augustan Age of Hindustani vernacular literature, an age in which the great Tulsidas lived and laboured, "unapproachable and alone in his niche in the temple of fame".

No notice of Emperor Akbar's multiple personality would be complete without at least a reference to his 'Din-e-Ilahi', or Divine Faith. Abul Fazl, of whom the Jesuit Fathers of the courts spoke as "the king's Jonathan", was the high priest of this new movement started by Akbar. He along with his learned father, Shaik Mubarak, was presumably the inspirer of the idea. "He (Akbar) would piece together the brilliant bits of every religion from the Quran, the Bible, and the Gita, and make a new one out of them in the way that he had conquered and annexed province after province of India and built up a great empire". But the movement did not make any headway. The *Ain-e-Akbari* makes mention of only eighteen members of this Din-e-Ilahi order. Among the Hindus, Akbar could count upon only Raja Birbal as a member of the order, Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Man Singh having politely declined to conform to the views of their imperial patron, to whom they were otherwise absolutely loyal.

Akbar's discussions on religion with the learned men of diverse creeds and persuasions in the 'Ibadath khana' (House of prayer), at Fatehpur Sikri, culminating in the founding of Din-e-Ilahi, indirectly contributed a good deal to the literature of the times. Mulla Badayuni, on the one hand, a sectarian historian, and, on the other, the Jesuit Fathers of Akbar's court, have tried to suggest that Akbar had disowned Islam. But historians like Sarkar and Datta having examined the issue express: "So it would not be fair on the part of an impartial historian to hold, on the basis of the writings of Mulla Badayuni,

that Akbar had renounced Islam.....We do not find him even denying the authority of the Quran, not even in the so called Infallibility Decree". (Text Book of Modern Indian History—Part III Chap. I—P.64).

We now pass on to Jehangir. There could be, if at all, only one Akbar in a dynasty. Jehangir though remarkable for his patronage of painting and his keen sense of justice, was nevertheless much inferior to his celebrated father. He was educated by tutors like the celebrated Moulana Mir Kalam Muhaddis (the traditionist) and Abdur Rahim Mirza. He knew Persian as well as Turkish. He was the author of an auto-biography, 'Tuzik-e-Jehangiri', which ranks second only to that of Babur, in frankness, sincerity, freshness, and charm of style. This he wrote in Persian. Among the learned men of his court were Mirza Ghias Beg, Naqib Khan, Abdul Haq Dehlawi, and others. Jehangir's taste lay in the direction of painting birds, flora, and fauna. Still, his reign produced several historical works, the most important being the 'Iqbal Namah-i-Jehangiri, the 'Maasir-i-Jehangiri' and the 'Zubdatut Tawarikh'.

Jehangir had promulgated a Regulation throughout his dominions that "Whenever a well-to-do man or traveller died without any heir, his property would escheat to the Crown" He utilized such property for building and repairing Madrasahs, and seminars (Dr. N. N. Law page 175). It is also noted in the 'Tarikh-e-Jane Jahan', that after his accession to the throne, Jehangir "repaired even those schools that had for thirty years been the dwelling places of birds and beasts and filled them with students and teachers....."Such was the concern of the Emperor for the educational advancement of his subjects.

Shah Jehan continued the noble traditions of his fore-fathers in his patronage of Arts and letters. His main interests lay in the direction of architecture and in that branch of Art, he contributed to the treasures of India his Taj which is admittedly the wonder of the world. On the literary side, he was a fine scholar of Turki, and set apart some time at night for study. He founded a college at Delhi near his famous Jumma Masjid. Among

the learned men of his time were Abdul Hamid Lahori, author of the 'Pad Shah Namah,' Amin Qazwini, author of another 'Pad Shah Namah,' and Inayat Khan, author of 'Shah Jehan Namah,' and others. All these books supply valuable information about the history of his reign.

Of the poets who flourished at the courts of Jehangir and Shah Jehan, mention may be made of Naziri, Talib Kalim and Saib, poets who have left permanent impressions on the literature of the times. Among the Hindu poets, who gained fame during this period, was Chander Bhan who wrote under the pen name of 'Brahman'. This poet hailed from Lahore, and, according to some, from Akbarabad, and was an intimate friend of Prince Dara Shikuh, who introduced him to his Imperial father. The first lines that the poet recited before Shah Jehan was his famous distich:

مراد ہے کہ ہر بار جبکہ ہر دم و بازو برہمن اور دم

"My heart is so attuned to 'Kufr' that each time I took it to Kaaba, every time it came back as a Brahman."

In the translation, the charm of poetic diction is lost and only the meaning remains, shorn of all the associations which the Persian words convey. The king noted the implications of the verse. But he was cultured enough to understand and appreciate another's point of view. The poet was rewarded with a suitable Mansab for having attained such facility and elegance in his composition. In fact, the courage of his convictions elicited much praise. It is to be noted that this poet rose to still greater eminence during the reign of Aurangzeb, who made him a Mansabdar of seven thousand horses and took him along with him in his Deccan campaigns. The author of 'Nataijul Askar', Quadratullah, writes: "And when Alamgir ascended the throne, he (the poet Chander Bhan) became the recipient of many favours and was appointed to high posts in the State. Towards the end of his days, he retired to Benaras, and engaged himself in austerities as became a good Hindu till he died in the year 1073 A.H. The poet's life, his religious convictions, and his rise to such eminence even under

the much maligned monarch, Aurangzeb, speaks much of the tolerance and good will of the times. The poet has left a *Diwan* in the Persian language, which perpetuates his memory. The following are a few specimens of his poetry:

لنم نرساده دلجی سد دیده مژگان را - نیم مشت خس بقوان بست راه طوفان را
چاک در نیم عاشق بود آسایش دل - کا فرم کر ہو س قار ر قوے دارم

"Out of my simplicity, I am attempting to stop the tears of my eyes with the help of my eye brows:

"Is it at all possible to stop a flood by means of a particle of straw?"

"The tearing asunder of the heart is the very solace of my soul;

"I shall be an infidel, if I were to attempt repairing it."

The originality of thought, the elegance of expression and the lyrical heights, which this poet attained, elicited for him universal praise, both in India and Persia.

Now, we pass on to one of the most hapless and tragic figures in Medieval Indian History, Prince Dara Shikuh. After his sad death, he gained much more than what he had lost in a life time. His memory is cherished even to this day; for Dara Shikuh was a great scholar, well versed in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, and was passionately devoted to philosophical and religious studies like his great sire, Akbar. Like him also, he was imbued with the liberal doctrines of Sufism, so much so, that within the limits of his limited opportunities, he strove to unite the discordant religious elements in the state. Under his inspiration were translated into Persian the *Bhagvad Gita*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Yoga Vasistha Ramayana*. He was himself the author of several works in Persian on Sufism, the chief of which are "*Safinatul Auliya*", touching the lives of the saints of Islam, and the "*Sakinatul Auliya*", dealing with the saint, Miyan Mir, and his disciples. His most well-known contribution to Persian and Sanskrit studies is his work "*Majmaul Bahrayn*" (confluence of the two seas). This work, as the name indicates, is a treatise on

the technical terms of Hindu Pantheism and their equivalents in Sufi phraseology. Some of his other works on Sufism are *Nadirun Nukat*, '*Hasnatul Arifiin*,' and the '*Risalai Haq Numa*.'

It needs to be noted here that notwithstanding his obsession with state-craft, Aurangzeb contributed a good deal to the literature of the times. Under his orders, and under the immediate supervision of Mulla Nizam, was compiled the well known work of his times, *Fatawai Alamgiri*, a digest of juristic pronouncements on points of Islamic law. And, though he was averse to have a history of his reign written under his auspices, a number of historical accounts were written to swell the Indo-Persian literature of the times, chief of them being '*Alamgir Namah*', '*Maathire Alamgiri*' and the '*Khulasat-ut-Twarikh*' of Sughan Rai Khatri, the '*Naqshe Dilkusha*' of Bhimsen, the '*Futuh-at-e-Alamgiri*' of Ishwar Das and the notorious work of Khafi Khan, '*Muntakhabal-Lubab*', written in secret to avoid the displeasure of the Emperor.

A word must be said about the literary labours of some of the Mughal princesses. The daughter of Babur, Gulbadan Begum, who was very tenderly attached to her brother Humayun, was a very talented lady and wrote the '*Humayun Namah*', which still is the authority on the life and times of that emperor. Sultana Salima, Humayun's niece, Nurjehan, Mumtaz Mahal and Jahan Ara, the talented daughter of Shah Jehan, were all accomplished scholars, and they took keen interest in art and literature. Zeibun Nisa, daughter of Aurangzeb, was a gifted poetess, who wrote under the pen name of '*Makhfi*' (the hidden). She was well versed in Arabic and Persian and her *Diwan* bespeaks of her remarkable talents.

In the preceding pages, we have attempted to give a bird's eye view of the great literary panorama of India in Medieval India. "It was a great age, an age in which the Hindu and the Muslim genius soared to the highest, and produced such literature and works of Art of which any country may rightly be proud. Even after Aurangzeb, literary activity did not entirely

cease. During the troubled days of the later Mughal rule, men of letters continued to be patronised by emperors like Bahadur Shah and Muhammad Shah, Subedars like Murshid Quli Khan and Ali Yardi Khan, and Zamindars like Raja Krishnachandra of Nadia, Asadullah Khan of Birbhum, and others" ('An advanced History of India' by Majumdar, Rajachandri and Datta, page 583.)

Now a word about the contribution of the South to Indo-Persian literature during the Middle ages. The Courts of Adil Shahis of Bijapur, the Qutub Shahis of Golconda and the last, though certainly not the least in importance the Walajahis of Arcot, Trichinopoly and Madras were centres of learning and vied with one another in the promotion of Indo-Persian, and Dakhni languages and literatures in which both Hindus and Muslims participated. Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur was himself a poet and a lover of art and literature. He invited Mulla Zuhuri Tarshizi of Persia to his capital at Bijapur. He had even invited the King of lyrics, Hafiz, who was only too willing to come but could not set sail due to inclement weather. Zuhuri was a prolific writer both in verse, as well as in prose. His 'Gulzar-e-Ibrahim', 'Nauras' and his famous 'Seh Nathr', achieved for their author great name and fame.

The Qutub Shahis of Golconda, as all other dynasties of the South, were patrons of letters, and the cultivation of the muse became almost a passion with them. Indeed, no man was considered learned unless he was conversant with Persian literature. From out of a large number of poets, mention may be made of Ghulam Ali Azad and his illustrious pupil, Lakshmi Narayan Shafiq. The author of 'Nataijul Afkar,' Qudratullah, refers to Shafiq in his work. He writes: "That romantic creator of verse, Lachmi Narayan Shafiq of Aurangabad, Khatri by birth, hails from Lahore. His grand father Bhawani Das had accompanied Aurangzeb's Army to the Deccan." Shafiq was a gifted poet. Two of his prose works have acquired fame and name. One is 'Gul-e-R'ana' which deals with the lives of Indian poets of Persian origin and the other is entitled 'Shawm-e-Ghariban', which

deals with Persian poets who settled down in India. The following are a few precious gems from his literary treasure:

گرچہ اے دوست ندیدم چمن روئے ترا - دایم از باد صبا می شوم بوئے ترا

"O Friend! though I have not been blessed with the sight of the flower garden of thy countenance. Still, I am content with the fragrance which the moving breeze brings to me from it".

خواہد از گوشه چشمت ہم لطف شفیق - آرزویم ازین نیست دعا گوئے ترا

"I only yearn for the tender grace of thy eyes. Beyond that, thy well-wisher entertains no other desire."

Mark the ethical note in the verses, the poet's romantic yet chaste sentiments. Shafiq was noted for his balance in thought and expression. His excellent taste in Persian poetry is acknowledged on all hands. He is regarded as the Morning Star of Persian Poetry in the Deccan.

Nawab Walajah I of Madras, in common with all other rulers of the Age, was a great patron of learning. He held a magnificent court at Arcot in the South and his munificence attracted the celebrities of the times to him. He had himself invited Allama Abdul Ali from Lucknow and conferred upon him the title of Bahrul-uloom—"The Ocean of learning". That indeed this celebrated theologian was, and his memory is revered in Madras even to this day. One of his Hindu pupils Lala Mukkhan Lal, born at Venkatagiri in 1177 A.D., rose to great name and fame. He could teach the famous book on grammar called 'Sharhe Mulla' to advanced students of Arabic literature. Under his poetic name 'Khirad', he created for himself a niche in the temple of fame. His title to fame was due to his mastery in composing chronograms. His opportunity came, when Walajah I built his great Mosque at Madras, which still bears his name. He invited the poets of his Court to compose chronograms to be inscribed on that edifice. Of all the compositions presented before the Nawab, those composed by Khirad were selected as the best. They read as follows:

امیر الہند والا جاہ فرمود - بنا این مسجد فرخندہ معطر
زدل از بہر تاریخ بنایش - خدا آمد کم "ذکر الم اکبر"

"The Amir-e-Hind Walajah laid the foundation of this mosque, which is so pleasing to the eye;

"For purposes of the date of its foundation the voice came forth from within:

"Remembrance of God is the greatest act".

The Arabic letters of the words used in the inverted commas give the date, viz. 1209 A.H. And again the date of completion was given in the following chronogram:

ما ختم طاعت کم اسلام ثم دیں یزور - آنکم فرمانبر اوست زم تا ما ہی
سال تاریخ بنایش بخورد ہاتف گفت - نام فرخندہ روے "مسجد والا جاہی"
1210 A. H.

"This house of Muslim worship was built by the King, who is a patron of Religion and whose authority extends from the moon to the fishes (in the ocean).

"The poetic muse whispered to "Kirad", the date of construction: "Its auspicious name be the Mosque of Walajah".

The words in the inverted commas give the date 1210 A.H.

Of all the chronograms composed by the poets of the Court, both Muslims and Hindus, those two quoted above composed by Khirad were decidedly the most natural and most factual and stand unrivalled in the simplicity of style, accuracy of detail and the elegance of expression. In the first one, the learned author by a happy coincidence, has found a verse of the Quran which provides the date. But this cannot be a mere coincidence. It speaks volumes of the scholarship of the author and his close acquaintance with the contents of the Quran.

There were several other writers who cultivated this particular branch of versification, the chronograms. Indeed, their composition on important occasions had become a fashion. But there is hardly any one to rival Khirad in the whole realm of Persian literature in India. His only parallel is the Poet Kahi

of Humayun's Court, who composed chronograms of his patron's death, which has been noticed earlier in this chapter.

In the end, I make mention of a great work on Lexicography and this was accomplished by a Muslim, Muhammad Badshah. This was the greatest Lexicon of the Persian language so far compiled. This work is deservedly called 'Farhang-e-Ananda Raj, after his patron, Raja Anand Raj, without whose princely munificence and liberality, the compiler would not have found the wherewithal for this gigantic literary enterprise. 'Farhange Anandraj' is a veritable encyclopedia of Persian, Turkish and Arabic languages and has been universally acclaimed as a work of surpassing literary excellence and merit. Maharaja Anand Raj was the ruler of Vijayanagaram in the Madras State. The Raja, besides being a great patron of learning, was himself a learned scholar, for in the preface to the great Farhang, the compiler of the Lexicon states: "Around him, and even on his bed, are strewn, not garlands of roses, but bouquets of far greater fragrance, viz. books on all subjects and of diverse languages."

The Indo-Persian literature of Medieval India abounds in 'Mathnavis', 'Diwans', 'Kulliyat', biographies, local and general histories, commentaries of the Quran, and in works on philosophy, metaphysics, theology, sufism lexicography, medicine, logic and ornate prose. These include translations of numerous works and treatises from Sanskrit. There was hardly any branch of learning, any form of Persian Poetry, didactic, lyric, narrative or mystical, which was left out by the Indian genius, both Hindu and Muslim. It would be difficult to give another example from the literary history of the world, of a country which has mastered a foreign language to the extent that India had done in the Middle ages. It would also be probably difficult to provide a parallel to Indo-Persian literature in Medieval India, either in variety, volume or richness. All this gigantic output served as a potent instrument in not merely widening the intellectual outlook of the people of the land, but in promoting a pattern of culture common to both the Hindus and Muslims, and which Emperor Babur happily styled the Hindustani way.

CHAPTER XI

THE BHAKTI AND REFORMIST MOVEMENTS

It has already been pointed out in an early chapter that the eighth century A.D. was marked by political disunity in North India accompanied by social and religious disintegration, and that so was not the case in the South. The kingdoms of Chola and Vijayanagar were still in a flourishing condition. With decadence in the North came the opportunity to the South to take the initiative in religious leadership. From the eighth century onward, therefore, till the tenth century, the South was indeed the home of religious reforms. The Vaisnava and Saivite saints started schools of Bhakti, and scholars like Sankara, Ramanuja, Nimbadiya, Basava, Vallabhacharya and Madhwa formulated their philosophical systems. The contact of Islam during this period with Hinduism, both from the Malabar side and Coromondal coast "leavened the growing mass of Hindu thought." In fact, so powerful and widespread was the revolutionary religious fervour displayed, that it was from here, the South, that the impulse for re-awakening was transmitted to the North, chiefly through Ramananda, a distinguished pupil of Ramanuja.

The eighth century was thus a great land-mark in the religious development of the country. The Saiva and Vaisnava saints laid the foundations of the new religious developments. Their immediate purpose was to wean the people from Buddhism and Jainism. Their appeal was to the heart, and the language which

they employed was necessarily the language of the people, even as employed by the Buddhist and Jain missionaries whose influence had to be countered. Such was the beginning of the movement known as Bhakti movement in India.

The Sanskrit word "Bhakti" is derived from the root 'bhaj' meaning adoration or worship. One who adores God with devotion is a 'Bhakta' or devotee of God.

The cult of Bhakti is as old as the Indus valley civilisation where we find evidences of the worship of Siva seated in meditation. We find Bhakti in Vedas, the Upanishads, the Epics and the Puranas. The distinctive characteristic of the medieval Bhakti movement was its re-emphasis on the essentially monotheistic character of the idea of God and the superiority of the path of devotion over ritualistic sacrifice and mere book knowledge and wisdom. Another feature is its emphasis on the need of a living teacher to train the seeker in the proper method of attaining God Vision, through unalloyed devotion and meditation. Like the Reformation Movement in the sixteenth century Europe, the Bhakti movement rendered inestimable service to the masses by translating the sacred scriptures from Sanskrit into the languages of the people. This gave them a new consciousness. Birth in a particular caste was no longer regarded as hindrance to become a Bhakti. Even the lowliest and the lost could be purified, and elevated in thought and spirit if they lovingly adored God in all humanity and earnestness.

The Bhakti movement as stated above was fostered by the Saiva as well as Vaishnava saints. Tirunavukkarasu, Tirujnama Sambandar Sundaramurti Manikkavachagar Tirumular and Nakkirar Nambiandar were among the famous Saivite saints who spread this cult. The Vaishnava wing of this movement was developed by the twelve Alvars (One in deep wisdom). They were Poyyan Alvar, Bhattar Alvar, Pey Alvar, Terumalisai Alvar, Tiruppan Alvar, Tondaradippodi Alvar, Periyalvar, Andal, Nammalvar, and Madhurakavi. The collection of Vaisnavite hymns is called 'Nalayira Prabhandam,' and it was compiled and

arranged by Nathamuni under the editorship of Nammalvar in the tenth century.

The Alvars, Nayanmars and Adiyars belonged to various castes and classes. Nammalvar and Tirunavukkarasu were Vel-lalas. Tirumangai Alvar belonged to a Kallar (robber) family, Kulasekhara was of royal extraction, while Tiruppan Alvar was an untouchable like Nandanar, the great devotee of Siva. Sundaramurthi was a Brahman. Andal was a woman. But they were all inspired by the same ideals and sentiments. Their devotional songs speak in soul-stirring language their ecstatic devotion to God, their absolute self-surrender, their irrepressible yearning to attain God's grace, and their unbounded love of God's creation.

Alongside of the work carried on by the Bhakti hymn singers of Tamil land, the great scholastics of the time "forged the intellectual instruments with which the resuscitated Hinduism fought and conquered" Buddhism and Jainism. The most remarkable of these scholastics was Sankara, whose philosophy having "dealt a fatal blow to Buddhism, attempted to rally the Hindu sects together." He aimed to establish that monism was "the outstanding feature of Hindu theology, monism uncompromising, absolute, idealistic. His exposition of Vedanta exercised so great an influence on the learned and philosophical minded that vast bodies of "smartas" throughout the country became his followers. But the religion of love and devotion popularised by Alvars and the Adiyars soon found a number of philosophic exponents—Vaisnava Acharyas and Saiva Siddhanta—to dispute the theories of Sankara. Among the former was the Acharya Nathamuni whose grandson Yamuna-Muni known as Alvar-dar was the teacher of the great Ramanuja who was destined to refute the theory of Maya as propounded by Sankara and emphasise the religion of Bhakti.

Ramanuja (1016-1137)

The greatest of Vaisnava acharyas who exerted a profound influence on the religious and cultural history of India was Rama-

nuja who was born in the first quarter of the tenth century. His most important works are "Vedanta Sanghama" and his "Bharvas" of the Bhadarayana's Vedanta Sutra, and Bhagavat Gita. His main object was to refute the Mayarada and absolute monism of Sankara, and to reconcile Bhakti to a personal God with the Vedanta philosophy. He affirmed that "the soul, though of the same substance as God's and emitted from him rather than created, can obtain bliss not in absorption but in existence near him." He emphasised that Bhakti would help the soul to attain emancipation and enjoy eternal blessedness in the presence of God. Though he allowed the ancient practice of restricting the privilege of reading the Vedas to the high classes, he suggested to others the path of self-surrender (prapatti) and absolute faith in the preceptor. His liberal social outlook is proved by his attempt to emancipate even the outcastes, and by his injunction that on certain days in the year, the outcastes must be permitted to enter the temple. His doctrine of prapatti led to the formation of two sects known as the Vedayalai (Northern branch) and Tengalai (Southern branch). The former believes that the process of deliverance must begin with the individual, and that God's grace is obligatory, and that once the devotee surrenders himself unto God, the soul is led to salvation.

One of the greatest exponents of Bhakti in South India in the 13th century A.D. was Madhwa. According to him, there is only one most supreme God, call Him Hari or Vishnu or Narayana. He has no equal. He is most independent. His grace alone gives us final release from worldly bonds. He is not accessible to mere learning or propitiatory rites. Whomsoever He elects, He reveals Himself to him. To become an elect of His, one must practise Bhakti which consists of an intense affection towards God, which surpasses everything else, and which is based on the knowledge of His greatness. Just as one needs devotion to God to become one of the elect, one should also be equally devoted to his preceptor or Guru, who alone can lead him to the goal, viz. God-vision. The Vedas declare that the path to perfection is Bhakti. It is Bhakti that enables one to obtain God-vision.

It is Bhakti that gives final release. Even those who have obtained release prefer the bliss enjoyed by the Bhakta to that of Moksha and do not want Moksha or final release.

Commenting on the Bhagvad Gita, Madhwa points out that the three paths to perfection—Action, Knowledge and Devotion—are not exclusive of one another. Right action does not consist in the mere performance of elaborate sacrificial rituals. It is the mind that has got to be purified. That has to be done by the eight-fold means of meditation, viz. non-injury, truth-speaking, abstinence, continence, not having property, purity, contentment, austerity, study and devotion to God.

These alone lead to wisdom which cannot be obtained by the mere reading of books. The Gita defines Gnana or Knowledge as including humility, integrity, non-violence, patience, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness and self-control. Indifference to the objects of sense, self-effacement and the perception of the evil of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain; non-attachment, absence of clinging to son, wife, home and the like, and a constant equal-mindedness to all desirable and undesirable happenings of life, unswerving devotion to God through exclusive knowledge of His unique superiority to all else, resort to solitary places, dislike for crowds, constant and eager contemplation of the Atman, inquiry into the meaning of sacred books to achieve realisation of God—these are declared to be the means for true knowledge and all that is different from it will not lead to true knowledge. Equipped with the qualifications of action and knowledge rightly understood, the seeker becomes fit to develop the right kind of Bhakti or devotion.

Jayathirtha, a successor of Madhwa in the 14th century, wrote a masterly commentary on the 'Sutra Bhashya' of Madhwa, known as 'Nyaya Sudha.' There, he defines Bhakti as a "continual flow of love for the Lord which cannot be impaired or affected by thousands of obstacles, which is many times greater than love for one's own self or love for what is regarded as one's own and which is preceded by a knowledge of the Lord as the possessor of infinite number of good and benign qualities.

Such devotion leads to dispassion or 'vairagya' and the Bhakta who secures a qualified teacher to teach him the proper method of meditation will, in due course, be able to secure God-Vision. Without the grace of the Guru, the gates of God's palace will not be opened to our hearts. With the Guru's grace the Bhakta obtains God-vision; and when that is obtained, all the ties that cling to the self are torn asunder and all doubts vanish. To such a Bhakta, even heaven is not wanted. The earth itself is a heaven for him. To such a saint, caste is no hinderance to perfection. His God is the God of all creation. His life is a life Divine.

Although the cult of Bhakti has its origins in ancient times, the advent of Islam in India supplied a sort of stimulus for a new orientation. The fundamental idea of Islam was complete surrender to the will of God or Allah. The Quran emphasised the unity of God, His majesty and His mercy. The traditional prayer prescribed to the followers of Islam was in no way different from the prayer of the Bhakta: "O Lord! Grant me the love of Thee; grant that I may love those that love Thee; grant that I may do the deeds that may win Thy love; make Thy love to be dearer to me than Self, family or wealth." Soon or late, therefore, the urge was felt to merge the two lines of approach towards one illumination.

Ramananda

The Bhakti Movement in medieval times took its rise in the wake of southern movements traced above. Ramananda may for all practical purposes be regarded as a bridge between the southern and northern movements. He was born at Prayaga (Allahabad) in a Brahmin family. The dates of his birth and death are not easy to determine. But Dr. Tara Chand observes that his career may provisionally be accepted to lie in the last quarter of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries. Although he started as a Vedantist of Monist school, he eventually became a disciple of Raghavananda of Ramanuja's Sri Sect and widely travelled about the country coming into contact at Banaras among others, according to Macauliffe, "with learned

Musalman." With his broadened outlook, he admitted to his view of life disciples from all castes and sexes including Musalmans. Among his disciples, the most prominent were Anantananda, Kabir, Pipa, Bhavananda, Sukha Sursura, Padmavati, Narhari Raidass, Dhana, Saina and the wife of Sursura.

Two schools of religious thought took their rise from the teachings of Ramananda. One was conservative and the other was radical. The first adhered to ancient beliefs, the other struck out an independent line of its own bringing into its fold both Hindus and Musalmans. Tulsidas belongs to the orthodox school. The radical school was led by Kabir.

Kabir

The circumstances of his birth are shrouded in mystery. But the historic fact is that he was brought up in a family of Muslim weavers. The story of his boyhood, youth and adolescence is variously related. But it is clear that "even as a boy", he showed such freedom from bias that both Hindu and Muslim boys misunderstood and persecuted him. He was throughout this stage anxious to seek a teacher who could get him into the reality of life. Tradition records that Ramananda was among his earliest teachers. In fact, in one of his utterances, Kabir says: "I was revealed in Kasi and was awakened by Ramanand". It appears, however, says Dr. Tara Chand: "that he did not remain long with his teacher, for tradition finds him soon after wandering from place to place and associating with ascetics and saints. He spent considerable time in the company of Muslim Sufis. Of this, he speaks in a Rmaini: "Manikpur was the dwelling place of Kabir, where for long he listened to Shaikh Taqi. The same (teaching) he heard at Jaunpur; and at Jhusi (near Allahabad) he learnt the names of the Pirs (Muslim preceptors). In the place they have a record of twenty-one Pirs who read the prayers (Khutba) in the name of the Prophet."

Kabir held the opinion that illumination comes only through guidance of a true preceptor. Says he: "He is the real Sadguru who can reveal the form of the formless to the vision of these

eyes; who teaches the simple way of attaining Him, that is other than rites or ceremonies; who does not make you close the doors and hold the breath and renounce the world; who makes you perceive the Supreme spirit wherever the mind attaches itself; who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities. Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind, he keeps the spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments."

Kabir was married, and had a son, Kamal. He was not a sanyasi or ascetic. To Kabir, "the home is the abiding place; in the home is reality. The home helps to attain Him who is real. So stay where you are, and all things shall come to you in time".

Kabir held that all external forms of worship were only means to concentration. Once unaided meditation becomes possible, outward symbols lose their importance to the God-visioned man. He hears the voice of God in his own heart and enjoys ineffable bliss. That is the idea, Kabir conveys in his song:

I am neither in temple, nor in mosque;
I am neither in 'Kaaba', nor in 'Kailas';
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies,
Nor in yog and renunciation.
Lamps burn in every house, O blind one!
And you cannot see them.....
Your Lord is near, yet you are climbing
The palm tree to seek Him.
Yoga and the telling of beads—these are naught to me.

Again;

Have you not heard the tune which the unstruck music is playing: The Qazi is searching the words of the Quran and instructing others; but if his heart be not steeped in that love, what does his effort avail, though he be a teacher of men? The Yogi dyes his garments with red, if he knows naught of that colour of love, what does it avail, though his garments be tinted?

Kabir says: "Whether I be in temple or on balcony, in the camp or in the flower garden, I tell you truly that every moment, my Lord is taking His delight in me".

To a man who is unable to conquer his senses and attachment to the senses, God realisation is impossible. Says Kabir:

"The moon shines in my body, but my blind eyes cannot see it. So long as man clamours for the "I" and the "MINE", his works are as naught. When all the love of I and the MINE is dead, then the work of the Lord is done".

Says Dr. Tara Chand: "Kabir is a genius of a different order. He has gazed into the mystery of life and seen the vision of the ineffable light. He brings from the world of beyond a new message for the individual and for society. He dreams of a future purified of insincerities, untruths, ugliness, inequalities; he preaches a religion based on the only foundation on which faith can stand, namely personal experience. He brushes unhesitatingly aside the whole paraphernalia of dogma and authority, for his soul is sick of the sorry spectacle of the quarrels of creeds and the worship of empty shells of formal religions. He tolerates no shams and demands reality in the search after God. Kabir is no retiring ascetic who has abandoned the world in despair, nor is he an idealiser who finds good in all things; he is eager to lift the sword in the moral struggle of the world and strike a doughty blow for the victory of righteousness and he is not afraid of administering stern, even harsh, rebuke to all infringements of rational conduct and all degradations of human dignity. He is a mighty warner, an intrepid pathfinder, the great pioneer of the unity of the Hindu and Muslim communities of India and the apostle of the faith of Humanity who taught that the divine disclosed itself in the human race as a whole".

Kabir left behind many disciples who made a mission of their life to spread his message throughout the Northern India and the Deccan. They belonged to one or other of the several schools which comprised the Panth going under his name. Of these, the most notable were Srut Gopal Das, Bhaggu Das

(Bhagwan Das) Dharam Das, Jeevan Das and Kamal. Among those who laboured after them, the best known figure is that of Dadu Dayal who spent most of his life in Rajputana. He has left behind 5,000 verses expressed in a language which is a mixture of Braja Basha and Rajasthani. Some of the verses are in Punjabi, Rekhta and mixed Persian. Speaking of Dadu, Dr. Tara Chand observes: "Dadu manifests perhaps even greater knowledge of Sufism than his predecessors, perhaps because he was the disciple of Kamal who probably had greater leanings towards Islamic ways of thinking than others, perhaps because the Sufis of Western India—Ahmedabad and Ajmer—wielded greater influence upon the minds of seekers after God, Hindu or Muslim, than those of the East. At any rate, the effect of their teachings was to make him a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. He repeats again and again the sentiment that:

"In all vessels, whether Hindu or Muslim, there is one soul"

"O Allah Rama, my illusion has passed away; there is no difference at all between Hindu and Musalman.

One of his remarkable utterances is that which touches the problem of rebirth. He was evidently of opinion that the entire cycle of births and deaths could be passed in one's own life time. Says he:

"Nature of the eighty-four lakhs of lives is within you."

"There are many births in a single day, but few understand them."

Nanak:

A great contemporary of Kabir was Nanak the founder of the Sikh faith. Born at the village of Talwandi in the district of Gujranwala to a Bedi Khatri family, Nanak learnt Hindi, Sanskrit and Persian by the time he reached his seventeenth year. At the age of eighteen, he was married to Sulakhin and had two sons by her. One was Sri Chand who founded the order of Udasis, and Lakhmidas. At the age of thirty, "he renounced home and became a Fakir" and in the company of Mardana, a

Muslim minstrel of Talwandi, and of Bhai Bala he wandered over many lands interviewing saints and scholars, such as Shaik Sharaf of Paniput, the Pirs of Multan, Shaikh Brahm (Ibrahim), the successor of Baba Farid at Pakpattan, and several others, and visited many holy places in India, Ceylon, Persia and Arabia. His wanderings over, he delivered his message of Hindu-Muslim unity such as should "heal the wounds of society" and "end the conflict of religions".

Nanak himself says:

"When One remains, and is removed, then alone is it possible to live with ease; but as long as the two remain established, there is struggle and confusion. The two had failed. Then God gave orders; for many had gone taking with them the Furqan (Quran) in order to unite, but they had failed to unite. 'Thou art my son, go into the world, all have gone astray, from the path, direct them upon the right path. Go thou into the world, and make them all repeat the one name; Nanak! go thou as the third over the head of both. Establish the religion of truth and remove evil, whoever comes to you from the two receive him, let not life be taken unnecessarily, protect the poor, remember that God pervades the eighty-four lakhs of species."

Says Dr. Tara Chand: "It is clear that Nanak took the prophet of Islam as his model; and his teaching was naturally deeply coloured by this fact. He was a mystic in the sense that he had a lively realisation of the presence of God, but he was not an enrapt visionary like Kabir. His spirit took occasional flights to the sorrowless and where the Divine palace is illumined by His light which exceeds the light of millions of moons, lamps, suns and torches and where from behind the curtain of the Unknown (ghaibi) the sound of bells is heard, but he does not revel in the transcendent joys of that illumined abode. His spirit draws its inspiration from that vision, but it is far too deeply interested in the fate of his fellow beings upon earth to linger long in the rare mystic regions."

Tara Chand rounds off the picture by observing: "How deep Guru Nanak's debt is to Islam: it is hardly necessary to state, for it is so evident in his words and thoughts. Manifestly he was steeped in Sufi lore, and the fact of the matter is, that it is much harder to find how exactly he drew from the Hindu scriptures. His rare references to them lead one to imagine that Nanak was only superficially acquainted with the Vedic and Puranic literature. Be that as it may, it is certain that in his own mind he was clear that he had come upon earth with one purpose which was to proclaim that:

"There is only one path to the Divine Court
which is presided over by the one eternal Lord."

Like the way of Kabir or Kabirpanth, Nanak's way, is known as Sikhism. The term 'Sikh' actually means a 'Seeker, a learner, a disciple of truth, Nanak's aim was that all men everywhere should praise the one, the only one, the True name that is Eternal.

Nanak's successor, Angad, 1538-1522, is said to have blessed Humayun when he was exiled by Sher Shah. The third Guru, Amardas, was offered estates by Akbar, but he refused them. During the time of the fourth Guru, Ramdas, (1574-1581), a site was granted by Akbar for the erection of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. The temple was completed by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjun, (1581-1606). The collections of the hymns of Nanak known as the 'Adi Granth', the Bible of the Sikhs, was completed in 1064. It included many verses of Kabir. Muslim saints like Mian Mir, Shah Husain and Boollay Shah gathered round Guru Arjun to hear hymns from the Granth. Noor Jehan took great interest in the sixth Guru, Hari Govind, (1606-1645), and had several interviews with him. Vazier Khan, one of the officers of Akbar and Jehangir, was among the admirers of the Guru. The seventh Guru, Hari Rai, (1645-1661) joined Dara Shikoh and Bhadur Shah, the successor of Awrangzeb, was on intimate terms with the last Guru Govind Singh who died at Naned in 1707.

Speaking of the post-Nanak development of Sikhism, says Dr. Tara Chand: "The religious movement started by Nanak continued to gather momentum under his successors. Its stern ethical tone and its definite puritanism were elements which distinguished it from similar movements in India. Its spirit of non-compromise carried within it possibilities of martyrdom and the seed of an organised church. The unsettled political conditions of the later period of the Moghul Empire gave these possibilities their opportunity, and the seed bore fruit. The later Gurus were inevitably drawn into the whirl of politics and they transformed the Church into a militant society. But although the Sikhs changed their organisation, their religion retained almost unaltered the impress of Guru Nanak's teaching."

Tulsidas: (1532-1624)

Another name which adorned the annals of Medieval India was that of Tulsidas. He belongs to the spacious days of Emperor Akbar. Unlike Kabir and Nanak, he belonged to a Brahmin family well versed in Sanskrit and Hindi. His great work *Ramcharita Mansa* is not merely a Hindi version of the great epic, the *Ramanaya* of Valmiki, it summarises the highest ethical teaching of the Gita, the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagvatha Purana*.

One of the characteristics of the Bhakti movement was its eclecticism. We find it evident in Tulsidas, harmonising Bhakti, in Rama, with Bhakti in Siva. Tulsidas, like Kabir and Nanak, emphasises that caste need not stand in the way of Bhakti to God. "Even a *swapacha* (the lowest of the lowly) a *sabara*, a *khass*, a barbarian outcaste, a *kol* or a *kirat*," is purified by uttering the name of Rama. Sinners can become saints, by repentance and Bhakti. Narada, the son of a maidservant in his previous birth, became one of the greatest Bhaktas of God in another birth. Narada meets Rama in the forest and requests him to describe the qualities of a saint. Rama replies: "The saints are the masters of the six passions (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy) They are sinless, disinterested, firm, possessing nothing, pure (both within and without), full of bliss, of boundless wisdom, desireless,

moderate in diet, faithful, inspired, learned and united with God, circumspect, bestowing honour on others, free from pride, strong-minded and highly conversant with the course of Dharma (righteousness). They are abodes of virtue, above the sorrows of the world, and free from doubt. Nothing besides My lotus feet is dear to them, not even their body nor their home. They blush to hear themselves praised, but feel much delighted to hear other's praises. Even-minded and placid, they never abandon the right course. Guileless by nature and loving, they are given over to prayer, austerity, control of the senses, self-denial and religious observances and undertake sacred vows. They are devoted to the feet of their Guru and God and the virtuous ones. They are full of piety, forgiving, friendly to all, compassionate, cheerful under all circumstances and sincerely devoted to My feet. They are further characterised by dispassion, discretion, modesty, knowledge of the truth relating to God, as well as, of the sacred works. They never take recourse to hypocrisy, pride or arrogance nor set their foot on the evil path even by mistake. They are ever engaged in singing or hearing My stories and are intent on doing good to others without any consideration."

The deep piety of Tulsidas won for him many admirers from among the liberal minded Musalmans of his time. The famous poet Abdul Rahim Khanikhanan who was a Minister of Akbar, was one of them. He described the work of Tulsidas as "the very life breath of saints and as the Veda to the Hindu and the Holy Quran to the Muslim". In our own times, it profoundly influenced the life of Mahatma Gandhi; and his conception of 'Rama Rajya' or the kingdom of God on earth was drawn from the beautiful account of Tulsidas. President Rajendra Prasad observes that it will be no exaggeration to say that during the past three centuries, the *Manasa* alone has served the purpose of all the scriptures and philosophical works for the masses of Northern India.

While Tulsidas developed the doctrine of Bhakti to Rama, his contemporary Surdas, the blind poet of Agra spread the Bhakti cult of Krishana, writing several thousands of verses in praise of

Krishana. Surdas was a disciple of Vallabhacharya, who obtained his vision by meditating on the form of boy Krishna. Surdas was in the service of Akbar as a Revenue Officer under Todar Mal. He gave up his office, became an ascetic and spent his days in the neighbourhood of Brindavan, near Mathura, the place associated with the youth of Krishna.

As Tulsidas and Surdas in Northern India, Purandhara Dasa and his contemporary Kanaka Dasa championed the cause of Bhakti in South India. Purandhara Dasa was the disciple of Vyasaraya, the patron saint of Vijayanagara, during the period of the Great South Indian Ruler, Krishnadevaraya, a contemporary of Akbar. Purandhara Dasa was a wealthy diamond merchant. He was married and had four sons. But he renounced all his wealth, left his native place, near Poona and sought the preceptorship of Vyasaraya at Hampi, Vijayanagara, where a hall is pointed out to the present day as the hall where Purandhara kept spell-bound masses of Bhaktas by his songs. Vyasaraya initiated Purandhara into the circle of Bhaktas. The bliss that Purandhara enjoyed as the result of the God-Vision that he obtained by the grace of his Guru, he expressed in a song, exclaiming that he beheld before his very eyes the form of Krishna. His disciples alluded to this experience of their master in a song, stating that God was gracious and danced before him for a second. Thousands of songs flowed from his lips and his Guru Vyasaraya was so pleased with them, as they conveyed in popular language the essence of the teachings of the Upanishads, that he named them 'Purandhara Upanishad'. The songs of Purandhara are very highly praised as the essence of the Vedas, capable of releasing sinful souls from the disease of samsara.

Kanka Dasa belonged to the hunters' caste and yet was able to obtain God-Vision, by the grace of Vyasaraya. In his devotional treatise, entitled "The essence of devotion to Hari Or Hari Bhaktisara", he appeals to the people not to worship many gods and goddesses, sacrificing goats, buffaloes and sheep. The true God is the omnipotent and omnipresent God. Everything

is within Him. "Are you in Maya or Is Maya in you? Are you within the body or is the body within you? Is the temple in the open space or is the open space in the temple? Or is both the temple and the open space in the eye or is the eye in the mind or is the mind in the eye or are both the eye and the mind within Thee, O God! Is sweetness in sugar or sugar in the sweetness, or are they both in the tongue itself? Is tongue within the mind or the mind within the tongue, or are both of them within Thee? Is the flower within the fragrance or the fragrance within the flower, or are these both in the nose? O God! Is it possible to say exactly, what is what? But it is certain that everything is within Thee."

Again, "The world is crying hoarse, saying caste, caste caste. But really what is the caste to the Sadhu and to the good man? Is not the lotus, that grows in a muddy pond, used to adorn God? Is not the milk which is produced from the cow used as the drink of the highest castes? Is not the musk that is used as the head-mark of the Gods obtained from the secretion of a cat? What is the caste of God Narayana? What is the caste of Siva? What is the caste of the Atma? What is the caste of Jiva-what is the caste of the senses (the Tatwa Indriyas) the principal means of knowledge? To whom the Lord bestows His grace, to him where is the question of caste?"

A great many saints arose in the North and the South during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who sustained the Bhakti movement. Space, however does not permit adequate reference to them here. But mention needs to be made of the leading figures who exercised a great influence on the life of the people in Bengal and Maharashtra.

Chaitanya

With the advent of the Muslims in Bengal and the spread of their rule therein, several forces came to be at work which brought about the elevation of Bengali to the status of a literary language. Under the auspices of Muslim rulers, the ancient sacred writings of Ramayana, and Mahabharata were trans-

lated into Bengali, as also several works from the Persian literature. The step was calculated to promote and strengthen friendly relations between the Hindus and the Muslims, and to awaken a renewed interest in their religious heritage. With Buddhism driven out of Bengal, and Brahminism growing oppressive to the masses among the Hindus, the ground was prepared for the rise of Bhakti teachers. The most prominent among them was Chaitanya.

Born at Nadya in 1485 he renounced the world when he was twenty-five, and wandered about the country preaching that love and devotion to Krishna would lead to the illumination of the mind and to ultimate salvation. He recommended dance and music to produce a state of ecstasy in which the Bhaktas could have a vision of God. His disciples belonged to all castes from the highest to the lowest. The notable sect of Kartabhajas was an offshoot of the school of Chaitanya. Its founder was a Sadagop, by name Ram Smaran Bal, better known as Karta Baba. He was born about the close of the seventeenth century. His birth was foretold by a Muslim Faqir and was brought up by him. He had twenty-two devoted disciples (Ba'is Faqir). One of these was Ram Dulal. It was he who succeeded him and organised the sect. The doctrines of Kartabhajas, as noted by Dr. Tara Chand, are:

- (1) There is only one God, who is incarnate in Karta.
- (2) The Mahasaya or spiritual guide must be all in all to his Barati or disciple.
- (3) The Mantra or religious formula of the sect must be repeated five times a day as means of salvation and of obtaining material prosperity.
- (4) Meat and Wine must be abstained from.
- (5) Friday must be held sacred and should be spent in religious meditation and discussion.
- (6) There is no distinction in the cult between high caste and low, or between Hindus, Musalmans and Chris-

tians. (A Musalman has more than once risen to the rank of a teacher. The members of the sect cat together, at least once or twice in the year).

- (7) No outward sign of adherence to the sect is required. A Hindu may retain his sacred thread, and a Musalman need not shave on becoming a member of the sect.
- (8) Fervid love or Bhakti is the only religious exercise necessary.

Namdev and Tukaram

Speaking of the saints of Maharashtra, states Dr. Tara Chand:—

"The intercourse of Hindus and Musalmans produced the same cultural phenomena in Maharashtra as it had done in Hindustan and Bengal. The Marathi saints and hymnsingers effected the same kind of synthesis of the two faiths as was done by Kabir and Nanak in the north."

Describing the beginning of the Bhakti movement in this part of the land, Ranade Says:

"The severity of the monotheistic creed of the Muhammadians was distinctly impressed upon the minds of these prophets (Kabir, Nanak and others). The worshippers of Dattatraya or the incarnation of the Hindu Trinity, often clothed their God in the garb of a Muhammadan Faqir. This same influence was at work with greater effect on the popular mind in Maharashtra, where preachers, both Brahmans and non-Brahmans, were calling to identify Rama with Rahim, and ensure their freedom from the bonds of formal ritualism and caste distinctions, and unite in common love of man and faith in God."

The greatest among the Bhakti saints of Maharashtra were Namdev and Tukaram. The former had a host of disciples who carried his message among all sections of the people. His disciples were drawn from all classes of society. Brahmins, Kumbis, tailors, gardeners, potters, goldsmiths, repentent prostitutes, slave girls, and even Mahars.

Tukaram was an equally great name among the Maharatha saints. His teachings are in the form of 'Abhangs' numbering between five and eight thousands. He rejects ceremonies, offering Vedic sacrifices, visiting holy places, worshipping stones, putting on saint's guise, fasts, and auterities, and shows the way to true worship. Tukaram was a contemporary of Sivaji. It was he, more than any other, who inspired the Mahrathas to weld themselves into a "people united in common aims and aspirations". Alongside of his endeavour in this behalf, he attempted to reconcile Hindu and Muslim faiths as is evidenced in the following hymns as translated in Godbole's edition of "Tukaram: Abhang":—

"What Allah wishes that is accomplished, O ! my friend (Baba), the Maker is the sovereign of all."

Cattle and friends, gardens and goods all depart.

My mind dwells, O ! friend, on my Lord (Sahib) who is Maker,

I ride there on the back of the horse (Mind) and the self becomes the horseman.

O! friend, meditate (zikr) on Allah, who is in the guise of all,

Says Tuka, the man who understands this becomes a Darwish."

And—

"First among the great names is Allah, never forget to repeat it."

Allah is verily one, the prophet (nabi) is verily one.

There Thou art one, there Thou art one, there Thou art one, O! friend.

There is neither I nor thou."

Like the preaching of the great Buddha two thousand years before, the Bhakti movement of Medieval India opened the path

of devotion to men of every caste. During the days of Emperor Akbar, men of all religions in India lived side by side singing the religion of the Bhakta, so well expressed by the poet Ibn ul Arabi of Audulesia:

My heart has become capable of every form.

It is a pasture for gazelles, and a convent for Christian monks,
And a Temple for Idols and the Pilgrims' Kaaba,

And the Table of the Torah and the book of the Koran.

I follow the religion of love whichever way his camel takes,
My religion, my faith is true religion.

CHAPTER XII

SUFI MOVEMENT IN INDIA

Sufism is that mode of religious life in Islam in which the emphasis is placed, not on the performances of external ritual, but on the purification of one's inner self in order to attain lasting spiritual bliss. In other words, it signifies Islamic mysticism. The term is popularised by Western writers; but the one in common use among the Muslims is 'Tasawwuf', while its cognate, Sufi, is used for the mystic.

Scholars wrangle over the derivation of the word Sufi. Some say that the Sufis were named as such because of "The purity (Safa) of their hearts and the cleanliness of their acts". Others think that they were so called because they were "in the first rank (Saff) before God through the elevation of their desires towards Him and the turning of their hearts unto Him". Others have said that they were so named because their qualities resembled those of the "People of the Bench" (Ashab al-Suffa) who were attached to the Prophet and who lived austere puritan lives. Lastly, it has been claimed that they were called Sufis because of their habit of wearing 'Suf', or wool. But it is necessary to remember that it is not merely by putting on rough hair-cloth or coarse wool that one is called a Sufi. As Hujwiri has said: "Purity (Safa) is a blessing from God and the wool (Suf) is a proper dress of the cattle."

According to the researches of Imam Qushayri, the word Sufi came into vogue a little before the expiry of the second cen-

tury Hijra. After the death of the Holy Prophet, "Companions" (Sahaba), was the title applied to the godly people who had kept company with him and lived the life of purity. They needed no better title; for, "companionship" of the Prophet was unanimously regarded as the highest and the best honour that was ever enjoyed by a Muslim. Those associated with the "companions" were called in their own times 'Tabein' (followers) and "the followers of the followers" were those who sat at the feet of the followers. After the expiry of this period, there was a slackening of religious spirit. Hearts were turning more towards the pleasure of the world than towards God. A number of new schools of thought cropped up. Each system was divided into a number of branches. Seeing this state of affairs, those who adored God above all things and were consumed by the fire of His love, separated themselves from the rest of the world, and devoted themselves to the recollection and remembrance of God—the only object of their love. These men were later called Sufis.

In the light of these historical facts, it is, now easy to determine the exact meaning of Sufism. If we cast a glance over the various definitions of Sufism given by the Sufis themselves, we will find not a few necessary attributes ascribed to them. But they are all summed up in a definition formulated by Shaykh-al-Islam Zakariyah Ansari, which is as follows:

"Sufism teaches how to purify one's self, improve one's morals and build up one's inner and outer life in order to attain perpetual bliss. Its subject matter is the purification of the soul and its end or aim is the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness".

The following few sayings of the more prominent Sufis amplify and extend with fresh details the definition above formulated.

Imam Qushayri, the author of the great Sufi compendium, 'Rasa'il,' takes Sufism in the sense of purity (Safa) i.e. the purity of inner and outer life, and says that "purity is something praiseworthy in whichever language it may be expressed and its oppo-

site, impurity (Kadar) is to be eschewed." In praise of Sufism Abu'l Hasan Nuri says: "Sufism is the renunciation of all selfish pleasures." To Abu 'Ali Qazwini, "Sufism is good manners". Abu Sahl Sa'luki defines it as "abstaining from carping criticism." Abu Muhammed al-Juraryi states: "Sufism is the building up of good habits and the keeping of the heart from all evil desires and passions". To Muhammad b.al-Qassab, "Sufism is good manners which are manifested by a good man in good time before a good people". Muhammad b. Ali has expressed the view that "Sufism is goodness of disposition. He that has a good disposition is a good Sufi".

It is clear then, that according to these great Sufis, Sufism is nothing but the purification of the senses and the will. It is the keeping under proper restraint of one's desires and conforming to the will of God. It is the building up of a solid wall between the pure self and the Gog and Magog of passions and desires. It is, in a word, self-discipline—the avoidance of what is forbidden and performance of what is ordained by the Law (Shariyah).

In this sense Sufism is a purely Islamic discipline which builds up the character and inner life of the Muslims by imposing certain ordinances and duties, obligations and impositions which may not be abandoned in any way by any man. The Prophet Muhammad was sent to "instruct" mankind "in Scriptures and Wisdom and to purify them" (S. II, 129). The Sufis keep these "instructions" before their eyes, strive their utmost to perform what has been prescribed for them. The Quran says: "And those who strive strenuously for us, we will surely guide them into our ways". (S. XXIX 69). And again "Oh ye who believe! Be mindful of your duty to God, and seek the way of approach unto Him and strive in His way in order that you may prosper" (S. V. 38)

But this is not the whole meaning of Sufism in Islam. The Sufis give to it an esoteric sense as well. To understand this esoteric aspect, it is necessary to distinguish between the three main categories of men given by the Quran in Sura LVI (Waqia).

Here men are sorted out into three classes: (1) The companions of the Right Hand (Ashab-ul-Maimana) (ii) The Companions of the Left Hand (Ashab ul-Mashama) and (iii) Those nearest to God (Muqarrabun).

The companions of the Right hand are "Those who believe in the Unseen", are "steadfast in prayer" and "have assurance of the Hereafter" in their hearts. They are "on the right path guided by their Lord". The companions of the Left Hand are "those who reject Faith" and go after wrong paths. The Quran describes them as "those who have bartered guidance for error" and "have lost their true direction." But who are the 'Muqarrabun'? They are not just the companions of the Right Hand only. Otherwise, they would not have been placed in a different category. The Sufis believe that it is just another name for those who are not only on the right path guided by their Lord, but also know the right relation between "Haqq" and 'Khalq', or between the Creator and the created, between God and man. This knowledge confers on us nearness to God, so much so that a Sufi being lost to his sense of self-subsistence, loses himself in the self-subsistence of God. He feels the immediate presence of God within and senses the presence of God without. His knowledge and actions are guided by God alone. Thus the great Sufi Saint, Shaykh Shahabuddin Suharwardi, in his famous Sufi compendium "Awarif-ul-Ma'arif (Chapter One) holds that though the term Sufi is not used in the Holy Quran, the word 'Muqarrib' connotes the same meaning which is expressed by the term Sufi.

Keeping this esoteric meaning of Sufism, Junayd has defined a Sufi as "dead to his self and alive in God". He passes away from what belongs to himself and exists through what belongs to God. When he is dead in relation to his own self, he becomes alive in his relation to the self of God. The end and aim of a Sufi's life is God alone; he loves God alone; his thinking, meditation and prayer are for God alone. He is oblivious to everything save God and when he thinks of God, his mind is purified and in this sense, he finds himself attached to God and disconnected with everything save God. He is totally captivated by God alone. Jami expresses this idea thus:

"Of my soul's union with this fleshly frame,
 Of life and death thou art the end and aim,
 I pass away: thou alone dost endure!
 When I say "me", it is "thee" I mean to name!"

Thu Sufism in its esoteric sense is the mystical knowledge of the nearness of God or 'ilm-i-qurb, and only the Muqarrabun, the Sufis, are blessed with this knowledge! And as Junayd has said: Sufism is "firmly bound up with the doctrinal faith of the Qur'an and the Traditions", and that which is rejected by the Qura'an and the Traditions", is nothing but heresy! Thus understood, without Sufism, the Islamic Religion would be like a circumference without a centre. Sufism comprises the doctrine and the methods of the 'Muqarrabun'. The Path which they follow is called 'Tariqah' and this term is used by extension to denote a Sufi brotherhood. The practices of the 'Tariqah', many of which are of esoteric character, are in addition, but never in opposition to what Shari'ah, the Sacred Law, prescribes.

The esoteric method of approach to God—the 'tarikha' as followed by the Sufis—has not however been uniform. In fact, due to the personal touch given to it by some prominent figure or other of the brotherhood, several circles or orders going under several names took their rise in due course, some of which eventually transplanted themselves on the soil of India. The impulse behind the individual touch was prompted either by intuitive call from within, or under the influence of one or other of the different speculative schools of thought which had shot up in medieval times among the educated classes in West Asia. Each order observed its own set of esoteric practices; so much so, that by the time Sufism travelled into India from the North West, the orthodox form of Sufism described above had already developed certain features which bore striking resemblance in theory to the monist pantheism of neo-Platonism, on one hand, and to Vedantism, on the other, and in esoteric practices, to those in vogue among Magians, Buddhists, Yogis, and Christians. It had also evolved a view of life styled 'Wahadat al-Wajud' or unity of Being, finally systematized by Ibn al Arabia, although the more care-

ful among the sufis, under the inspiration furnished by Ghazzali, tried to give to every aspect of it a Quranic interpretation, and reconcile it to the Shariyah.

Introduction of Sufism in India

The early history of Sufism in India is enveloped in obscurity, but it could definitely be laid down that since the earliest times of Islam's contact with this country, Muslims with strong leanings towards the sufi style of life had begun to exert their influence in South India, Ceylon, Lakkadiv and Maldiv Islands in favour of purity of life. Of the three routes through which the Muslims came into India, the one through Khyber Pass proved to be the main entrance for muslim ascetics and wandering dervishes.

The Sufi movement in India received powerful impetus from the time of Shaykh Ali bin al-Hujwiri, who is popularly known in India as Data Ganj Bakhsh. Hujwir and Jalab are two villages near Ghazna. As he lived there for sometime after his arrival in India, he is called Hujwiri and Jalabi. Since he settled down in Lahore and died there, he is also known as Lahori. His most famous work is "Kashf-al-mahjub", which is considered to be the first book of Sufism in Persian. Jami in His Nafhat-ul-uns praises the book in the following words:

"Kashf-al-Mahjub is a well-known authoritative book on this subject in which the author has gathered together fine points of mystical theory"

Dara Shikuh in later times praises it thus:

"Ali Hujwiri's works are numerous; but Kashf-al-Mahjub tops all of them. He is a perfect preceptor and a guide in Sufism. No one else has written a better book on Sufism in Persian.

Hujwiri disliked the outward rites and ceremonies of the Sufis. He regarded these formal ceremonies as sin and hypocrisy. To adopt them, according to him was to place "oneself in a situation where there is the risk of being misunderstood".

Hujwiri passed the last period of his life in Lahore where he died in 1063 or 1701 A.D. After his death, his tomb became the Mecca of Millions of people. Once Khwaja Mu'inud-Din Chisti shut himself in a room by his tomb for forty days; and when on the expiry of the period, he was about to take leave, he recited the followig couplet:

"Thou art bestower of the treasures of both the worlds, and the manifestation of the Light of God! A perfect guide to the perfect, and a guide to the immature!

His biographers say that this is the reason why he became famous as "Gunj Bakhsh" i.e. bestower of treasure. The common people speak of him as, "Data Baksh".

Professor Nicholson has translated *Kashf-al-Mahjub* into English. In his introduction, he summarises Hujwiri's teachings in the following words:

"Although he was a Sunni, a Hanafite, Al Hujwiri like many Sufis before and after him, managed to reconcile his theology with an advanced type of mysticism in which the theory of annihilation (Fana) holds a dominant place, but he scarcely goes to such extreme lengths as would justify us in calling him a pantheist. He strenuously resists and pronounces as heretical the doctrine that human personality can be merged and extinguished in the being of God. He compares annihilation to burning by fire which transmutes the quality of all things to its own quality but leaves their essence unchanged. He agrees with his spiritual director al-Khuttali in adopting the theory of Junayd that 'sobriety' in the mystical acceptance of the term is preferable to 'intoxication'. He warns his readers often emphatically that no Sufis, not even those who attain the highest degree of holiness, are exempt from the obligation of obeying the religious law. In other points, such as the excitation of ecstasy by music and singing and the use of erotic symbolism in poetry, his judgment is more or less cautious. He defends all-Hallaj from the charge of being a magician, and asserts that his sayings are pantheistic only in appearance but condemns this doctrine as unsound. It is clear

that he is anxious to represent Sufism as the true interpretation of Islam, and it is equally certain that the interpretation is incompatible with the text".

Major Sufi Orders

Of the fourteen fairly well defined Sufi orders, four have exerted considerable influence in India. They are: (1) the Chishtiya (2) the Qadriya, (3) the Suharawardiya and (4) the Naqsh Bandiya. These orders are not like water-tight compartments. One may be initiated into the discipline of more than one order according to his urge for extension of knowledge:—

(1) Chistiya Order:

The founder of the Chishti order is Khawja Abu Ali Ishaq Shami Chishti. Migrating from Asia Minor, he arrived at Chisht which is in Khurasan and settled down there. It is why he is called Chishti. He was a disciple and a vicegerent of Mimsad Ali Dinwari.

Khawja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti of Ajmer is the sponsor of this Order in India. He is the most prominent figure in the line.

The chief characteristic of the Sufi Shaykhs of this order is the excessive love of God (Ishq). When the mind of a person is overpowered by the love of another, the latter seems always and at every place to be before his mind's eye, and every moment this love takes a deeper root in his heart. To stimulate this love, the saints of this order lay strong emphasis on 'Dhikr-e-Jali' (loud recitation) and have, according to their taste, devised different methods of recitation. Loud recitation, it is considered, produces warmth in the heart which fans the flame of love. They instruct their disciples to listen to 'Sama' (audition), but there are certain conditions governing it, and it is compulsory to observe them. Their belief is that the love of God is developed by recollection of God or by acts of supererogation or by other methods of worship, by audition, or by keeping company with the spiritual director.

Khawja Farid-ud-Din Attar has beautifully expressed the creed of the Chishtiya Order in the following couplet:

"Unbelief to the unbeliever! Faith to the faithful!

A twinge of thy love-pang is enough for the heart of Attar." Again he expresses himself thus:

O brother you should entirely become a victim
to the pangs of Love;
For the pang of love is the only remedy for your ailment!

The founder of the Chishtiya order in India, Khwaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti Sanjari, was born in the town of Sanjar in Sistan in 1142-43 A.D. As he advanced in years, he came under the influence of some of the great West Asian Sufis, particularly Shaykh Uthman Haruni and Shaykh Najmuddin Qubra. He had also the opportunity of being introduced to Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad, the founder of the Qadriya order, Shaykh Shahabuddin Suhrawardy, the founder of the Suhrawardiya order, and also to the latter's spiritual director Shaykh Diyauddin, and to Khwaja Auhaduddin Kirmani, Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani, Abu Said Tabrizi, and Shaykh Mahmud Isfahani—great names in Sufi hagiology. It was during his pilgrimage to Madina that he received the inspiration that his field of service lay not in West Asia, but in India, "from where", as the prophet had once observed in his lifetime, "cool breezes come to me", so much so, that after his visit to Sheikh Mahmud Isfahani, he announced: "I will now travel to the country where I have to lie down (be buried)".

Khwaja Sahib first came to Lahore; but the great Shaykh Al Hujwiri was already dead. He confined himself in a room close to his tomb for 40 days, and then left for Multan from where he came to Ajmer. Here he lived till his death in 1226 A.D. at the age of 90. His work in India among the poor and the down-trodden is so well-known, that even today people from every part of India throng every year at his resting place in Ajmer.

There were many deputies of the great Khawajas. They were sent to different places with a view to spreading, by example,

the values of Sufism throughout the length and breadth of India. When the kings of Delhi were busy in invading one place after another for the sake of crowns and thrones, these dwellers of Khankhas, darwishes, were engaged in winning the hearts of people. Among the great members of his Chishtiya order in India, particular mention needs to be made of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Khwaja Fariduddin Ganjshakar, Khwaja Nizamuddin Awlia, Amir Khusraw, Khawaja Nasiruddin Mahmud Chirag-i-Delhi, and Syed Muhammad Gesudaraz of Gulberga.

(ii) **Suhrawadiya order:**

The second order which exerted its influence on the Sufi movement in India is the Suhrawardiya order. Their history begins with the arrival of some of the deputies of Shahabuddin Umar Suhrawardi. Suhraward like Chisht is the name of a place which lies in Iraq midway between Hamadan and Zanzan. Shahabuddin Umar, his spiritual preceptor Shaykh Diyauddin Abu Najib, and the latter's Pir, Shaykh Wajihuddin were residents of the same place. That is why their order is known as the Suhrawardi Order. Shahabuddin Umar was born in 1144 A.D. and died in 1234 A.D.

The spread of this order in India was mainly due to Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariya Suharwardi, Shaykh Ahmad Mashuq, Ruknuddin and the noted world tourer and scholar Syed Jalaluddin popularly known as Makhdum Jahanian Jahan Gasht, the author of *Khazana-i-Jalali*, *Siraj-al-Hidaya* and *Jame-ul-Ulum*.

(iii) **Qadiriya order:**

The founder of this order is Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani. Jilan or Gilan is the name of a village south of the Caspian Sea where the Shykh was born. His year of birth is said to be 1077 A.D. He resided in Baghdad and passed away in 1166 A.D.

Three hundred years after the death of the founder of the Order, the Qadiriya Order was established in India. The basic principle of initiation in this order is that the attention of the mind

is turned away from everything save God; and sensuality, anger, and sins are fought and over-powered by self-denial and austerities.

The order was founded in India by Maqdhum Shaykh Muhammad, the tenth in the line of succession from the founder of the order in Baghdad. His work was carried on by his eldest son Maqdhum Shaykh Abdul Qadir, and subsequently by various others, chief of them being Shah Qumes; the founder of the Qumesiya section of the Qadiriya order, Mir Muhammad, commonly known as Mian Mir, the last named being one of the preceptors of Prince Dara Shikuh.

(iv) Naqshbandi Order:

The first saint of this order who came over to India is Khwaja Baqi Billah. He is the tenth in the line of succession to the founder of the Order—Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshband. He came to India at the order of his pir, and settled down in Delhi where he died three years later. The most renowned of this order was Shaykh Ahmed of Sirhind, styled "Mujjadid Alf-i-Thani", a powerful protagonist of the theory of "Wahadat-i-Shuhud" (apparentism) originally formulated by Shaykh Rukunuddin Ala'ud Dawla, challenging Ibn Arabi's theory of "Wahadat-al-Wajud" (Unity of Being). A notable figure in this order is the well-known theologian of Delhi Shah Waliullah, the author of "Hujjatulla-il-Baligha" and "Izalat-al-Khifa" who reconciled the theory of "Wahadat-i-Shuhud" of his predecessor Shaykh Ahmad of Sirhind to the theory of "Wahadat-al-Wajud" by arguing that in substance the two theories were but one and the same. His four sons, Shah Abdul Aziz, Shah Rafiuddin, Shah Abdul Qadir and Shah Abdul Ghani and a grandson of his, Shah Mohammad Ismail, were also distinguished members of this order.

Minor Sufi Orders:

Along with the four major orders referred to above, a number of minor orders were founded in India, the chief of them being (1) the Uwaysi order (2) the Madari order (3) the Shattari order and (4) the Qalandari order.

(1) Uwaysi Order:

This order is ascribed to Uways-al-Qarani who is said to have lived at Qaran, a village in Yaman, in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, but who could not pay a visit to him while alive. He is credited therefore to have received spiritual training from the spirit of the Prophet, so much so, that any one who avows that he has received spiritual insight from the spirit of a departed saint is also called Uwaysi.

There were a number of saints in India who were Uwaysi. Some of these founded separate orders, of their own. One of them is what is known as the Madari order.

(2) Madari Order:

The founder of this order is Badi-ud-Din Shah Madar. The views of hagiographers have been conflicting regarding the incidents of his life. There is a book entitled "Mirat-i-Madari" in the Imperial Library, Calcutta, which contains a sketch of his life. This book is said to have had for its sources the *Iman-i-Mahmud* whose author is believed to be Mahmud Kanturi, a deputy of Shah Madar.

(3) Shattari Order:

Another order is that founded by Abdullah Shattar who introduced the *shattari* method of mystic training. The word *Shattar* literally means 'fast-goer', and the Sufis have technically defined the Shattari system as a mystical practice by following which the state of 'annihilation' (*fana*) and subsistence (*baqa*) are speedily attained. As he had practised considerable austerity in attaining this state, he won the title of 'Shattar.' He is the disciple of Shaykh Muhammad Taifur who having bestowed on him the robe of deputyship, and conferring on him the title of 'Shattar,' directed him to go to India.

On his arrival in India, Abdullah Shattar settled down at Jaunpur. But before long his relations with its sultan became strained. So, he left Jaunpur for Mandu, the capital of Malwa, where he died in 1428 A.D. Among his successors, the most not-

able figures were those of Shah Mohammad Gahwth of Gwalior and Shah Wajihuddin of Gujrat.

(4) Qalandari Order:

The term Qalandar has been variously defined. The author of 'Risala-i-Ghowthia' says that in Syriac, 'qalandar' is one of the names of Allah. Some people regard the words Sufi and Qalandar as synonymous. Some hold that when a Sufi attains perfection, he is regarded as 'qalandar'. Others think that the word qalandar is derived from the Persian term 'Kalantar,' the chief man. A few are of opinion that this word is derived from the Turkish term 'qal' which means clean or pure.

Says Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir Samnani, "A Qalandar is he who has severed all ties from the world and has attained complete outward and inward detachment. A qalandar seeks God only and renounces all interests in this world, as well as, in the world hereafter. He neither desires for any reward in this world, nor does he wish for any recompense or requital in the next world. He is a seeker of God alone and of nothing else."

The faqirs of Qalandari order have the hair of their head, beard, moustaches and eye-brows removed. The reason given for this clean shave is that all the hairs of the founder of the Order, Abdul Aziz, had fallen off due to advanced old age. So, his disciples imitate him by making their faces and features resemble his. The order was founded in India by Sayyid Khidr Rumi who was the deputy of Abdul Aziz Qalandar. The notable names of this order are Syed Najmuddin Ghawsud-Dahar-Qalandar of Malwa, and Shah Sharfuddin Bu Ali Qalandar of Paniput.

These minor orders even as the major ones had one thing common between them—the belief that the entire universe exists because God is Love. Love is the great Law of existence. Love, according to the Sufi doctrine is God's own nature, and because man exists within God's universal Being, it follows that Love is the fundamental law at work in man. That is why man's greatest experiences are those which are expressed in love. The

Sufi's primary aim, therefore, is to obey, by steadfast discipline, the greatest of divine commandments:

"Love one another and love everything everywhere"

The first requirement, according to the Sufis, is that we should love God, the Lord, above all His outer manifestations. Because God is love, the more we worship Him and keep the heart joyfully absorbed in love for Him, the more will our own love too be glorified.

The second requirement of life is that we shall love every soul on earth. In God's presence, hatreds, resentments, criticisms, and judgements have no place. He is the Spirit in every soul, and it is His spirit in every one that we must love. It is the privilege of love to stretch forth a hand to lift up into light the man who is in darkness.

The Sufi orders, both major and minor, spread themselves in medieval times all over India, and through their essential message of love and purity of life brought solace to many a weary heart, and laboured among people in all conditions of life to promote the spirit of fellow feeling and mutual understanding and thereby accelerate the pace of that cultural synthesis which was the glory of medieval India.

PART THREE

IMPACT OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

CHAPTER XIII

IMPACT OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

The discovery of a new route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498 was an event of tremendous significance as it brought India into intimate contact with a new type of civilization. When the European nations appeared on the Indian scene, an equilibrium among the forces working in Mediaeval India had been restored. But the tremendous impact of the new civilization upset the balance and released new forces, which in course of time, revolutionised every aspect of life.

Racial Impact:

The first among the nations to take advantage of this discovery was Portugal which jutting into the Atlantic Ocean had bred a sturdy race of seamen attuned to the perils of maritime life. The contact with the Portuguese which lasted for nearly a century and a half introduced some new factors which changed materially the economic and social conditions in their settlements. They came to India for purposes of trade; but the Political condition in Malabar where they first established their settlements kindled in them imperialistic ambitions. In order to perpetuate their influence, one of the "Viceroys", Albuquerque, started some colonies consisting of a mixed population of Indians and Portuguese. He encouraged inter-marriages between the people of the two races and also employed Indians in the army. Some of the Indian rulers changed their old methods of warfare and

used fully firearms against their Indian rivals. It is said that the Zamorin of Cochin and the Rajah of Cannanore had under them fine artillery, manned by trained experts. The Portuguese introduced into the country improved methods of cultivation to meet the increasing demands for spices, cocoanuts and other products. They also introduced new products like tobacco and the Kishu tree which is even now known as the Feringhee tree. The extensive foreign trade increased the prosperity of the people and helped them to adopt some of the businesses of the foreigners. Magnificent buildings and houses on European model were built in some of the big cities like Cochin, Calicut and Quilon. The colleges started to impart religious knowledge to the new converts became centres of Latin and Portuguese studies. The Portuguese language became popular. St. Francis Xavier, one of the most remarkable evangelists who came to India, compiled a Malayalam version of Catechism, and this may be said to mark the beginning of a new movement of translation from foreign languages which is still one of the important methods by which Indian vernaculars are being enriched. The rulers of Cochin acquired proficiency in the Portuguese language and adopted it in diplomatic correspondence even after the Portuguese power was destroyed. But, in spite of all this, the Portuguese influence on Indian culture was negligible.

By the middle of the seventeenth century the Portuguese had to yield to their more vigorous and more powerful rivals, the Dutch, who established their factories in Malabar and a few other places. But they were more interested in the spice trade of the East Indies and neglected their settlements in India. They however actively encouraged Indian industry with the help of the artisans who were encouraged to come to India. They succeeded in producing fine Cotton fabrics and also improved the system of dyeing and printing. But even the Dutch like the Portuguese, did not make any striking contribution to the development of Indian culture.

The English came into contact with India from the commencement of the seventeenth century. The defeat of the Spanish

Armada in 1588 gave a stimulus to the maritime enterprise of the British, and Queen Elizabeth signed a Charter on the last day of 1600 granting the English East India Company a monopoly of trade in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, except the territories occupied by the Portuguese and the Spaniards. From this small beginning, the Company passed through many years of prosperity and adversity, and by the middle of the nineteenth century established its political supremacy over the whole of India.

The French also, inspired by the British example, wanted to establish trade connections with India. A French East India Company was formed in 1644 under the inspiring and energetic leadership of Colbert, the famous Minister of Louis XIV. This was followed by the establishment of factories at Surat in 1668 and at Masulipatnam in 1669. Pondichery was founded in 1674, and this became the capital of French settlements. The French also established factories at Mahe, Karaikal, Chandranagore and other places. Dupleix, the greatest of French governors, realising that the political condition in India presented splendid opportunities for establishing French dominion in India played for high stakes, and interfered in the quarrels among the native rulers. For sometime his influence with the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nawab of the Carnatic was great, and he seemed to be marching along the road to great imperial triumph. But there was a turn in the tide, and with the steady success of the British, the French failed miserably and finally retained only Pondichery, Mahe, and Karaikal. These remained as important centres of French influence and culture until very recent times when the French relinquished their hold on their possessions and permitted their merger with the Indian Union.

During the seventeenth century, India came into contact also with the Danes who founded the Danish East India company in 1616. They established a factory at Tranqubar in 1620 and another at Sarampore in 1755. In 1723 the Austrian emperor granted a charter to an association of merchants in Flanders which traded with India under the name of Ostend Company.

Another Austrian Company was chartered in 1755. A Swedish Company was also started in 1731.

Thus during the two and a half centuries following the discovery of Vasco da Gama, India came into active contact with a number of European nations. But these contacts were essentially commercial, and did not lead to far-reaching cultural results. It is through the British who finally established their supremacy over India that western ideas began to flow into the country.

The racial contacts in the early company days were rather disappointing. The British merchants lived as an alien aristocracy with little or no social contact with the Indians. Hence the borrowings on either side were confined to some details of dress, food and a few other things. With the increase in the power and prestige of the Company, there was a gradual change. The contact widened with the assumption of power by the British Crown. But this did not forge any sympathetic contacts at the group level. Indeed with the growth of the spirit of nationalism in the land, the relations between the rulers and the ruled grew increasingly strained resulting finally in the severance of political ties in 1947. But contacts between sympathetic British individuals and Indians tell a different tale. Many Indians were attracted to western way of life and copied them enthusiastically. Some of the Indians who visited England and other European countries imported into India western ideas and western ways of life. The result has been transformation of social life in almost every direction.

Educational Impact:

The culture of a nation finds expression in its literature and hence the most important channel through which western ideas flowed into the country was the western system of education. When the British gained control over Bengal, the inspiration of the classical age of Indian culture had become dormant. Higher education was imparted in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, which, withdrawn from common life, had produced a literature of elaboration rather than development. Hindu and Muslim educa-

tion were closely linked up with dogmatic theology which, being based on unchallenged authority, had paralysed creative energy and stifled the free spirit of enquiry and progressive change. In short, the educational system resembled that of Europe during the Middle Ages. Many Englishmen were convinced that the grave social abuses prevalent in society were mainly due to the ignorance of the people which could be removed only by English education, the "key which will open to them a world of new ideas. These European enthusiasts were supported by Raja Ram Mohan Roy of Bengal and his associates. The Orientalists on the other hand, preferred the classical languages of India. The whole controversy was brought to an end by the brilliant but one-sided report of Lord Macaulay who recommended the adoption of English as the medium of higher education. It was therefore resolved in 1835 that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India and that all funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone". In 1844 it was decided that for public employment in every case, preference should be given to those who had been educated in Western science and were familiar with the English language.

In course of time the study of English became popular and English books were sold in thousands. A number of private schools were opened, many of which were run by Christian missionaries who rendered splendid pioneering work in spreading education in the early days. The year 1857 which witnessed the birth of the three Universities of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta was another important landmark in the history of western education in India. Since then, a large number of schools and colleges have been catering to the educational needs of the people.

There were of course many defects in the British system of education. The sole aim of study has been that of passing examinations, and thus qualifying for congenial and profitable employment. The teachers were condemned to become "merely

purveyors of a certain article to a class of purchasers". The result was "while we trim the wick of intellect with mechanical accuracy, we have hardly learned how to light up the lamp of the soul". The system, in the words of Lord Curzon, was "one of active but often misdirected effort, over which, like some evil phantom, seemed to hover the monstrous and maleficent spirit of cram." No serious attempts were made to secure the services of men of character and high ideals, because teaching in India, though highly esteemed as the noblest of professions, had always been the sorriest of trades. Thus ill-equipped teachers and students without aptitude pulled down the standards of education. This had a sterilising effect on culture and many who distinguished themselves in examinations found themselves misfits in life. This is particularly bad in the democratic set up of today, because history has shown that it is dangerous to teach people to read, unless they can be trained to think also.

The most serious objection to the system of education has been its secular character. Religion has lost its importance but nothing of equal validity has been allowed to take its place. This is a serious defect in a country like India and the first reactions have been deplorable. The Indian who is essentially religious finds something missing. Religious knowledge properly imparted has always enriched life, elevated human character, and stabilised society by its values. This policy of religious neutrality has destroyed this safe anchor of life and the people are left to drift in the stormy sea. The indiscipline, disorder and aimlessness characteristic of modern social life in India are in part, due to this education without a spiritual background.

But with all its shortcomings, English education has been a boon to the country. It has put an end to intellectual stagnation, and opened the gateway to European knowledge. The fertilising flow of western ideas widened the mental horizon and generated a spirit of healthy discontent. The corrosive action of new ideas undermined the strength of conservatism and superstition in the country and ushered in new hopes to those who had been, from time immemorial, excluded from the blessings of higher op-

portunities of life. The opportunity and the urge to improve gave rise to a member of social reform movements which transformed a society matted with caste and custom. The ideals of individual liberty and democratic freedom gained currency and there was a steady progress along the road to democracy. The rise and progress of the freedom movement in the country was in a large measure due to the spread of western ideas of liberty and nationality. The most uncompromising critics of British imperialism in India were some of the best products of this system of education. It produced not only clerks and petty administrators but also great leaders of men in every walk of life who wished to create "an European society with Indian spiritual background."

The Muslims were at first opposed to the new learning and were content to continue the old system, because they felt that the new system could only open new avenues of official and professional life and could not impart education according to Islamic ideals. Even Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938), who was a great poet and philosopher of recent times, condemned western civilization as essentially bad, unjust and greedy, in spite of his education in England and Germany. He was much impressed by the criticisms of European civilization by Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Spengler, Karl Marx and others. His view of western civilization is best expressed in the following couplets:

"The glitter of modern civilization dazzles the sight;
But it is only a clever piecing together of false gems.
The wisdom of science in which the wise ones of the
West took such pride
Is but a warring sword in the bloody hand of greed
and ambition."

Syed Akbar Hussain, who wrote under the pen-name of Akbar, was another critic of western civilization. Rediculing western civilization as purely materialistic, he says: "The days are past when they searched for the light of God in their hearts; now they test what phosphorus there is in the bones". Condemning western ideas of progress, he writes: "the devil invented a new way

to bring down man; he said, let us give them a taste for "Progress".

But some far-sighted Muslim leaders were not blind to the advantages of western education. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, for example, realised that the British Empire had come to stay and that it was in the best interests of the Muslims that they should march with the times. He was convinced that there was a need for a rationalistic interpretation of the Quran which had been distorted by "empty distinctions and subtleties, metaphysical propositions, and arguments of logic." He wanted that his co-religionists should follow the spirit rather than the letter of the teachings of the Prophet who advised his followers to "seek knowledge even though as far as China". He suggested a compromise formula of imparting the new learning in institutions established by Muslims for Muslims, and started in 1875 the Anglo-Oriental College. The main object was to create an urge among the Muslims to learn what was best in western science and arts, and make modern knowledge a living force among them by a practical application of new knowledge to all departments of life and thought.

A number of schools and colleges were started for the Muslims in different parts of the country. In course of time, however, they had to conform to the standards prescribed by the Government and Universities imparting knowledge to other communities in India. Hence the Muslims came largely under western influence in dress, social habits, manner of living, mental make-up, etc.

Impact on Indian Languages

The impact on the Indian vernaculars or languages of the various forces released by the British contact with the country was profound. The vernaculars which had already assumed, at the advent of the British, the status of literary languages may be grouped under two heads, one belonging to the North which had grown out of Sanskrit and the Prakrits or the Apabrahmsha dialects of Sanskrit, consisting of Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati,

Kashmiri, Hindi, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi and Urdu, the other to the South, comprising the languages of Dravidian origin viz., Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam. The emergence of the North Indian languages may be assigned to the period beginning from the 8th century A.D. to the 14th century of the Christian era. As spoken tongues of different groups of people in the North who had eventually succumbed to the Aryan domination from the North-west, some of them were current even in pre-Aryan times. But their development into literary languages took place during the period just suggested. The Punjabi, Hindi and Oriya showed signs of development from the 8th century onward, the Bengali from the 10th, the Kashmiri and the Urdu from the 13th. As against the Northern group, the languages of the South had more ancient origins. Tamil and Kannada, in particular, were current as vehicles of literary expression long before their contact with Sanskrit, and possessed fully developed literatures of their own by 1000 A.D.

In the early period, the themes for literary treatment in the North Indian languages were mostly drawn from the Sanskritic traditions derived from Epics and Puranas, although lyrics, folk songs, and ballads were also produced. The Southern group of languages, which had their own system of writing to follow, eventually did come under the influence of the Sanskritic traditions. But Tamil, in particular, was more conservative than the rest in its borrowings. Still, alongside of the themes derived from religious lore and traditions of their own historic past, subjects of Sanskritic origin also came in for treatment in an increasing measure as the Aryan influence deepened in the South.

In the mediaeval period beginning with the advent of Islam into India, a wider field of choice of subjects was opened especially before the North Indian languages. New forms and techniques were attempted and new themes drawn from the Persian and Arabic traditions. In fact, Persian which was the official language of the Moghul Empire exercised so powerful an influence on the different North Indian languages that they stand today enriched by an appreciable volume of vocabulary and idiom having

been embedded into their texture. It was, however, different in the South, although, even there, the borrowings from the Persian language and usage cannot be regarded as negligible.

The noteworthy feature about this development was that, so far, not much worthy of mention was attempted in prose. Every literary venture was invariably expressed in verse. The idea prevailed that subjects of serious import could only be expressed either in Sanskrit or Persian and these were, therefore, the two languages employed in learned discourses on philosophy, religion, ethics, and history.

One of the lasting results of the impact of the languages brought into the country by the Muslim races on the indigenous languages was the rise of a mixed language under the name of Hindustani or Urdu which, taking its rise from Khari Boli of the region round Delhi, has made such a remarkable progress as vehicle of literary expression that it was thought appropriate to employ it as the medium of instruction at the University stages in the Osmania University of Hyderabad from the time of its inception in 1918.

With the dawn of the British rule in India, and during the period covered by their rule, marvellous changes have been wrought in the different languages both of the North and the South. Of the languages which first reacted favourably to the influences of the West were Bangali and Urdu. The rest followed in due course. The result expresses a tremendous renaissance in Indian literature. Much of the early literary attempts in every language were no doubt imitative in character. But with the advance of time, a huge volume of creative literature also has been produced. New literary motives and stylistic modes have come into play, and various new art-forms adopted, such as the novel, biography, the essay, the lyric with all its sub-divisions, metric forms including the blank verse, and journalistic writing. It is through these various forms that the genius of India is expressing itself at this moment, and is bringing to light and reviving for the present-day world literary treasures from her glorious past, on the one hand, and reacting on the other, in vary-

ing degree to numerous intellectual tendencies from the West, some wholesome and some disturbing. The stage is still transitional. But with the recent reorganisation of states of the Indian Union on the linguistic basis, the Indian languages have an opportunity to disclose greater potentialities for progress in the days to come.

Feminism:

The impact of western ideas, by exposing the dark and bright aspects of the life of Indian women, has expressed itself in various reform movements introducing revolutionary changes in the status and outlook of women during the last hundred years as had never been witnessed before. Even by the beginning of the present century, most women were steeped in ignorance and superstition and had no privileges except those permitted by their husbands or parents. Seclusion (Purdah) prevented many from taking a full share in social activities. It was clear, as the Maharani of Baroda told the All India Women's Educational Conference in 1927, that "If women are to take their part in the raising of the tone of social life, if they are to understand the duties and responsibilities for which their sons must be trained, the purdah must go. If women are to have that freedom of mind and variety of interests without which there can be no joyous life, the purdah must go". Child marriage, early maternity, the hardship of widows, polygamy, denial of share in family property, and the Devadasi system were some of the other social evils which degraded them and added to their misery. At the same time, the free life led by the European women and Indian Christian ladies presented a challenge which was taken up by social reformers like Iswar Chander Vidyasagar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, B. M. Malabari, Justice Ranade, Prof. Karve, K. Natarajan, Pandita Ramabai, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, Sister Subbalakshmi and others.

Another important reform was in the direction of women's education which was in a very deplorable condition. Even as late as 1835, William Adam reported that: "In fact, a feeling is alleged to exist in the majority of Hindu families, principally cherished by the women and not discouraged by men, that a girl

taught to write and read will soon become a widow...and the belief is also generally entertained that intrigue is facilitated by a knowledge of letters on the part of females...The Mohammedans participate in all the prejudices of the Hindus against the institution of their female offspring". It redounds to the credit of these enthusiasts of female education that they were able to overcome the hostility, apathy, ridicule and criticism of the people and spread education among women. It must also be acknowledged that Christian missions in India have done more than any other agencies, not excluding even the government, to educate women. During the last three decades, the progress of women's education has been phenomenal and women have thus been helped to distinguish themselves in all branches of education.

Once this key to progress was given to them, progress in other directions was only a question of time. Child marriage and infanticide have been prohibited. Purdah is slowly disappearing. Polygamy has been made illegal. Women's right to family property and to divorce have been legally recognised. They are to-day enjoying all rights and privileges on a basis of equality with men, and they are playing a significant role in different branches of national life.

Mechanism and Transport

The development of roads and railways in India is particularly important, as it introduced significant economic and social changes. Good roads connected main centres of industries and commerce, which lay scattered through the length and breadth of this vast sub-continent, and encouraged the industrialists to exploit natural resources and increase production. It shattered the isolation of the villages and assisted political consolidation and unity. It also served as one of the most powerful factors in destroying social barriers and caste distinctions, and promoting social harmony by making travellers belonging to the highest and lowest classes travel together.

Progress of science has further annihilated distance and has brought together the peoples of the world by providing ample

facilities of travel. These travels, besides widening their mental outlook have developed a spirit of enterprise and initiative to profit by the newly acquired experience. Those who have profited by these travels now play a vital role in all fields of national life.

Printing Press

The printing press was another powerful channel through which western knowledge spread in India. It was first introduced into India in the latter half of the 16th century by the Portuguese. Its importance as an instrument for the dissemination of knowledge is obvious. It enabled the production of cheap books in large numbers and carried knowledge to the very door of even the poor people. The British knew the power of the press, and so, they were anxious to keep the people ignorant about it. It is said that when the Nizam of Hyderabad once expressed a desire to see some European machinery, the British Resident sent him a printing press and an air pump. But when the Government of Fort William came to know of this, they rebuked the Resident for what they regarded as an act of indiscretion on his part. They feared that it might result in the spread of sedition, and so advised the Resident to have it destroyed.

But the reluctance of the imperial masters could not stop the irresistible flow of ideas, any more than Canute's orders could stop the waves. The printing press soon occupied its legitimate place in the life of the people and spread knowledge among them. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian to recognise its value and make full use of it for propaganda purposes.

Cinema and Radio

The Cinema and Radio are among some of the important channels through which western ideas have spread among the masses, most of whom are illiterate. Besides being sources of entertainment, they have been one of the most powerful agencies of propaganda. It may be said that very few young men and women have escaped the influence of the cinemas, and in most cases social etiquette, fashions of dress, ideas and even language

and accents betray the influence of the cinemas. Radios and cinemas have in fact transformed the whole structure of Indian life, and have forged a close communion of thought between educated Indians and the westerners.

Economic impact

The economic impact was not less striking. When the Western nations came to India, the economic organisation of the country, in spite of its defects, was well advanced. Hence, the coming of the European traders opened a very flourishing "seller's Market" in India and goods were exported in large quantities through new and profitable channels. Pyrard, a Portuguese writer of the seventeenth century, says that "every one from the cape of Good Hope to China, man and woman, is clothed from head to foot" in Indian textiles. This statement, though exaggerated, suggests that Indian garments were much in demand. This popularity was mainly due to its fine quality. An Englishman writing in 1867 says, "The Indian taste in decoration is in the highest degree refined. There is no waste in ornamentation. . . . nor is there any lavish expenditure of ornament which is often purchased at the expense of comfort". But the Indian method of production and commercial organisation were based on isolated and self-sufficing village organisation and were confined to specific classes and areas.

The expansion of British Empire in India coincided with the progress of Industrial Revolution and India was intended to be a dumping ground for British industrial products. This naturally resulted in the ruin of Indian industries.

The Laissez Faire policy of the British Government led to disastrous results. The Free Trade policy would be advantageous in a country where the capitalists were enterprising and technical skill abundant and highly advanced. But in India, the investors were not venturesome, capital was shy and the artisans had not taken advantage of the progress of science and modernisation of industries. Hence Indian industries could not face competition from the more advanced countries and the Indian artisan was crushed

by the cheap machine-made goods. Sir Charles Trevelyan who served as the Finance Member of the Government of India, giving evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1840 deplored that "Dacca which was the Manchester of India, has fallen off from a flourishing town to a poor and small one; the distress there has been very great indeed." Soon the British realised that the policy of depressing indigenous industries was not advantageous to an exporting country like England. Attempts were, therefore, made to develop Indian industries, but lack of technical skill and commercial initiative and the adverse tariff policy of the Government, made economic progress painfully slow.

The First World war revealed both the potentialities and defects of Indian industries. The Government was made to realise that the growing demand for a more constructive economic policy could no longer be ignored. A number of Commissions were appointed to study the various problems connected with Indian industries and some of the recommendations were implemented. With the changes in the administrative set up after the Mountagu-Chelmsford Reforms, Government's policy became more and more responsive to public opinion. The progress of science in India, liberal investment of capital in industries, increasing availability of technical personnel, and the progress of the Swadeshi movement accelerated the tempo of industrial progress, and by the time the British relinquished their power, India was recognised as one of the important industrial countries of the East.

Thus as a result of the strong economic impact the old outworn economic organisation was transformed into the more modern organisation of high capitalism characterised by economic unification, predominance of money economy, and substantial commercialisation. There was almost a revolution resulting in the replacement of a non-progressive economic order based on status and custom by a dynamic one based on contract, increased specialisation and large-scale production.

This has helped the emergence of a small middle-class consisting of owners of landed estates and urban property, merchants and members of various professions. A capitalist class consisting of enterprising converts to the new creed mastered western techniques of production and led the way for an industrial revolution. Their phenomenal success and infectious enthusiasm encouraged other business men and scientific experts to invest capital and forge ahead in the economic sphere, abandoning primitive methods of agricultural and industrial production. The Pax Britannica and various administrative measures have brought about a revolution in the methods of production. Even the tradition-bound and unchanging villager has been jerked out of his old groove, and has been made to feel the urge for a better life. In short, the great progress made under the first Five Year Plan after India attained independence, is, in a large measure, due to the new outlook on life which tries to hasten the advent of a new order without altogether abandoning the old.

Communism:

The growth of capitalist economy however, has raised new problems about the sharing of profits among the various elements of society. The capitalists' greed for maximum profits, the labourers' demand for equitable distribution of income, discontent, disillusionment of the middle class, growing unemployment and unrest and other inherent contradictions in capitalist economy became more and more pronounced. Hence the youth of the country became interested in the great experiments in the reorganisation of society on communistic ideals. Karl Marx came to be regarded as a Messiah and Communist literature was read with great interest and enthusiasm. A branch of the Communist International was set up in 1920 in order to disseminate communist ideals. Russian literature flowed into the country and some Indians were even given training at Moscow in Communist technique of propaganda. In 1923 Communist groups were started at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Lahore and Cawnpore. Many brilliant young men joined the Communist Party and dedicated themselves to the spread of communism in India. Since then, the

Communist Party has slowly gained strength in the country, and today it is actually running the Government in the Kerala State.

Administrative Impact:

The administrative impact was of special importance, because the Pax Britannica created the climate necessary for a proper appreciation of the greatness of the British and Indian cultures. With the decline of the Mughal authority, the administrative machinery rapidly broke down resulting in great confusion. The British had first to restore order and, not having a sufficient number of men with the necessary knowledge of the people of India and their institutions, they were forced to adopt the existing machinery to meet their requirements. They scrupulously avoided making innovations and the guiding principle was: "when it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change". Even as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Marquis of Wellesley protested against the commercial policy of his masters and regretted that "India was ruled not from a palace but a counting house, not with the ideas of a prince but with those of a retail dealer in muslin and indigo."

Public conscience in England was shocked and attempts were made from time to time to remedy the situation. One of the important steps to improve the administration was the introduction of a scheme of Local Self-government on the model of the English County Councils and Rural District Boards by Lord Ripon during the years 1883 to 1885 A.D. This measure was intended primarily as a measure of political and popular education rather than to improve the administration. This was a very important move in the right direction because local self-governing institutions are the best training ground for democratic administration.

The leaders of the country who had seen the benefits of the Parliamentary system of government clamoured for the introduction of such institutions in India also. But the British were unwilling to do anything in that direction and even as late as 1909 Lord Morley declared: "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a par-

liamentary system in India, I for one, would have nothing to do with it." Even after the passing of the Government of India Act of 1919 and 1935 which introduced Dyarchy and Provincial autonomy respectively, the British retained the substance of power and parted only with the shadow.

But even these limited reforms were useful as providing a good training ground to the people and the leaders. During their operation a number of public men received valuable training in the art of administration and in the conduct of business in the legislature. People became more and more convinced about the excellence of British Parliamentary institutions, and the present constitution, in spite of vital differences, embodies the spirit of the British system.

The British system of administration also produced a galaxy of administrators who showed a remarkable sense of duty, discipline and diligence and tried their best to promote the welfare of the people. It developed a uniform system of administration and unified India as one administrative unit. It established peace and order in a country distracted by frequent wars and consequent insecurity to life and property. Lord Northbrooke speaking at a State banquet on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales, remarked with great justification that British Empire in India "means that all its subjects shall live at peace with one another; that every one of them shall be free to grow rich in his own way, provided his way be not a criminal way; that every one of them shall be free to hold and follow his own religious beliefs without assailing the religious beliefs of the people, and to live unmolested by his neighbour".

But the most important result was the ending of arbitrary judicial authority exercised by earlier rulers and the introduction of the "rule of law". There were no doubt some shortcomings in administration of Justice. But the system emphasised equality before law and guaranteed judicial remedy even for the lowest against the most powerful, and the most influential in a country where penalties and laws to be administered varied with class

and status. It thus helped the growth of a professional judicial hierarchy which made the people look up to those courts as sheet-anchor of people's liberty. Even the worst critics of British administration have paid a tribute to the efficiency, integrity and sense of justice of these courts.

Political Impact: Indian Nationalism

Another important result of contact with the West was the growth of the idea of Indian nationalism. India had no doubt developed a strong sense of cultural unity but the concept of political nationality was new to it. The idea shaped itself as the result of British imperialism, as it succeeded in suppressing forces of disorder and establishing peace and order, developing of means of transport and communication, introducing an uniform system of administration and spreading western ideas and ideals in the land. This nationalism grew, partly through wounded pride excited by the aggressive side of western culture and partly in sympathetic response to western political nationalism demonstrating by example the value of self-rule or swaraj.

Surendranath Banerjee's idea of uniting the people of India on the basis of common ideals and aspirations was derived mainly from Mazzini. Lala Lajpat Rai tells us that "the nationalist calendar of great men followed by young India contained such names as those of Washington, Cavour, Mazzini, Bismarck, Kossuth, Emmeth, Parnell by the side of Pratap, Ramdas, Guru Govind Singh, Sivaji, Tipu Sultan and the Rani of Jhansi." They also followed the western technique of political agitation through the press, platform, political pamphlets, mass meetings, mass petitions etc. The terrorist movement was inspired by Russian nihilists and Kossuth's advocacy of violence. Even the names of political parties like the National Congress, and the Home Rule League, and political slogans were copied from those of political associations in western countries. British statesmen like Gladstone and Burke had also their share in giving shape and direction to Indian nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi was influenced by the Bible and writings of Tolstoy and others. Hence even such

a valiant fighter against British imperialism as Lala Lajpat Rai acknowledged that "British rule in India has its brighter side. Young India has drunk deep from the springs of liberty and the rights of man as embodied in English history and literature; it has imbibed the spirit of modern civilization, epitomised in the activity and energy of the West....".

Religious impact:

Still another channel through which western ideas flowed into the country was Christianity. This religion was introduced into the country from very early times and there was an organised Church in South India from the sixth century. But active Christian missionary activity began with the coming of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. In course of time a number of missions belonging to different churches were at work with the result that Christians in India formed an influential and important minority.

At the time India came into active contact with Christianity, the high principles of Hinduism were practised only by a few intellectuals and the masses were steeped in superstition. The contradictions between Hindu basic ideas and actual practice became glaring when it was confronted with the proselytizing Christian religion. Some, who were dazzled by the Christian doctrines, embraced the new religion with enthusiasm and condemned strongly the practices of the religion they had abandoned. But many tried to discover the fundamental teachings of Hinduism and adapt them to suit modern needs. Thus the spread of Christian religion and ideals stimulated reform movements to cast off the excrescences inconsistent with the spirit of Hinduism and western culture. The Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, Rama Krishna Mission, etc., were only manifestations of this new urge for a transvaluation of values and to restore the glory of Hinduism.

These movements led to far reaching social reforms which introduced a social revolution. Hindu social organisation, unlike that of the West, is a socio-religious system in which the rules

governing the Caste system, property, marriage, family life, etc., had a religious basis and sanction. The collective social institutions completely absorbed the individual, and any individual progress inconsistent with group interest could never be tolerated. The new ideas and humanitarian principles of christianity weakened the grip of religion on institutions and started a number of social reform movements. Class arrogance, caste exclusiveness, superstitions, traditional beliefs etc. were withering before a new spirit of social democracy and reform movements have brought about a startling reformation of Hindu society. The progress of these reform movements has been facilitated by the services rendered by enlightened Hindus and religious reformers in the past who strongly protested against these social evils as being opposed to the true spirit of Hinduism.

Thus the diffusion of new knowledge, the extension of means of communication, modernisation of the economic set up and the spread of western ideas have profoundly affected every department of life and have changed the face of the country. Above all, it has created an intellectual stir, a scientific and progressive outlook and a cultural inspiration which have enabled the Indian to shed off his conservatism and march along new paths of progress. This new outlook which may lead to a successful synthesis of western ideas of progress with India's spiritualism is the most important legacy of this tremendous cultural impact.

CHAPTER XIV

LAW IN MODERN INDIA

John Austin said in his 39th lecture delivered about the year 1831: "I am far from thinking that the law can ever be so condensed and simplified that any considerable portion of the community may know the whole or much of it. But I think that it may be so condensed and simplified that lawyers may know it." It would be reckless for any lawyer to make a similar assertion about the existing Indian law. The purpose of the following brief summary is, however, to convey information, however imperfect, about the salient features of the law in modern India which is our most valuable heritage.

India is now the mistress of her destinies. To a casual observer, therefore, it would appear rather odd at first sight that she should retain, in the main, the legal system and the institutions which the British had imposed upon her. A little reflection, however, would show that this phenomenon is not unique, but is an illustration of the working of certain historical laws. "Innumerable examples" says Alan Gledhill, "show that neither national, nor any analogous sentiment are offended by the adoption of the laws and institutions of other people. In so far as a people has no written law, no effective tribunals to enforce law, and no effective legislatures to enact new laws, it will readily absorb foreign laws." This fact can be demonstrated by the reception of law in Continental Europe and the importation, within the past hundred years, of the legal system derived from the Napoleonic

Codes in Tsarist Russia, China, Japan and several South American States. The most recent examples is that of Ethiopia, where a Commission is engaged in framing for that country a code directly inspired by the Western European models.

When, by a combination of historical events, the British traders found themselves rulers of vast stretches of India, they were brought face to face with the hard and practical problem of governing the peoples which had come under their sway. What then was the law to be applied? International usage dictated that the most practical mode was to apply, as far as it was feasible, the law by which the people themselves had been accustomed to be governed. It was, however, soon realised that there were no effective legislatures, and that the indigenous legal principles available in writing were hardly adequate to meet the problems set by the age. To fill up the gaps, therefore, the new rulers imported the law of England which they believed to be the 'true embodiment of everything that is excellent, with such modifications as were warranted by local conditions. The device proved acceptable, because there was no obvious alternative, and since it was essentially based on expediency, rather than on a desire to impose British culture on India.

The point of time marks the introduction of the basic principles of English law into India in order to govern the dealings of the subjects *inter se* in agricultural and trading matters. The natural concomitant was the supply of the basis of the laws of England to govern new activities when mechanically propelled vehicles were introduced and industry developed. The march of time enlarged the sphere of activities and as the practice of setting rules relating to these matters at international conferences increased, the tendency was for the new Indian laws to be in harmony not only with the new laws of England, but the new laws of the modern nations.

By 1833 the legislative map of India presented a varied and motley appearance, "Not only did the law of each Presidency vary in certain respects from that of every other, but

there were wide differences between the Muffasal laws of the three Presidencies. The Provincial Regulations were not identical, and there were inevitable divergencies of opinion between tribunals administering a law, the greater part of which had received no more precise definition than "justice, equity and good conscience", for it had transpired that there was a remarkable dearth of indigenous legal principles upon which to base judgments in the cases coming before the Muffasal Courts."

The law Member was added to the Governor-General's Council and the right to legislate by Regulation was abolished in 1833. The Government of India Act of 1833 laid down that it was 'expedient that such laws as may be applicable to all classes should be enacted'. Lord Macaulay, the first law Member, presided over a Law Commission which was empowered to enquire into existing laws and codes. He enunciated the policy: "uniformity where you can have it, diversity where you must have, but in all cases certainty." The year marks the coming into being of the first All India Legislature. It was inherent in its constitution that the tempo of legislation would lag behind its needs. Moreover the legislative process was not in accordance with any preconceived plan but was piecemeal. Priority was given by the Law Member to the needs of the commoner types of cases in the Muffasal Courts, in which the law applicable was not certain.

The law Commission published its report in 1840 which recommended that the general law should be based on English law and maintained that the personal law of the Hindus and Muslims should not be interfered with. A second Law Commission, sitting in London, which included two members of the first Commission, decided that, excluding Hindu and Muslim law, a body of substantive law should be enacted for India as a whole. The third Commission commenced its work in 1861 and produced the Indian Succession Act, 1865. Drafts on Contract, Negotiable Instruments, Evidence, Transfer of Property and Criminal Law followed, but by now the Indian Legislature showed its spirit of independence. The objections, when reported to London, were rejected by the Commissioners, and the directions of the Secretary of State

to the Legislature to enact the drafts were fruitless. The deadlock was resolved by the resignation of the Commission; and henceforth the drafting of codes became generally the responsibility of the Legislative Department (now termed the Ministry of Law).

In succeeding years, that is to say in 1859 the Code of Civil Procedure was enacted, in 1860 the Penal Code, in 1861 the Criminal Procedure Code, in 1872 the Evidence Act and the Indian Contract Act. The fourth Law Commission was appointed in 1875 which consisted of the Law Member, Dr. Whitley Stokes, and three Indian Judges. It recommended that Stokes draft Bills on Trusts, Easements, Negotiable Instruments and Transfer of Property should be enacted forthwith; while the law of Tort, the Law of Carriers and the Law of Property should be taken up soon after; the process of codification with the idea of ultimate consolidation into a general code should continue. It will thus be seen that the legislative map of India had by now presented a complete picture of the laws needed for the good governance of a civilised state, and much had been accomplished towards the goal set by the Fourth Commission. It cannot however be denied that our Statute Book, in its present form and shape, is a "patchwork with some overlapping, and a few gaping holes", but nevertheless it embodies well drafted laws made by highly skilled and experienced Draftsmen, and from the point of view of form and technique bear comparison with the best in any other country.

When the Indian Constitution came into force, India's heritage from the British rule was not merely a heterogenous collection of British ideas and institutions, but the British tradition of justice according to law and fair play had become an integral part of its political system. The governmental machinery was basically British, and the British constitutional conventions were mainly followed. These were the underlying factors which explain the fact that the text of the Indian Constitution is inspired directly from the Government of India Act, 1935; and that many of its provisions are copied almost textually from it. The Act of 1935 was the largest ever passed by the British Parliament. The Indian

Constitution is the largest and most detailed in the world. Lest the similarity be over-stressed, it is to be borne in mind that the Constitution incorporates in itself the conflicting concepts of both individualism and collectivism—both importations from the West. In the words of Sir Ivor Jennings: "Essentially the Indian Constitution is an individualistic document. Its prophets are Burke, Mill and Dicey. Yet some of the members of the Constituent Assembly thought in collectivist terms. The result is a curious dichotomy. On the one hand, the individualism of the 19th century has sought to limit the powers of Government in the interests of liberty; on the other hand, the collectivism of the twentieth century has sought to expand the powers of government in order that the State may regulate economic life and incidentally restrict liberty. In such conditions, compromise and complexity are inevitable."

January 26th 1950 is the most significant date in the legal history of India, because that is the date on which the Indian Constitution came into force in the territories of India. It is beyond the scope of this Chapter to deal exhaustively with so vast a subject as the Indian Constitution except to touch upon its main characteristics. The Constitution is Federal in form with a strong centralizing tendency, that is to say, sovereignty is divided between the Central Government and the States so that each operates directly upon the people. Each Government is limited to its own sphere, and within that sphere is normally independent of the others. In emergencies, however, power is reserved to the Union or the Centre to invest itself with over-riding powers. In the first place, if the President is satisfied that a grave emergency exists due to war or internal disturbance, or a threat to either of these, he may issue a proclamation of emergency. Secondly, when there is a break-down of the Constitution in a State, or if a State disobeys an executive direction from the Union, the emergency powers may be utilised by the President to effectively deal with the situation (Art. 352). Thus it will be noted that on a Proclamation of Emergency, or on the breakdown of the constitution in a State, or on disobedience of Central executive direc-

tions by a State, or in a financial emergency, the Constitution provides for the supersession of State sovereignty or even annihilation of a State if the need arises.

Another note-worthy feature of the Constitution is that it is lengthy, detailed and in consequence comparatively rigid. It is the largest and most detailed constitution in the world as according to Jennings it contains 397 Articles and 9 schedules, the whole occupying 254 octavo pages. The following reasons are adduced by Jennings for its bulkiness:—

(1) This is a federal Constitution which prescribes not only a Constitution for the Union, but also constitutions for the States.

(2) The relations between the Union and the States are unusually complicated which required a detailed treatment.

(3) It was thought fit to include not only a Bill of Rights occupying 26 Articles, but also Directive Principles of State Policy occupying 16 Articles.

(4) Matters relating to the organization of judicial authorities have been included in the Constitution. The Union Judiciary occupies 24 Articles and the judiciary in the States another 24 Articles.

(5) Problems peculiar to India which required specific constitutional enactment, such as public services; special classes like Anglo Indians, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Official languages.

(6) Partly because of the federal system and partly because of the inclusion of a Bill of Rights, it was thought necessary to include emergency provisions.

The Constitution contains both a Bill of Rights and a series of Directive Principles of State Policy. The direct inspiration of the Fundamental Rights is the American Constitution, but their scope is wider. The constitutional provisions protecting the seven freedoms namely, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom to choose one's

place of residence, freedom to deal with property and freedom to follow an avocation are protected by special rules for enforcing Fundamental Rights. The right to freedom of conscience, and to profess, practice and propagate any religion is recognised but subject to restrictions as in the case of most of the other Fundamental Rights which are subject to reasonable restrictions in the interest of the general public.

The notion of the Directive Principles of State Policy was taken from Eire, which in turn took it from the Constitution of Republican Spain. In the Indian background, their importance and implications cannot be lightly dismissed. In the Preamble to the Constitution which India gave unto itself, it is resolved to secure for all Indian citizens social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression and belief, equality of status and opportunity, and fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the nation. Certain solemn aspirations are expanded in the Directive Principles: Wealth, its sources of production, and its means of distribution shall not be concentrated in the hands of a few, but shall be distributed so as to subserve the common good; there shall be adequate means of livelihood for all, and labour shall not be exploited or forced to operate in inhumane conditions; the standard of living shall be raised, and public health improved; public assistance shall be provided for the sick, disabled and aged; there shall be free and compulsory primary education; agriculture shall be improved and organised; there shall be a uniform civil code.

The important point to remember about Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles is that while the former are enforceable by courts (except in declared emergencies) and protected by Constitutional Writs and other appropriate remedies, as well as, penalties for infraction to be prescribed by Parliamentary Legislation, the latter are not enforceable by any judicial process. As put tersely by Alan Gledhill: "Whereas the Fundamental rights are, in effect, injunctions prohibiting Government from doing certain things, the directive principles are affirmative instructions to Government to do certain things."

It is a feature inherent in the Constitution that it is supreme and unchangeable by ordinary means. Any Act passed by Parliament or a State Legislature which is repugnant to the Constitution, either because the Union Parliament or the State Legislature has legislated outside its sphere prescribed by the Constitution, or because its provisions are in derogation of the provisions of the Constitution, is void and must be so held by the Courts. From the legislative point of view, the Constitution is omnipotent in as much as it preserves existing laws not repugnant to it. In other words, all laws in force at the inauguration of the Republic which are not expressly repealed remain in force, subject to necessary adaptation, until repealed or amended, except in so far as they are inconsistent with the Constitution.

The Constitution is unlike the ordinary legislation in as much as it assigns different degrees of rigidity to its different parts. There are certain provisions in the Constitution which are expressed to be in force until Parliament otherwise provides. In a few cases also there are similar provisions enabling the Legislature of a State to modify constitutional provisions. In order to make any amendment of a major nature, all that is required is a majority of the total membership and not less than two-thirds of those present and voting in each House of Parliament. If, however, the amendment relates to what may be called the federal clauses, specified in the Articles, it requires not only an absolute majority in each House and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting but also ratification by the legislatures of one half of the States. Such ratification is required for amendments affecting the method of electing the President, the extent of the executive and legislative powers of the Union or the States, the provisions regarding the Supreme Court and the High Courts, the representation of the States in Parliament, and the method of amending the Constitution. In respect of the component States creating or abolishing the Upper Chamber in their Legislature if there is one, a two-thirds majority on a resolution of the Lower Chamber of the State Legislature must be followed by an Act of Parliament for which a simple majority in each House is sufficient.

Under the Constitution, legislative powers are distributed between the Union and the States. The scheme and principles of distribution of subject matter between the Union and States are directly inspired by the Government of India Act 1935, except that the Lists are longer, and subjects, not on the list including taxes, fall within the exclusive competence of the Union Parliament. The Union Parliament is exclusively competent to legislate with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the "Union List." While state legislature has exclusive power to make laws for such State or any part thereof with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the "State List." There is a third category of subjects called the "Concurrent List" with respect to which, both the Union and the State Legislature have power to make laws. In the field of concurrent legislation, the Central law whether made before or after the Constitution came into operation, prevails over the State law to the extent of the repugnancy. If, however, having been reserved for and received the President's assent, it will prevail over the Central law until the Parliament passed a new Act over-ruling the provisions of the State Act.

The Founding Fathers of the Indian Constitution felt that the Supreme Court should be made the interpreter of the Constitution and guardian and protector of Fundamental Rights. Hence in India, as in America, the Supreme Court is allotted this function. Thus despite the care taken in drafting the legislative Lists, it is likely that the subject matter may be overlapping or appear to be so. Moreover either the Union or the State Legislature may, in all good faith, trespass on the legislative sphere of the other. In the event of any such disputes arising, the Supreme Court is authorised to settle them. The principle on which decision is taken is that the language of the Constitution is not to be stretched in support of a legal or constitutional theory, nor should any decision go beyond what is necessary for the determination of the particular case. Again, future Union and State legislation and all existing laws inconsistent with the Fundamental Rights created by the Constitution are void to the extent to which

they conflict with the rights. Hence acts of Ministers and Officials may be called in question whether they are performed under a statutory authority or not, by moving a court to issue the appropriate constitutional writ. If the impugned Act in the opinion of the Court, infringes a Fundamental Right, it will be declared invalid to the extent it is repugnant to the right.

The conclusion would be obvious from the above brief summary that the general body of the existing Indian law was built up during the British period and traces direct decent from the English law. The conclusion is also to be drawn that the British juridical system was not imported as a mere facade, but had been worked for the past three centuries as the main law of the land after being adapted to suit the Indian conditions. This is a notable example of the transplantation of a juridical system into a markedly different culture. How far such transportation has borne fruit may be judged by an enquiry into the ways in which the laws have been made and administered in the country; for, the best of the laws are nugatory unless they are properly implemented.

In the world of today, the substance of social life is to an increasing extent a product of laws and legal rules. In every country new interests create new relationships, and new needs require new regulations. Even though the needs may approximately be the same as in any other country, legislation itself can neither take the same form, nor include the same provisions, for it cannot be detached from the medium to which it belongs. Montesque in the middle of the eighteenth century had stressed this fact when he wrote in his usual lucid way: "Laws must be so much the part of the people for whom they are made that it is extremely questionable whether those of one nation can suit another. They depend upon the political institutions, the historical traditions, the local circumstances and the physical peculiarities of the country, on the way of life of the population. They must conform to the stage of development of each civilisation and of each nation, to the religion of its citizens, to their feelings, their wealth, their number, their trade, their habits and their manners."

The first point of our inquiry is therefore the way in which the laws are made. That is to say the form and the process adopted in the initiation and completion of a legislative enactment. Generally speaking, the same method is followed as obtains in other common law countries, and particularly as developed and perfected in England after centuries of experience and continuous improvement. In a speech delivered in the House of Lords on the Militia Bill in 1756, Lord Hardwick had said: "In old times, almost all the laws which were designed to be public Acts and to continue as the standing Laws of this Kingdom, were first moved for, drawn up, and passed in this House, where we have the learned judges always attending, and ready to give us their advice and assistance. The form of much of the copious and ill-expressed English legislation of the 18th century would not advance the judicial reputation if it were true that the judges were mainly responsible for the drafting of it." John Austin wrote in his famous treatise on Jurisprudence: "Statutes made with great deliberation, and by learned and judicious lawyers, have been expressed so obscurely or have been constructed so inaptly that decisions interpreting the sense of these provisions, or supplying and correcting the provisions *ex ratione legis*, have been of necessity heaped upon them by the courts of justice." Whatever complaints there might have been in the past, the same cannot be said of the present day draftsmanship for which purpose highly experienced specialists are employed. In this regard, India has greatly gained from the experience of the British.

India owes a debt of gratitude to the British for importing generations of Draftsmen of high calibre under whose guidance and control Indians have been trained and equipped in the technique of drafting with the result that our statutory instruments are models of good draftsmanship. This, however, cannot be said generally of the merits of the laws drafted in the States with regard to which both the Secretary of State and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council have had occasions to complain. The situation is remedied to an extent by the fact that the Legislative Department of the Government of India (now the Ministry of

Law) affords the opportunity to the State governments to depute their nominees, who possess special aptitude for drafting, to the Ministry of Law to undergo a course of training and experience in legislative drafting. Sometimes also, the State governments are helped by the Ministry in the drafting of some of their important legislations.

In modern India, the legislative process is also on the same lines as followed in England. It would suffice to say here that almost all the legislation which ultimately becomes part of the Statute Book is initiated by the Government. But before any legislative measure is submitted to the legislature in the shape of a Bill, it has to pass through a long and arduous period of gestation. In the first place, instructions are received by the Draftsman which are usually of a general and indefinite character. They emanate either from the Minister or the Government Department principally concerned, in the form either of a short note, or reference to the report of a Commission or Committee or of papers which appear to render legislation expedient. As a rule, also, the Draftsman will not accept instructions for a Bill until the general purpose of the Bill has been approved by the Cabinet.

On the receipt of official instructions for the drafting of a Bill, it is not a *sine qua non* that the Draftsman should forthwith proceed to give shape and form to the proposed measure; but he has first of all to examine whether the object in view is attainable by an amendment or modification of the law already in force or merely through executive instructions. If, however, he does come to a decision that fresh legislation is needed, it is his next duty to test the proposal for legislation, and to see whether it is with respect to one or other of the subjects upon which the legislature has power to legislate, and also to see whether it infringes one or other of the limitations of legislative power contained in the Constitution. The Draftsman is expected to work out, unless it is impossible, some scheme which will be constitutional.

If after the above mentioned preliminaries, it is ascertained that the projected legislation is not open to any fatal technical objections, the procedure to be followed for the drafting of the

Bill would naturally vary according to the character and importance of the measure. There is usually a preliminary conference either with the Minister who is to be in charge of the Bill, or with the Head of the Department concerned or with both. A measure may sometimes affect more than one government Department. In that event, the Departments affected will have to be consulted; and if there is any conflict of views between the Departments with regard to the underlying policy of the proposed measure, the official Draftsman, owing to his neutral position, is the most appropriate person to iron out such apparent or real points of difference. The first draft may appear in the form of a rough sketch which is gradually elaborated after repeated conferences.

The above brief sketch would convey some idea of the time and trouble that is needed in the preparation of statutory legislation which is difficult for the uninitiated to fully appreciate. Apart from questions of form, terminology and language, the proposed measure has to fit in with the whole law of the land and it is necessary to visualise constructively that the paper scheme, as prepared, is capable of being worked in practice and does not produce results opposite to those contemplated or expected. Thus in the process of expressing in appropriate legislative language the conclusions arrived at by the Minister in charge of the draft Bill, it might become the special duty of the Draftsman, as put by Sir Courtney Ilbert: "to prick legislative bubbles, and to damp the ardour of ambitious legislators by asking inconvenient but necessary questions about the precise mode in which those proposals are to be carried out in effect. Moreover, he might be able to throw light on the proposals from other points of view, and to guard against conflicts and inconsistencies between the policy and proposals of different branches of the Government. Thus it may be his duty to inform, to advise, to criticise or to suggest. But decision, and responsibility for decision, rest with the Minister and with him alone."

We have seen that not only does the Indian juridical system claim direct heritage from the British but its constitutional organisation is also modelled on the British system. No machinery,

however well designed, can work efficiently without the human agency which has to operate it. The British legislators have had generations of political experience, while in resurgent India, the typical "representative of the people" is a new comer in this field. It is, therefore, surprising that this "political infant who is sometimes neither a good lawyer nor a good politician" has shown on the whole commendable self-restraint. There is thus a danger, which cannot be minimised, of ill-considered and over hasty legislation being undertaken in all good faith by inexperienced and over-zealous legislators; for many would-be-reformers have a pathetic belief in a new statute as a panacea for every human ill and the less experienced a reformer is, the greater his ardour and ambition to make the best laws in the World. The present situation was commented upon by the late Mr. G. V. Mavlankar, Speaker of the House of People, while presiding over a meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs on November 25th 1955 in the following words: "The Government in India" he said, "appeared to interfere too much with the pattern of society and in the economic affairs. Hasty legislation was being undertaken, even though with the best of intentions, because of the ignorance of the "Law of gradualness". This was creating difficulties everywhere and impeding constructive activity. This outcome was natural when efforts were made by impatient legislators to remould society. Such attempts to impose preconceived patterns on a society through administrative machinery will only result in the demolition of its moral structure."

At the dawn of legislative activities in India during the British period a despatch was sent from the Secretary of State which insisted on the need for mature deliberation in the legislature before any law was enacted, and explained that the length and publicity of the process and the conflict of opinion constituted a security against rash or thoughtless legislation. It warned that only the determined prudence of those who were concerned could guard against the hazard of precipitance. The despatch ended with the directions: "We deem it of great moment, therefore, that you should by positive rules provide that every project or proposal of

a law shall travel through a defined succession of stages in Council before it is finally adopted." Leslie Stephens remarks in his treatise on science of Ethics: "Lawyers are apt to speak as though the Legislature were omnipotent, as they do not require to go beyond its decisions. It is, of course, omnipotent in the sense that it can make whatever laws it pleases, in as much as a law means any rule which has been made by Legislature. But from the scientific point of view, the power of Legislature is of course strictly limited. It is limited, so to speak, both from within and without, from within because the Legislature is a product of a certain social condition, and determined by whatever determines the society; and from without, because the power of imposing laws is dependent upon the instinct of subordination which is itself limited."

Resurgent India has firmly resolved to become a Welfare State; and with the adoption of the new lighted concepts of modern civilisation, far reaching changes in the established law of the land are to be expected. For, it is only right that there should be reform and it is also right that we should advance. In order, however, to ensure that the reforms would prove workable in practice and to a great measure achieve the object in view, apart from other factors, there are certain pre-requisites from the legislative point of view which should be satisfied. In the first place a legislative measure should not only be maturely considered but should also 'travel through a defined succession of stages in the legislature.' Secondly, it should also be constructively visualised that it would be capable of being worked in the society for which it is proposed to be made. Lastly, it should be expressed in the proper shape and form for which purpose highly specialised and experienced experts need to be employed in modern States. In the words of John Austin: "I will venture to affirm that what is commonly called the **technical** part of legislation is infinitely more difficult than what may be called the **ethical**. In other words, it is far easier to conceive justly what would be useful law, than so to construct that same law that it may accomplish the design of the law-giver." According to Sir Cecil Carr: "The teams of legal

advisers to the various ministries in Britain form a cast with a tradition which harmonizes loyalty to the public service with loyalty to the law and its professional ethics.... One of their functions is to clarify the political and departmental mind by eliciting the exact definition of the policy for which legislation is contemplated.... knowledge of law has to be extensive and accurate. Their responsibility is grave; if they make mistakes the apple-cart will be upset indeed."

In modern countries these official lawyers are a class by themselves. They are the keepers of their government's conscience. Their traditional duty is to work for legality and justice. Their advice has to be independent; for, subservient advice is useless. Thus it is incumbent upon a legal adviser now and again to give as his considered opinion which at times like Balaam's prophecy, is not what was expected or desired by those consulting him. If the adviser is not servilely accommodative and is prepared to give his opinion without fear or favour in the high traditions of his office, it would be necessary for him to point out to his political chief that no foreign law, however successful it may have proved in its own environment, could be safely transplanted without full reflection and due consideration for its integration with the existing social and cultural environment. Moreover, before embarking upon legislation, he would ask for a consideration of certain ancillary factors, viz., whether the public opinion is sufficiently advanced to desire the proposed legislation so that the public would co-operate when the law is passed; whether sufficiently trained personnel would be available to man up the institutions which will have to be set up; and lastly, whether the State exchequer is willing to bear the costs required in the administration of the proposed measure.

The next point for consideration is the evaluation of the agency responsible for the administration of the laws of the land. In this department of governmental activity, too, we should be made conscious of the fact that no machinery, however well designed, can work efficiently unless the human agency that has to operate it is

properly recruited, suitably trained and has developed traditions of service with humanity and fairness. It was very long ago when Confucius was constrained to remark that "oppressive government is more terrible than tigers." The problem of controlling the rapacious propensity of the Executive is of much longer standing than the statement of Confucius. For the working of the Welfare State which is required to perform social service unthought of before, monopoly of power is claimed as a necessary concomitant. But if such power is vested without any restrictions, it may become oppressive and arbitrary; for it may be exploited to gain selfish ends or used in ignorance of the object for which it is given, thereby defeating the very purpose of the Welfare State. In England the solution was partially found in the sovereignty of the Rule of Law. The concept has been passed on to us and the foresight of the Founding Fathers of the Constitution has further fortified it with the provision for judicial review of administrative actions.

It has been said that executive powers of wide nature inevitably ill-defined, give rise to much irritation and abuse of the "bureaucracy", not always fairminded or well informed. If it is realised from a more synoptic point of view that perhaps the most important function of the State is to ensure justice, it would appear very odd that when the State expends vast amounts in the establishment of elaborate machinery for enforcing law and justice between subjects, it should, in its executive action, tend to be indifferent to law and justice in its dealings with those subjects. Even if it is true that this atavistic tendency of bureaucratic tyranny may be challenged and in some measure offset by the system of judicial review made available under the Constitution, it is to be borne in mind that not every citizen has the means or the determination to go to a court of law. The private citizen can only question the views of the executive at considerable trouble to himself and at risk of costs which the administrators, if they lose, have not to bear. Thus the scales are against the citizen, and from this it follows that the standard of conduct to be expected from the representatives of the Government should be

at least as high, if not higher, than that of the ordinary citizen. In French administrative law, the dictum of a distinguished member of the Conseil d'Etat, that "the State is an honest man", is a maximum of jurisdiction. Horiou and other French authorities constantly recognise an administrative morality as well as an administrative law, and on his conception the doctrine of *de'tournement de pouvoir* is based. Huriou observes in his *Precis* that the "Administration must act in good faith, and this forms part of its morality."

A critical examination of the practice in this branch of public service in England led Lord Hewart to raise his voice against this "new despotism". But actual facts would reveal that the courts, the legal Advisers to Government Department, whose traditional duty is to work for legality and justice, and the great Departments themselves which as a rule observe courteous consideration in their dealings with the members of the public, by their cumulative action assure fair deal to the subject, so that any deviation or apparent deviation from it is extremely rare and exceptional. In contrast, as described above, although the general body of Indian Law is to a great extent similar in form and substance, it is applied with a different bias. Thus it is not unusual that not only utmost rigor juris is pressed against the subject, but Government Departments appear to be predisposed to strain the interpretation of statutes in favour of administrative convenience. At times they even go so far as to take action in flagrant disregard of the specific provisions of the statute.

It would be a curious doctrine that because the administrators are "trustees of the public", they should strain the interpretation of a statutory instrument against the just claims of the subject. It may therefore, be asserted without any fear of contradiction that in a Welfare State justice has to be done not only through its courts of law but also through its administrative departments. The term "justice" has a much wider connotation than law, and the primary purpose of law is the quest of justice as observed by Lord Wright in interpretations of Modern Legal Philosophers: "I

am most firmly convinced by all my experience and study and reflection upon law that its primary purpose is the quest of justice." The ingrained tradition to do justice may be illustrated by a mention of cases where Government Departments have announced "concessions" of various kinds, such as the direction of the Treasury to requisitioning Departments to pay compensation to damage caused by fair wear and tear, although the compensation (Defence) Act expressly excluded such payments. This forcefully demonstrates the fact that in a Welfare State, such as England, the "trustees of the public" do not only not always press the *rigor juris* against the subject, but go out of their way to soften the *rigor juris* for the sake of justice and fair play.

After having surveyed in brief outline the genesis of the modern law of India and its administration and working in practice and its super imposition by the Indian Constitution with the declared policy of the State to achieve a socialist pattern of society, we come face to face with the very pertinent problem posed by Professor Hamson: "To what extent will the peoples of former Indian Empire" he asks, "continue to find in the English law, which was in some degree arbitrarily imported into the country, a real satisfaction of their own aspirations and desires now that they are entirely at liberty to maintain, to abolish or to alter that system in any manner they wish?" He further adds as a forecast: "It may be judged inevitable, and it is perhaps desirable, that there should be some alteration—indeed some measure of alteration may be the sign of some genuine adaptation of the principles of that system by its new inheritors to their own circumstances according to their own judgment. It does not seem at present probable that the system will be fundamentally altered root and branch."

The recent law Commission set up by the Government of India under the chairmanship of the Attorney-General is eminently fitted to answer the questions raised by Professor Hamson; but after eight years of the working experience of the Republic of India, we should be in the position to hazard some comments without appearing to anticipate the views and recommendations of the

Law Commission. It would be clear to any observer, in spite of prolific legislative activity since the inception of the Indian Republic, no revolutionary changes appear to have been taken in the juridical system India has inherited. On the contrary, especially in the domain of social reform, the tendency is very apparent to adopt and assimilate modern Western European notions which would have been un-thought of during the British period and which are definitely alien to the pristine Indian culture and ingrained traditions of the society.

In the post-Constitution climate of progress and reforms, there does not appear to be any upsurge of the desire to deroot or alter, for the sake of alteration, the legal system we have inherited, but there is ample evidence of the desire to adopt and give shape to the ultra modern Western ideologies. It is also clear that modern India is not prepared to accept unreservedly the premises of the received political and legal ideas better suited to the static age. New economic ideas, industrialization on a vast scale and rapid strides in science are forcing upon all men adjustments in their ways of life. Modern India appears, therefore, to be determined to plan the economic and social foundations of life in the interests of the whole community. There is an honest endeavour to devise an alternative New Order which would be more practicable, more durable, and more humane.

As far as can be predictable from the present trends, the New Order inaugurated by the Founding Fathers of the Constitution and the present leaders of India is not designed on the theory of law based on the "materialistic", or economic interpretation of society as conceived by Karl Marx, according to which the condition precedent for the building up of new society is the complete overthrow of the old order. There is a marked affinity to the tenets of the Fabians who believe that it is possible to carry on into the new society values developed under the old order, but not inseparably bound up with the nineteenth century ways of conducting economic affairs. They believe that it is possible to build a socialist civilisation without throwing overboard all the

institutions that grew up under capitalism, good and bad alike. They believe that only those things be cast away which necessarily belong to a capitalist society and are not capable of being adapted to the needs of a socialist society. They feel that if it were possible to create a new society without the sacrifice of all the good things we possess, it would be an infinitely better society, and would be built up with far less human suffering and with fewer growing pains of transition, than if it were necessary to tear everything down first, and then begin building up again amid the ruins of all our habits and traditional standards.

We have seen that the British legal system is the genesis of the law in modern India, and that the Constitution which India has given unto herself is the synthesis of principles underlying various modern Constitutions of the World and that the ideal of the 'socialistic pattern of society' is the product of European thought. It is therefore evident that the skeleton and the frame-work of the modern Indian law is designed on Western conceptions, but its functioning and interpretation must be activated by the specific ethos and mores of the Indian people. That is to say, the endeavour is to transplant the system begotten from the Western culture into a significantly different culture. What, then, are the chances of its successes? It behoves us as realists to see things in their proper perspectives.

As forcefully put by Harold Nicolson: "Democracy has not lived up to its own magnificent opportunity; individualism has been allowed to degenerate into egoism, and freedom into the avoidance of sacrifice; we have thought so much, and clamoured so much, about our rights that we have forgotten all about our duties; and the inventiveness which the democracy has unleashed has provided us with a mechanical opportunity which we have been too lazy, too selfish and too stupid to exploit for common ends. . . . It is for us to reaffirm democracy in the form of a rejuvenated faith." It has been said that the successful working of parliamentary institutions presupposes an electorate capable of

taking an interest in the proceedings of the legislature and exercising control over its representatives. The extent to which the electorates will be able to perform these functions would depend upon the interest taken by them in public affairs and upon their political training. It would not hurt our self-esteem to acknowledge that the democracy we possess falls far short of the prescribed standard; for, as said by Harold Lasky, "a semi-educated democracy is not a democracy at all", and it will require all the determination and courage of our great leaders to prevent it from relapsing into organized communalism—

Arouse the tiger of Hyracanian deserts,
Strive with the half-starved lion for his prey;
Lesser the risk, than rouse the slumbering fire
Of wild fanaticism.

As compared with the Western standards, we start with enormous disadvantages—lack of technicians of every kind, and a dearth of persons who possess the experience and educational competence needed to carry out the essential tasks of social construction. On the credit side, we possess the judges who have lived up to the glorious traditions built up by their predecessors who had set high standards of impartiality and sound judgment. This is demonstrated by the case law which has accumulated since the advent of the Constitution from a perusal of which any casual observer would perceive that our great judges have acquitted themselves honourably by upholding the rule of law, and doing justice, without fear or favour, by giving everyone what is legally due to him. Thus carrying out in practice the primary purpose on the basis of which a state can justify its existence "*sum cuique tribuere*." More than that, we possess the spiritual background (Dharma) which inculcates love for its fellow creatures, charity, justice and the assumption of moral responsibility by those in power based on the faith that the end of the natural life of an individual is not the end of everything, but that he is accountable in after-life for all his deeds and actions to some higher Being,

Who sees with equal eye as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall.

It would not be a mis-statement to say that in India of today, religion still dominates both political and economic life. "Material progress", says the Pope, "bringing with it larger and fuller opportunities of living, is an ideal not to be despised. But it does not satisfy the nature of man born to better and higher things." Let us by all means attack the root causes of penury and want; but let us at the same time disabuse ourselves of the conviction that the advance of "civilisation" means the continual accomplishment of human happiness; nor are we prepared to accept the naive assumption that material amenities induce happiness and contentment. Petrazhitzky in his latest philosophy has taught that the end of law is social solidarity and that its immediate task is education in the spirit of love for their neighbours. This is exactly in consonance with the culture of India based on religion. We, therefore, believe that the parturience of the new lighted concepts of the materialist West with the essentially synthetized spiritual culture of India if properly nursed by its wise leaders bear splendid fruit by setting a shining example to the world. In the words of President Da Valera "we can assure a great future for our nation, if we strive for it, and are true to ourselves and our past. Have truth on our lips and cleanliness in our hearts."

CHAPTER XV

MODERN RELIGIOUS TRENDS IN INDIA

I. HINDUISM

"Hinduism grows, in the proper sense of the word, not by accretion, but like an organism, undergoing from time to time transformation as a whole. It has carried within it much of its early possessions. It has cast aside a good deal and often it has found treasures which it made its own. It took what it could, whence it could, though it adhered to its original vision. The more it charges, the more it remains the same thing." Radhakrishnan.

The modern trends of reform are only a continuation of the work done by mediaeval reformers like Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas and are intended to purify Hinduism, emphasising its essentials and denouncing some of its later accretions and separating its essentials from its non-essentials. The pioneer of modern reform in Hinduism was Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833). He was born in a Hindu family, whose ancestors served under the Muslim rulers of Bengal. As a boy he received instruction in Bengali, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. At an early age he wrote a little book in Persian with an Arabic introduction entitled *Tuhfat-ul-muwahiddin* or *Gift to Deists*, emphasising that Truth consists in the worship of the one Being, who is the source of all that exists and its governor. In 1798 he began to study English, Greek and Hebrew. Between 1809 and 1814 he was a Revenue Officer under the East India Company. In 1814 he resigned his office and

applied himself to the study of Hindu Religion and Islamic mysticism. In the same year he started a society for the worship of the one indivisible God as inculcated in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Between 1815 and 1819 he published translations of the Upanishads in the English language.

He came into contact with great European Orientalists like Sir William Jones, Colebrooke and Wilson and became an admirer of Christianity. In 1820 he wrote a book styled the 'Precept of Jesus: a guide to peace and happiness,' which was published by the Unitarian Society of London. In 1828 was opened the Brahmo Samaj, for the worship of the One True God. One of its chief supporters was Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, grand father of Rabindranath Tagore. The prayer hall of the Samaj was opened in 1830 and in the trust-deed it was laid down "that no sermon, preaching, discourse, prayer or hymn be delivered or made or used in such worship but such as have a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the author and preserver of the Universe, to the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and the strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds." Raja Ram Mohan Roy was friendly to Islam throughout his life. In 1831 he went to England as an envoy of the Moghal Emperor to the Court of Great Britain. He died at Bristol on 27th September 1833.

The second great personality in the history of the Brahmo Samaj was Maharishi Devendranath Tagore (1817-1905), father of Rabindranath Tagore. In 1842 he was initiated a Brahmo. He was a great mystic, profoundly influenced by the teaching of the Upanishads, *ISA VASYAM IDAM SARVAM*, to see whatever there is in the world as being the Abode of God, and to consider God, as Father, Master, dearer than sons, dearer than wealth and and dearer than all. He retired to the Himalayas between 1856 and 1858 and spent the time in divine contemplation, deeply absorbed in ecstatic bliss, loudly repeating the lines of Hafiz:—

"Do not bring a lamp into my audience hall today
Tonight that full moon my friend is shining here."

He tells us how he obtained the beatific vision. "I saw God, not with fleshly eyes but with the inner vision from these Himalayan hills." "Henceforward I shall radiate light from my heart upon the world, for I have reached the Sun and darkness has vanished." An off-shoot of the Brahmo Samaj was the Prarthana Samaj of Bombay. The greatest of those who joined it was Justice Ranade (1842-1900) who emphasised that "the theism of the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj was nothing new and that it was organically related to the older theisms in the bosom of Hinduism." Ranade was regarded as a sage, inspired by a deep love for humanity, ready to help all who sought his help. The Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj were eclectic in character and appealed to the intellectual classes only. The Arya Samaj, whose founder was Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) aimed at a new and virile Hinduism. Dayanand was a profound Sanskrit scholar. He maintained that monotheism was the creed of the Vedic religion. He criticised the view that the Vedic worship was nature worship and declared that the Vedic hymns refer only to one supreme God-head, EKAM SAT, the one true God, who himself takes the form of many gods and bears many names. He demolished the caste system and converted non-Hindus to Hinduism. He also introduced a system of national education, based on the teachings of the Vedas. The founders of the Theosophical Society met Dayanand in 1877 and were highly impressed with his learning and eloquence.

Madame Blavatsky, (1831-1891) was a Russian by birth. In 1873 she went to the United States of America where she met her co-worker, Col. H.S. Olcott. In 1875 the Theosophical Society was formally founded with Olcott as its life President. The object of the society was "to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour, to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science and to investigate un-explained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man." The theosophist sees every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefers its study

to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. In 1882 Adyar near Madras was made the Headquarters of the society.

In 1887 Mrs. Annie Besant came into contact with theosophy. She landed in India in 1893. After the death of Col. Olcott in 1907, she became the President of the Society. From 1893, until her death in 1933, she worked heart and soul for the renaissance of Hinduism.

In 1898 she was able to found the Central Hindu College which became the nucleus of the Banaras University. Religious instruction was encouraged through graded text books on Sanātana Dharma or Hindu Religion and Ethics. Story books of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and other Indian legends were written in simple English to suit the standard of School-going students. Mahatma Gandhi said "As long as India lives, the memory of the magnificent services rendered by her will also live. She endeared herself to India by making it her country of adoption and dedicating her all to it."

Another important movement in modern Hinduism is that of the Ramakrishna Mission. Its founder, Vivekananda, 1863-1902 was a disciple of Ramakrishna (1834-1886), the saint. The great lessons taught by Ramakrishna were to avoid the lust for woman and the lust of wealth. He used to preach wealth as dust and woman as mother. His great teaching was that no one should be hurt, and that all religions should be regarded as different paths leading to the same goal. To attain that goal what is needed is spiritual vision and not mere book knowledge. Ramakrishna was the embodiment of renunciation and religious universalism. "His life was an object lesson in Non-violence. His love knew no limits, geographical or otherwise," wrote Mahatma Gandhi in 1924. Vivekananda represented Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. There, he declared that "each religion must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve its individuality and grow according to its own law of growth."

His English disciple, sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble) became the first nun of the Ramakrishna order and gave herself to a life of service to India.

Devendranath Tagore spent the last years of his long life in meditation at Shanti Niketan, the abode of peace, which under the fostering care of Rabindranath Tagore (1851-1941) developed into the Viswa Bharathi, a centre of world culture. Over the door of Shanti Niketan runs an inscription "In this place no image is to be adored and no man's faith is to be despised." Professor Levi from France and Professor Pouré Davoud from Persia helped Tagore in the organisation of Humanistic studies, with special emphasis on Asiatic, including Islamic studies.

The Nobel Prize was awarded to Tagore in 1913, for his book of poems, *Gitanjali*, or song-offerings. "Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest and the lowliest and the lost." "Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads. Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee. He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones." "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight." Here we find Tagore as the inheritor of the traditions of Ramanand and Kabir. In 1912 Tagore visited the United States of America and delivered a course of lectures at the Harvard University, on *Sadhana* or the realisation of life. Absolute self surrender to God in devotion and service, in goodness and love, is the means of realisation. We are taken across to the other shore, when we are able to say, "All my work is thine". Then alone God reveals Himself to us and all the conflicts and contradictions of life are reconciled and knowledge love and action are harmonised.

Although initiated into Brahmoism by his father, he withdrew from it in his later life and stood for a higher universalism to which he gave expression in his novel, *Gora*, "Today give me the mantram of that deity who belongs to all, Hindu, Musalman, Christian and Brahmo alike, the doors of whose temple are never closed to any person of any caste whatever, he who is not only the God of the Hindus but who is God of India itself."

The National Anthem of Independent India is the famous song of Tagore, JANA GANA MANA, "thou art the Ruler of the minds of all people, day and night thy voice goes out from land to land calling Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains round thy throne, and Parsees and Muslims and Christians. Offerings are brought to thy shrine by the East and the West. Victory, Victory, Victory to Thee."

The greatest of modern Indian mystics was Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950). After a long period of meditation and contemplation, he was able to reach the intuitional level of consciousness: and what he has seen through the organ of spiritual sight, he has given expression to in his monumental work, the *Life Divine*, the greatest philosophical book which has been produced in India for centuries. In this work he maintains that the ills of the present world can never be overcome by new political, social or economic arrangements. They can be overcome only by a new race of men in whom the higher spiritual powers have been brought into operation.

Human unity can be attained only when the whole of society has come to consist of individuals of the new species, the "gnostic" beings, as he calls them, whose whole way of life is governed by a vast universal spirituality. They see God in all beings and in all things. To them God is the beginning, the middle and the end. He is the enjoyer as well as the object enjoyed. He is the high. He is the low. He is the knower and the known. He is the word spoken, and He is the breath which speaks it. He is the manifest, and He is the unmanifest.

The Ashram or monastery at Pondichery, now under the leadership of "The Mother", a French Lady who became the disciple of Aurobindo, provides the training in soul-development, the highest reward of which is the capacity to rise to that supramental level of being or VIGNANA. Once we are able to rise to that level, we will be able to obtain that light and power that can entirely transform our being.

"To be in the being of all and to include all in one's being, to be conscious of the consciousness of all, to be integrated in force with the universal force, to carry all action and experience in one self and feel it as one's own action and experience, to feel all selves as one's own self, to feel all delight as being one's own delight of being is a necessary condition of the integral divine being." Aurobindo was the man of contemplation: Gandhi (1869-1948) was the man of action. In him was exemplified the principle of returning good for evil and love for hatred. He has profoundly shaken the sense of values of the modern world and made every one think of the pattern of values that ought to prevail if humanity is to survive the threats of atomic warfare.

Gandhi is said to have continued what Buddha had begun. The part he played in rousing the mass consciousness of resurgent India is a marvellous phenomenon. This is due to the combination of social, religious, economic, and political methods in his programme of action. No one has done so much for the removal of social abuses sanctioned by religious tradition, like the removal of untouchability and the abolition of child marriage. He believed in the Bible and the Koran as much as in the Gita. He regarded all the saints of the world as one. His Hinduism was the religion of Truth, Non-violence and Love.

The greatest living exponent of modern Hinduism is Professor Radhakrishnan, (born in 1888) the Vice-President of India. He is a citizen of the world, a liaison officer between the East and the West, proclaiming that the future of civilisation requires co-operation, not identification of all races, creeds and cultures of mankind.

He has shown how Indian thought has never been rigid but has been "a movement, a process, a growing tradition of the godward endeavour of the human spirit continuously enlarging through the ages."

Like Aurobindo, he believes that divine life will emerge out of human life, as human life has emerged out of sub-human life. Writing in 1928 on "The religion we need", he said, "if the king-

dom of God on earth is the ideal destiny of mankind. . . . it can be achieved by strong religious souls whose patriotism knows no limits of geography or history but only those of justice and Truth, freedom and fair play, God and Humanity." In short "a more vivid, a deeper sense of the one universal God is the profoundest need of our Age."

According to him, Buddhism was not a revolt against Brahminism. Buddha was a reformer of Hinduism and not its opponent. His inspiring address on Gautama Buddha before the British Academy in 1940 and his subsequent visit to China in 1944 have revived Indian interest in Buddhism and its doctrine of Universal love. "The Buddha mind is associated with a great compassionate heart which desires the liberation of every sentient being and bestows divine grace on all who make a serious effort to achieve man's final end." "The mystic religion of India which affirms that things spiritual are personal and that we have to reflect them in our lives, which requires us to withdraw from the world's concerns to find the real and return to the world of history with renewed energy and certitude, which is at once spiritual and social, is likely to be the religion of the new world, which will draw men to a common centre even across the national frontiers." (Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*, 1947).

II—ISLAM IN INDIA

The impact of the forces released by the British rule in India has been as profound on the Muslim section of the people as on the rest, in every sphere of life, including the religious. The reaction has been expressed not in any noticeable conversions to Christianity which the British rulers professed, but it has taken the form of an internal movement of transvaluation of values which prevailed among the Muslims at the advent of the British. That is the distinctive feature marking the various tendencies which manifested themselves during the British rule in the body of Islam in India and needs to be kept in view when we take a survey of them.

Another feature which needs to be noted is this. The movement which embodied the new tendencies, took their rise, one and all, among the Muslims of the North. The South Indian Muslims, particularly of the area covered by the present Kerala and Tamilnad, continue to remain unaffected on the religious plane. The reason for this is to be sought in the versions of Islam introduced respectively in the South and the North. In the South, it was brought in by the Arabs who were steeped in the traditions of Islam as expounded by the Prophet himself among the Arabs. The Arab settlers in the South, and the mixed communities which they raised for themselves in the South have had a continuously undisturbed religious life, conforming to the orthodox Sunni Schools of thought to which their forbears had belonged when they first came into the land. On the other hand, the Islam which came into the country from the North-West, in the wake of the Muslim invasions, was not of the same variety. The invaders who founded kingdoms in the North were essentially new converts to Islam. Although they believed in its basic creed, they nevertheless clung, in varying degree, to a number of subsidiary beliefs which they had inherited from their earlier faiths and the social customs which were the concomitants of such beliefs. Further, it was in the North that Muslim races of non-Arab origin who had embraced Islam, attracted by the benefits accruing from

the Muslim rule, poured into the land representing various sectarian views of religious life which had by now taken shape in the non-Arab or Ajami Islamic world of the mediaeval times.

Broadly speaking, they were divided into two groups, the major group professing one or other of the several phases of Sunni thought, the other the Shia views. The Shia minority followed more or less an exclusive compact religious life. The religious life of Sunni majority was diversified and controlled severally by orthodox Ulama on the one hand, and the class of the priests known as Pirs or Mashayaks, on the other. The purity of life enjoined by the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet was hardly noticeable among them on any large scale. Attempts were, no doubt, made at long intervals to introduce purer ways of life among them, but with no appreciable effect. The result was that with the decadence of the Muslim power in the land, the grip of the orthodox priests and the Ulama tightened, making it very hard to infuse fresh energy in their life. The religious life therefore went by rote and rule allowing no chance for freedom of thought.

Such was the state of affairs among the Muslims, in so far as religion was concerned. The great event of 1857 gave them a rude awakening. The worst sufferers in the catastrophe were the Muslims of the North, particularly those belonging to the classes who had enjoyed the privileges of the Muslim rule; and as a reaction, the more serious among them began to reflect over the situation in which they found themselves, and realised that something had to be done to preserve their identity in the land, and resuscitate their life to the extent possible in the altered conditions.

The first to come into the field was Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh which in due course developed into a University. The task which he set before himself was twofold. One was to equip the Muslims of India to take their due share in the affairs of their country by providing them with modern education which was the only door open to

them at the time to enroll themselves in Government services, on the one hand, and to assimilate whatever healthy strains which proceeded from Western culture, on the other, to distinguish themselves in other walks of life and thereby to contribute to the progress of the country as a whole. But he had to overcome one big obstacle before he could lay out a workable plan. That was the memory of the wrong they had suffered at the hands of the British Government which had generated a deep antipathy to everything British and all that was introduced into the country under their auspices including the modern system of education. To add to his difficulty he had to counter the dense fog of ignorance which hovered over the entire body of Muslims of India, thanks to the manner in which the body of Muslim divines had tried for generations together to stifle independent thought in matters religious and consequently pressed them to follow ways of living and of social behaviour which would allow them to march abreast of the times.

Such was the nature of the difficulties that one had to reckon with while devising any plan of reform and progress. Undaunted, Syed Ahmad Khan took up the challenge of the hour and gathered around him a band of thinkers and writers to launch his scheme which now goes under the name of Aligarh movement.

The scheme had two specific purposes before it. One was to drive out the wrong notions which the Muslims had held till then in respect of their religion which traditionally governed activity in every sphere of life. To cover this purpose, he first started a monthly magazine called 'Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq' or 'Reform of Morality'. At the same time he planned a scheme of discourses or speeches to be delivered at important centres of population in North India to acquaint the Muslims with the true teachings of Islam and the exact details of its ethics. Among his supporters the eminent poet Mawlana Khaja Altaf Husain Hali came forward to press his muse to the service of the cause sponsored by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and produced his great work in

verse entitled 'Madd-wa-Gazr-i-Islam' or 'The Flow and Ebb of Islam' written in the stanzaic form of 'Musaddas'. Mawlana Nazeer Ahmad, another comrade, produced an Urdu translation of the Quran in a form easily understood by the masses with a commentary attached to it; whereas a third comrade, Mawlana Shibli Numani began to write monographs on historic subjects such as could revive among muslims memories of purer days and better lives pursued by muslims in their historic past. Side by side, a model school was started at Aligarh on the lines of public schools in England in which modern education was to be pursued—a school which slowly and steadily developed into a full-fledged College in his own lifetime attracting to its staff a number of devoted scholars from Europe who paved the way to its fruition into a University.

The cumulative effect of the work carried on by the band of reformers at Aligarh was tremendous. The message of the movement was carried into every corner of India giving rise to a new awakening among the Muslims. The progress alarmed vested interests particularly in religious camps. They spared no pains to condemn the move for reform. As a counter-blast to the new College of Aligarh, a religious institution under the name of 'Dar-ul-Ulum' or 'Seat of Learning' was set up at Devband to serve as a stronghold of traditional reactionarism in Islam. The forces of retrogression were organized on a vast scale, so much so that Madrasahs were started in the different parts of the country to fight the reform spirit generated by Aligarh. The counter-movement put on an aspect so reactionary that even the orthodox who had at first sided with it, came to realize that it was going too far and growing too oppressive even for them.

Noticing this redeeming quality in the counter-movement, and also growing alive to the brake neck rapidity with which the Aligarh movement for westernization had begun to take its strides, the thoughtful even among the followers of Syed Ahmad Khan who would not go the whole hog with the movement steadied themselves and thought of building a half-way house between the two

extreme wings. It was thus that the 'Nadwatul-Ulama' came into being at Lucknow with Mawlana Shibli Numani at its head which undertook to pursue a compromise scheme both by propaganda and actual education. The new movement has done immense service in giving a tone to Muslim religious thought on lines not disagreeable either to the orthodox or to the forward block among Muslims. The work of the Nadwa was carried on after Shibli's death by his pupils Mawlana Syed Sulaiman and Mawlana Abdus Salam both of whom are now no more. The organization has now fallen into the hands of people who at times betray that they do not possess that catholicity of outlook on life with which their predecessors in office were gifted with.

While the forward and the backward movements were contending against each other—the Aligarh and the Devband, a new element raised its head commonly known as the 'Qadiyani' movement. Its progenitor, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib, came forward as the Messiah charged with the mission of purifying Islam. The concept of Messiah or Mahdi is Judaic in origin and has somehow filtered into the body of traditions attributed to the Prophet of Islam several generations after the Prophet had passed away. The idea in Judaic lore had always come to the fore whenever the Jews found themselves in a state of depression and invoked a hope for a Saviour. The thought was evidently transmitted in the course of Muslim history, particularly of the early centuries of Islam, to political parties who did not fare well against the ruling classes of their times. At various stages in the early history of Islam, leaders of such parties in their zeal to aspire to power or to disturb the existing order, claimed the role of Mahdi. And although they one and all came to grief, the idea persisted in the mind of certain classes of Muslims that one day, just before the day of judgement or Qiyamat, a Mahdi would arise to redeem or save Islam from the onslaught of its detractors. Anyway Mirza Sahib put forward his claims to this office and gathered around him a goodly lot of people who believed in his mission. But the vast majority of Muslims proved hostile to the claim, since Messiahship was a form of Prophethood and no Muslim would allow

anyone to assume that title, as after the Prophet of Islam who is regarded as the last of the Prophets, the function of Prophethood had ceased to exist. The followers of Mirza Sahib contended, on the other hand, that they were as good followers of the Quran and of the Prophet of Islam as any other and that they regarded Mirza Sahib as a Minor Prophet within the bosom of the major Prophethood. Whatever the differences between the main body of Islam and the Qadiyani group, the fact stands that the Ahmadis, as the followers of Mirza Sahib call themselves, have founded missions of their own in various parts of the world and pursue their activities in the name of Islam. They have their headquarters at Rubwah in Pakistan from where the entire organization is controlled by a grandson of Mirza Sahib enjoying the title of Khalifat-ul-Masih or Deputy of the Messiah.

With the opening of the 20th century and the gradual spread of English education on a wider scale than hitherto came to Muslims, the inevitable urge to share the benefits of administration. As the masses among Muslims were still accustomed to look at things from a religious standpoint, every political movement was given a religious colour, and every religious movement provided with a political purpose. The pan-Islamic spirit which had been generated from Egypt by Syed Jamaluddin Afghani had already brought within its vortex Muslims of every part of the World including India. The travails, therefore, of the Turks in the Balkans and Tripoli easily roused the sympathy of the Indian Muslims. The interest in the fate of Muslims outside deepened when Turkey plunged herself into the first world war, and faced at the close of it the dismemberment of its Empire and the disappearance of the centuries old Islamic Institution of the Khilafat. Since all these events were believed to be the result of the imperialistic policy pursued by Britain in all Muslim countries, the old hatred for everything British was powerfully revived and the Muslims who had already been organized under a newly formed Muslim League, joined hands with the Congress to usher in a movement, the Khilafat movement, with a view to creating an increasing embarrassment to the British rulers here—a movement

in which Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad, Mawlana Muhammad Ali, and Mawlana Shawkat Ali distinguished themselves together as its mainstay.

The period beginning with the troubles in the Balkans and Tripoli and ending with the close of the first world war was a formative period for the Muslims of India. Stimulated by the fateful events of the time, an earnest urge was felt among them to re-orientate their religious outlook which had governed their activity in every sphere of life. This urge was powerfully voiced by Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad, a very young scholar at the time, gifted with a remarkable power of eloquence and the talent for high and effective literary expression. This, the young leader did through his two weeklies in Urdu: *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, which although started in a moment of political stress, served as vital instruments of religious reform. So modern were his discourses published therein and so weighty his arguments for a re-orientation of Islamic thought that not merely the orthodox intelligentsia, but the English educated class of Muslims all over India were carried off their feet and hailed him as a new force in Islamic religious thought. The movement for a religious revival started by the two journals gathered momentum through the publication of the first volume of Mawlana's monumental work '*The Tarjiman-al-Quran*' in 1931, followed soon by the second volume, wherein he attempted to revive for the modern world the meaning of the Quranic word even as was meant by the Prophet himself or understood by his early followers. The attempt was to clear the Quranic meaning of all accretions which had shrouded it for centuries together. The writings of Mawlana were so popular at the time that had a simultaneous attempt been made to transmit his thought into the languages of the people of the Middle East, a renaissance might have set in the body of Islam. But the pity is that this movement was not allowed the time or the opportunity to develop into a definite school of Islamic thought, and this because Mawlana Azad soon had to give his full time to the politics of the country by throwing himself heart and soul into the struggle for India's independence.

While Mawlana's move for religious re-construction of thought was slowly taking shape, a similar movement prompted by the same political urges was taking its rise in the utterances of the poet Sir Muhammad Iqbal. Even like Mawlana Azad, he had been powerfully moved by the downfall of the Turkish Empire and felt the need to rouse the Muslims of India from their religious torpor. In his study of philosophy, he had been powerfully influenced by the writings of Nietzsche, Bergson, and McTaggart, and in consequence had developed a view of life which he tried to set against the background of Islam and to give expression to it in his poetic work, 'The Asrar-i-Khudi' or 'Secrets of the Self' translated into English by Prof. R. A. Nicholson. His theory of 'self' caught the imagination of the younger people throughout the country. The idea was expressed by him later on in diverse ways through his variegated writings both in Urdu and Persian. But this idea consisted at best of mere flashes, brilliant as they were. No doubt he attempted to expatiate on these flashes in his well-known six lectures entitled 'The Re-Construction of Religious Thought in Islam.' The fact, however, stands that no attempt was made by him to combine his flashes into a flood-light or a definite coherent system, so much so, that his admirers have been left to interpret his flashes in various ways, the approach of each being necessarily subjective. Among those who have echoed in prose the notes that Iqbal struck in his poetry and tried to read a system in them, the leading figure is that of Mr. Ghulam Ahmed Parvez, who through his monthly organ, the 'Tulu-e-Islam,' now issued from Karachi, and his numerous works on Quranic themes, is now leading a movement for religious reform. The primary aim of this movement is to reorganize society in Islam on an economic basis which in some of its bearings is more revolutionary than Marxism.

Among the recent movements for religious reform, note may be taken of the movement associated with an organization known as 'Jama' at-i-Islami' started by Mawlana Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi now working from Lahore, with an independent parallel organization working from Rampur. The aim of this movement is

to return to the ways of the companions of the Prophet and reproduce their life in the atmosphere of today and is pitted against not only every form of modernism in Islam but also every form of orthodoxy contending with its own variety.

Reference needs to be made to yet another organization going under the name of 'Jamiyat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind', a body originally started under the auspices of the Devband Muslim divines having now its branches in most of the States of the Indian Union. Although under the stress of circumstances, this body has had to engage itself since its inception in a form of work which may be easily styled pseudo-political, it has nevertheless been endeavouring to the extent possible for it, to take an active interest in the social and religious uplift of the Muslim masses in India. But constituted as it is at present, the Jamiyat has not acquired that status in the intellectual estimation of learned circles in India which might enable it to aim at functioning as a reformatory movement in Muslim religious thought.

As things stand at the present moment, the feeling is gaining momentum among the higher Muslim intelligentsia in India that something has to be done to re-orientate Muslim religious thought in the context of the present-day world. The idea is sponsored by an association of scholars in Hyderabad started in 1952 under the name of 'The Academy of Islamic Studies'. The objective of the Academy is to prepare ground for a re-orientation of Islamic thought on the one hand, and to promote, on the other, inter-religious understanding and inter-cultural amity among the followers of the different faiths. As an initial step in this direction, the proposition was mooted in 1954 that re-orientation was possible only when a bold attempt was made to clear the Islamic thought of accretions which in the course of history had gathered round it, particularly through the agency of the Traditions or Hadith attributed to the Prophet, and the mediaeval interpretation given on that account to the Quranic word. The move lay in an appeal to the Ulama of the entire Islamic world to make a concerted effort to weed out from the Corpus of Hadith the dross that still clung to the gold therein, and release it in its

purity to serve as a factor in the re-orientation of Islamic thought for the world of today. The proposition was embodied in a memorandum prepared by Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, Sponsor and President of the Academy, entitled 'Toward Re-orientation of Islamic Thought: A Call for Introspection.' This was addressed to all the leading scholars in the different parts of the Islamic world irrespective of their sectarian affiliation, and evoked a very encouraging response from a number of intellectual centres including Al-Azhar University of Cairo. The report on the response elicited was issued by the Academy under the title, "Toward Re-orientation of Islamic Thought (A Fresh Examination of the Hadith literature)." The Academy is pursuing its vision silently at the academic level by preparing studies on various aspects of Islamic thought, and holding discussions thereon periodically, without exciting any positive antagonism on the part of the orthodox Ulama. In fact, the Academy's remarkable publication, "The Mind Al-Quran Builds," contributed by its President has been hailed by Western scholars as a land-mark in the field of Quranic interpretation. The work with its translation into Urdu has gone to create for the Academy an atmosphere of confidence even among the orthodox in the land. The potentialities inherent in the Academy's movement are thus becoming obvious to the thoughtful both at home and abroad. Some of the leading orientalists already look upon this venture as an 'internal movement of major importance'. Although mediaevalism is still a factor to reckon with among the Muslims of India, as of several other countries, one may hope—judging from what has been achieved by now—that the movement sponsored by the Academy may gather strength as time goes on, and express itself, soon or late, in some concrete form of reconstruction of religious thought in Islam.

CHAPTER XVI

CULTURAL SYNTHESIS IN INDIA

The history of India furnishes a striking example of the impact of many divergent races and cultures, which struggled silently for supremacy for sometime, but were gradually transformed by a process of assimilation and mutual adjustment. A survey of these cultural processes as presented in the customs, religions, literatures, and arts of the people of India will demonstrate the unity of Indian culture to which the different races, languages, arts, and religions of India have all made worthy contributions. It will be found that there is a distinct type of thought and life in India which has been enduring through the centuries and which is India's greatest contribution to the world, and in which the Hindu and the Muslim, the Christian and the Parsi, the Aryan and the Dravidian, all find a common source of inspiration. I am sure, a correct reading of history will demonstrate that there is a deep thread of unity running throughout the apparent diversity of race, religion, language, philosophy, science, art and custom in the life of the people. In the words of Sir Herbert Risely, "Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom, and religion which strikes the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. There is in fact an Indian character, a general Indian personality which we cannot resolve into its component elements."¹

1. "People of India" by Sir Herbert Risely (2nd Edition) p 299.

The word 'culture' is of wide significance. It covers the entire field of human activity, intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual, moral, social, economic and political. The seat of 'culture' is the mind of man. It is deeply embedded in the human mind, and rises above all shifting conditions of political life, which always disturb the common moral consciousness permeating the entire body of the people; that is what is the essence of 'culture'. Sometimes people talk of 'religion' and 'culture' as if they were almost interchangeable terms. It is a mistake to overlook the distinction between these two aspects of life. While it is true that a dominant religion never fails to influence the culture of a people, any attempt to identify the 'culture' of man with his religion is to reduce human nature to a simple formula, which is inconsistent with its complexity. 'Culture' is a comprehensive term which includes man's relation to the beauty and glamour of nature, the romance of life, the creativeness of art, the zest of knowledge, the lure of power,—in short, all that civilized people value in mundane life. In fact, there is always an unstable equilibrium between the worldly and other-worldly attitudes of human mind. Religion without its cultural habiliments would remain too abstract; 'culture' without the elevating influence of a religious inspiration would not rise to its full stature. But to confuse them as indistinguishable is to ignore a fundamental fact of human history. It is in this comprehensive sense of the term 'culture' that there is a real cultural synthesis in India, a synthesis that has been going on in the past and that is going on even at the present moment, despite the separatist slogans of political parties and strained communal relations, and linguistic, regional and other rivalries.

INDIA: A UNITY

India is a vast country equal to the continent of Europe minus Russia. This vastness coupled with the variety of its physical features, religious, political, and social conditions, languages, manners and customs, creates a sense of wonder in some minds. They therefore declare that India is really a continent, or at least a sub-continent. Those whose attitude is vitiated by racial or

political prejudices go further and declare that India is too big a land to be called a single unit of a country, and that its peoples, so varied in their elements, can never claim to one Indian nationhood. It is said that even the political and economic unity that exists at present, is the outcome of British rule in India and a direct result of nationalism generated by the desire for freedom. But if we examine this proposition, leaving aside its political and controversial aspects, we find that it is based on fundamentally wrong premises. To find out an answer to this question, we have to ask ourselves: 'what have our forefathers thought about this country,—as a single unit of a country, or a multitude of countries and nationalities?' History gives us the answer that this vast expanse of land from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from sea to sea, has always been considered from time immemorial as a single unit of a country demanding our homage as *Matribhumi* or *Madar-e-Vatan*.

We find the earliest record of this conception of unity in the *Rig Veda*, the oldest existing record of the Hindus. Bharata was the eponymous king of one of the Aryan tribes who fought among themselves for supremacy. We soon find that the name '*Bharatavarsha*' was given to this whole land. Though various provinces received various names at various times, this term still continues in the '*Sankalpa*' which is recited at the commencement of all rituals throughout India with slight changes. We find *Chakravartis* or *Sarvabhaumas* (Emperors) whose suzerainty extended from sea to sea. This idea of political unity was strengthened by the ritualism and the sacrificial practices of the *Rajas* who were enjoined to undertake conquests and subjugate the whole land. The River-Hymn in the *Rigveda* expresses in impassioned poetry the intense patriotism of the Vedic *Rishis*. This theme is repeated in the *Atharva Veda* in a most remarkable manner in what is called the '*Prithvi Sukta*', another impassioned hymn addressed to the mother-land. The last passage which invokes the mother-land as 'bearing in many places people of different speeches, of diverse customs etc.',¹ is

1. *Atharva Veda*—XII Kanda; Mantras 40-45.

a remarkable and significant indication of the unique insight of the Vedic seers into the fundamental conception of national unity. It recognises these diversities of 'speech and custom' as elements of nationhood and as a source of national strength rather than weakness, and as leading to that 'richer and fuller unity in which all diversities lose themselves with their several contributions towards the development of a common life even as a thousand streams merge themselves in the sea'.¹

According to the Manusmrithi and Puranas 'birth in this land is the final felicity rewarding the spiritual merits accumulated through a thousand lives'² and gives better chances of Mukti or putting an end to the continuous revolution of the wheel of births and deaths in which human beings are caught up. In Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Kalidasa's Meghduta, we find beautiful descriptions of the land charged with reverence and devotion. The whole of the Indian peninsula from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari and from Dwarka to Jagannath is interspersed with sacred rivers like Indus, Ganges, Jamna, Saraswati, Narmada, Tapati, Krishna, Godavari, Tungabhadra, Cauvery, and others, hallowed with sacred memories in which every Hindu considers it his duty to bathe. Every pious Hindu yearns for a drop of 'Gangajal' on his death bed. It washes away all temporary pollutions. From the temple of Siva on the Himalayas, and Badrinath and Hardwar in the north to Rameswaram in the south, and from Dwarka on the Western coast to Puri on the eastern, there is a network of temples and shrines and places of pilgrimage sacred to all Hindus, to whichever part of the country they may belong and to whichever caste, sub-caste, or creed they may subscribe.

Thus, leaving aside the several prolonged periods of actual political unity of the whole land achieved under the Vedic and Puranic Kings whose dynasties ruled over the country with varying fortunes, this background of fundamental unity based on so-

1. "Nationalism in Hindu culture" by R. K. Mukerji, p. 14 Asian Library Theological Publishing House, Madras.
2. Quoted by R. K. Mukerji in "Nationalism in Hindu Culture" (Supra) p. 28-29

cio-religious sentiments was strengthened in several other ways which it would be difficult to enumerate. In the words of Vincent Smith "India, encircled as she is by seas and mountains, is indisputably a geographical unit, and as such rightly designated by one name. Her type of civilisation too has many features, which differentiate it from that of all other regions of the world, while they are common to the whole country or rather sub-continent in a degree sufficient to justify its treatment as a unit in the history of social, religious, and intellectual development of mankind."¹ Thus it will be found that the idea of unified India as one common unit is a historical conception as ancient as the Vedas.

History gives us the remarkable story that people of all races and countries who settled in India, forgot the land of their origin and came to love her as their own. If we just go back to the early contacts of India with the Western countries of Arabia, Palestine and Egypt, we find that those contacts are as old as King Solomon who is said to have obtained his gold from Beypur. The Phoenicians traded with India; the Ptolmeys founded ports on the Persian Gulf. The Greeks and the Persians traded with India. The Arabs took a great part in the trade between the East and West, because they controlled the ships that entered the Persian Gulf. Records prove that the Arabs of Pre-Muslim days had settled as traders on the Malabar coast. They used to trade directly with India especially with Malabar which they called 'Alfilfil' 'the land of pepper'.² The Romans got their Indian goods through the Arabs. After Islam, this movement expanded and Muslim Arabs landed on the coast of Malabar. The *Tohfatul-Majahidin*³ mentions that certain pious men of Arabia and Iran were going on a pilgrimage to see 'Adam's foot', but were led astray to Cranganore on the Malabar coast. The Samudri, (Zamorin) as the Raja was called, welcomed them and

1. "Early History of India" by V. A. Smith p. 5

2. "Relations of Arabs with Malabar" by Hakim Shamsullah Qadri—Madras University Lectures in Urdu p. 6-8.

3. See Elliot's "History of India" Vol. I p. 155-116 and preface to Rowlandson's "Tohfatul-Mujahidin"

was himself converted to Islam. Thus the first mosque in India was built at Cranganore in the South. About 600 years earlier in the 1st century A.D., the first Christian Church in India is said to have been built by St. Thomas himself in Kerala. One of the oldest synagogues of the Jews in India is at Ernakulam (Cochin) built by the earliest emigrants. The Muslims who had settled on the Malabar coast were propagating their religion and mixing with the people and marrying among them, giving rise to communities of mixed descent like the Ravuthars and Labbes¹ etc. Even on the Western coasts of Semour, Gujra²th, and Cambay, there were Muslim settlements, established long before the invasion of Mahmud Ghazni. Masudi² and other travellers give an account of those settlements. It is, therefore, incorrect to say that Muslims came to this land as invaders or conquerors. They came first as traders and then as preachers. The invaders came the last. Contact had already been made and the process of assimilation had already begun long before Muhammad Bin Qasim invaded Sindh or Malik Kafur invaded the Deccan. The difference of religion or the conversion of Hindus to Islam does not seem to have created any sense of belonging to 'different nationalities.' The Hindu Raja of Somnath had a number of Muslim officers in his army. Mahmud of Ghazni had a numerous body of Hindu troops who fought for him gallantly under his Hindu Commander Tilak who suppressed the rebellion of Mahmud's Muslim General Niyaltagin. This itself shows that in spite of the enormous amount of sacking of cities, looting of temples, breaking of idols etc., ascribed to Mahmud of Ghazni, his invasion itself was not the result of any religious zeal, but a pure act of political expansion. When Qutbuddin Aibak decided to stay in Hindustan, he had to carry on the administration of the country with the help of the Hindus.

The Muslim kings themselves had to revive the spirit of political unification of India, a spirit which had gradually died

1. See Sturrock's "South Canara, Madras District Manual" p. 180 and Rice's "Mysore and Coorg" Vol. I, p. 353

2. See Elliot's "History of India" Vol. I (Masudi)

out during the 600 years preceding their conquest. Thus after the first shock of conquest was over, the Hindus and Muslims prepared to live as peaceful neighbours. This effort to seek a new life led to the development of a new culture, which was neither exclusively Hindu nor purely Muslim. It is indeed that Hindu-Muslim culture of which India is the proud possessor to-day. This spirit of unification of India which was carefully fostered, nursed, and strengthened by the Muslim Emperors of India had its own social and religious counterpart. From the earliest times, especially after Ghazni's invasion, a stream of Muslim scholars and saints flowed into India¹. They came with decided leanings towards an eclectic Islam—an Islam prepared to recognise the good that could be found in all religions and ready to assimilate it to the enrichment of religious life. Saints like Mansur-al-Hallaj, Baba Rehan, Shaik Ismail Bukhari, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti of Ajmere, Jalaluddin Bukhari of Bhawalpur, Baba Farid of Pakpattan, Nathadvali of Trichinopoly, Baba Fakhruddin of Penugonda, Syed Md. Gesu Daraz Hussaini of Gulbarga, Shah Madar, Kutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Jalaluddin Surkhposh, Ghouse Shattari, Saqi Sarwar, and other innumerable saints lived and died in this land. They had not merely Muslim followers but innumerable Hindu followers. Islam no doubt enjoins only one pilgrimage to Mecca, but the Muslims of India whether, masses or classes, have the same amount of reverence for the sacred Durgahs of these saints as the Hindus have for their places of pilgrimage. Thus the whole country from end to end is interspersed with such places, and remarkable as it may seem, we often find an important and sacred temple of the Hindus side by side an ancient Muslim mosque or durgah. This is not adventitious circumstance or a temporary fact of mean importance. Similarly, if the Hindu exclaimed "Jananni Janmabhumiśca Swargadapi gariyasi", the Moghul Emperor sang "Agar fardaws bar-ruye zamin ast; hamin ast o hamin ast o-hamin ast". It will thus, be found that the idea of India being a unit by itself, is not exotic or temporary, but

1. "Influence of Islam on Indian Culture" by Dr. Tara Chand p. 46-47

that it is a genuine product of history and a permanent national ideal.

RACIAL ASSIMILATION

The process of assimilation that has been going on among different races inhabiting this great land of ours is a fascinating study. The Rig Veda shows that on the advent of the Aryans, they had to face the Dasyus who inhabited the land. There are places where the Dasyus are described as 'black' or 'dark coloured' but the antagonism of the Aryans to them, seems to have been based mainly on the fact that they did not subscribe to the Vedic rituals and sacrifices and the Dharma of the Aryans. We find several non-Aryan tribes mentioned in the Vedas like Vrishyas, Panis, etc., with whom the early Aryans fought just as a Railway passenger entering the carriage has to fight his way against those who are already seated. But the process of Aryanisation soon began and when these non-Aryan tribes were either absorbed or assimilated, we find the name Dasyus giving place to the name Sudras. Many members of the non-Aryan tribes or races espoused the Manu cult (Manu Dharma) and were merged in the Aryan race; the tribes which followed the non-Manu worships were designated first as Dasas and then as Sudras. It appears from Patanjali's Mahabhashya that the Sudras were of two kinds—those who having imbibed the Aryan culture sufficiently, were entitled to perform a sacrifice and could eat from the Aryan plate without defiling it like the Kishkindhas, Gandhikas, Sakas, Yavanas, Sauryas and Kraunchas; and those others who were excluded from sacrifices as well as from eating food from the plate of an Aryan like the Chandalas etc. Probably the same people were subsequently declared as even untouchables.

Thus the term 'Sudra' seems to have included Scythians and Greeks who were foreigners but who adopted the Aryan mode of worship and merged in them, as well as those who belonged to indigenous tribes, did not imbibe the Aryan culture. Thus according to Patanjali, 'Sudra' is one who does not belong to the three Varnas—Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya—and denotes

every other body from the whole world. 'Sudra' like 'Dasa' certainly denoted originally a tribe, but afterwards came to signify anybody who was not a full-fledged Aryan. He may be a veritable barbarian or aborigine. He may be a foreigner endowed with culture. He may be even such a foreigner as has partially assimilated Aryan culture. But if he has not imbibed this culture fully and wholly, especially in its social aspect, he is a Sudra. This is Dr. Bhandarkar's view based on his study of Vedic original sources.¹ The three sections of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas had not crystalised into castes; they were classes. We find Kshatriyas becoming Rishis and even performing priestly duties, and of Brahmanas turning into warriors. In regard to the Varnas, we find that they were mere classes so that an Aryan could, at will, change one for the other. This sort of thing prevailed until the Gupta period, though the hardening process had already begun about the commencement of the Christian era. The Aryans not only Aryanised the other Indians, but they were themselves Indianised. Thus we may call this process both as Aryanisation of Indians and Indianisation of Aryans.

If Dr. Bhandarkar's view is correct,² the Asuras were Assyrians who had settled down in various parts of India and had their kingdoms. Then again there were Vratyas who seem to have been non-Aryan tribes that later on imbibed Aryan culture. They have disappeared as a race and have been completely absorbed. Similarly the Sakas and Yavanas (the Scythians and Ionians) were completely absorbed into the people leaving no trace of their race. Bengal and Bihar used to be called 'Prachya Desa' comprising Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Pundra, and Magadha. Magadha, Pundra, and Vanga were Aryanised much earlier but they became centres of Buddhism and Jainism before they were completely Brahmanised about the third century A. D. There

1. "Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture" by Dr. Bhandarkar p. 10-12

2. "Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture" by Dr. Bhandarkar, Lectures III and IV.

were again tribes called 'Vrishalas' who seem to have stubbornly opposed the spread of Brahmanism in the East of India. The Vrishalas did not believe in Vedic rites and the priesthood of the Brahmans. The Buddhists were mostly recruited from these. They were all absorbed into the general structure of the Hindu community. In Dandaka forest (Deccan) there were the Rakshasas and the Vanaras—two Non-Aryan races or aboriginal tribes with cultures of their own. Rakshasas are mentioned along with Parsus (Persians) and Asuras (Assyrians) by Panini. The Dakshanapatha (Deccan) was inhabited by the Dravidians who had a very ancient culture, far more developed in some respects than that of the Northern Aryans. The intermixture and interaction of these two races has been so deep and profound, that it is impossible at this date to separate the Aryan and the Dravidian elements from the complex culture of the land. 'Agasthya'—the famous sage, seems to have been the head of the movement of Aryanisation of Southern India. It must have taken centuries or a millennium; and the old Tamil records show that this process was not entirely peaceful. Deadly wars were fought and then both the Aryans and the Dravidians settled down to peaceful reckoning and mutual assimilation.

In short, a study of ancient Indian History will prove that in spite of the strictly endogamous form of marriage under the restrictions of caste which became stricter gradually, there has been such a racial admixture in India, that no expert on Ethnology can tell which Indian belongs to which particular race. Except with regard to Parsis who have preserved their racial individuality, and the aboriginal tribes who have not merged completely in the Indian population, no scholar will dare to dogmatise on the racial origins of any particular sect or community. Only general assumptions are possible. Thus racial assimilation had been carried on in India to such an extent in the past that no amount of stringent caste restrictions subsequently made, could prevent inter-marriages, giving rise, on the one hand to communities of mixed descent, and on the other, to the increase of castes and sub-castes to the alarming total of over 3000.

Foreigners like the Greeks, the Huns, and the Sakas were so completely absorbed that the pedigrees of their kings were joined to those of the Surya Vansi and Chandra Vansi Kshatriyas. "Had the Moghuls or the present Englishmen" says Dr. Ketkar "been without an organised priesthood, and had they accepted the Brahmans as their spiritual guides and taken pains to adopt elevating sacraments they also could have formed one of the Kshatriya castes."¹ Again the original fourfold division multiplied by a process of disintegration. Subsequent differences of religion, occupation, language, and locality on the one hand, and the increasing fusion of one sect with another, on the other, have led to the multiplication of castes, sub-castes, and mixed castes which defy all attempts at accurate enumeration. "But despite the prolonged conflict, and the gulf that separates the various groups socially, they have all banded together for centuries, in diverse spheres of public usefulness. Together they have fought their social and political battles, together making the best possible use of their physical and mental endowments in satisfying their material and spiritual needs, as though they were close corporations constituted on joint-stock basis"²

"A Hindu is one who was born in India of Indian parents on both sides and who accepted and obeyed the rules of his caste or community."³ That is the definition of a Hindu given by an eminent English writer. The same can be said of the Indian Muslim or Christian with a little change. Arabs, Turks, Moghuls, Persians and native Indians with all their admixture of racial elements find their representation among the Indian Muslims who can claim no more racial unity for themselves than the Hindus can. We see that while many communities of mixed descent like Moplahs, Ravuttars, Labbes, Nawayts etc., arose in the south, many others arose in Sindh and Gujerat. Similarly there are different Christian communities of mixed descent

1. "History of Caste in India" by Dr. S. V. Ketkar, p. 94

2. "The Legacy of India" by G. T. Garret (Clarendon Press) 1937 on p. 148

3. Ibid.

and all racial elements are represented among the Christians. A detailed study of this problem will reveal to us the gigantic process of racial assimilation that has been going on in the past and which is going on even at the present moment by the sheer force of time-spirit. Indeed even a superficial study and analysis of ethnological processes in India will clearly indicate the absurdity of postulating racial division in this country. It would appear that the rigidity of caste system which prevents marriage outside the caste and the tribe was either a later innovation, or if the antiquity claimed for the rule is to be accepted, it was more honoured in its breach than in its observance. Otherwise the obvious phenomenon of admixture of racial characteristics can hardly find adequate explanation. One can neither distinguish between an Aryan and Dravidian today by his physiognomy, nor is it possible to establish any connection between the colour of the skin and the caste to which a person belongs.

LINGUISTIC SYNTHESIS

Let us now pass on to the synthetic process in the development of languages and literatures of India. Considering the long period of Indian History, and the numerous races and tribes that were assimilated and grew into the Indian population, the process of assimilation in the sphere of languages has not been slow. The variety of language that India presents is often a subject of surprise to observers, but they forget the size of the country. As F.W. Thomas puts it "Linguistically India is not, on a superficial comparison, more complex than the area with which it is usually compared, viz. Europe exclusive of Russia." The linguistic history of India, so far as at present ascertained, is the history of the spread of Indo-Aryan speech, its internal developments, its modification through substrata, and its influence upon those languages which it did not obliterate. Those foreign or local tribes who had adopted the Sanskritic languages as the vehi-

1. *The legacy of India* by G. T. Garret (Clarendon Press 1937) p. 38. According to the census of 1926 the Soviet Union is inhabited by 185 different nationalities and tribes, speaking 147 languages.

cle of their expression, gave up their tribal tongues altogether. Some others that had fairly developed languages, refused to submit to the suppression of their languages. Sanskrit influenced these pre-existent languages mainly in the matter of vocabulary. As the source of vehicle of a higher culture, it has at all periods furnished those languages names of new object and conceptions, and sometimes consolidated the effects by replacing the native terms by its own. The Dravidian languages are as much affected by Sanskrit and its derivatives as is English by the classical languages. This is true of Malayalam perhaps even more than of Tamil.

The Indo-Aryan language has itself undergone continuous transformation. The language of the Aryan tribes who first settled in the Punjab was, in its general features, on a level with the earliest Greek. With their expansion eastward and partly southwards in the course of a thousand years, it developed into the Sanskrit, chiefly through the neglect of some of its grammatical forms. About the 4th century B.C. it is recognisable in three forms—(1) the strict Sanskrit of the Brahman Schools rendered precise by generations of refined and scrupulous study of texts and of pronunciation, and finally fixed by Panini, (2) the language of poets like Valmiki and Vyasa or court-bards etc. distinguished by some irregularities, and (3) a less literary Sanskrit more akin to the normal speech of educated persons employed in treatises on practical sciences and supplementary works etc. The freer language of the Epics continued in Puranas and some Kavyas. The irregular and oral Sanskrit was adopted by the Buddhists for their canonical writings with a good mixture of local dialects. This is the language of the Asokan edicts. The Paninian form was dominant in learned works and classic poetry. But soon a language which is called Monumental Prakrit became the universal language of India from 200 B.C. to 450 A.D. It became the official language of kings and the political language of the country even in the South where Dravidian languages prevailed.

In its millenary process of expansion from the Indus to the borders of Bengal, Sanskrit had to react to varying alien influences; and this resulted in a dialectal variety comprising (1) Magadhi in Magadha (Bihar) (2) Old Prakrit in Punjab, and (3) Western Indian Prakrit in the West. Thus several forms of Prakrits as they were called and Apabhramasas (degenerate popular dialects) arose during this process. "The absence of real frontiers in Hindustan has caused each local form of speech to be a transition stage between its neighbours." Journeys, pilgrimages, business connections etc., have domesticated linguistic peculiarities. Thus all vernaculars of India have been affected by 'mutual borrowings'. But the chief and constant infusion has been and is from the classical language of Sanskrit. This process has been even more continuous and general than the absorption of Latin and French phraseology into English.

Persian was not only current wherever there was Muslim rule, but also in the Durbars of Jaipur, Nepal and Kashmir. If we closely study the vocabulary of the vernaculars of India, we will find that most of the languages came to adopt a considerable number of political, legal and business terms from Persian.

The influence of Persian language on Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Sindhi, Gujarathi, Kashmiri, Bengali, and others has been enormous. The birth of Sindhi, Punjabi and Kashmiri languages is the result of a close linguistic synthesis of Prakrits and Persian, Turkish and Arabic. We have only to consult the dictionaries of other vernaculars to trace out Persian words or their derivatives or other forms. Persian has even influenced southern languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese and Malayalam etc. though not to that extent as it has influenced the northern vernaculars of purely Sanskritic origin. There are traces of Persian grammatical constructions and forms of sentences in all northern vernaculars in varying degrees, though their literatures which have roots in common life are at one point or another adjusted into a general frame of which Sanskrit is the vehi-

1. "The Legacy of India" by S. T. Garret, p. 45-46

cle. Other literatures have also enriched Sanskrit by their inheritance or inspiration. The contribution of Dravidian intellect to the philosophical and religious sections of Sanskrit literature can hardly be exaggerated. It will thus be seen that linguistic assimilation has been going on continuously throughout our history. The only alternative to a violent suppression of a language is assimilation. The Aryans did not, beyond a certain limit, impose their language on those with whom they came into contact; if they had, there would not have been this complex problem of language that we are facing today. We find from inscriptions that even they were not uniformly made in Sanskrit. In later periods, we find Prakrit being adopted for the purpose of inscriptions even in the Deccan. The inscriptions of Andhra kings are mostly in Prakrit during the earlier period. Prakrit was a sort of *Lingua Franca* in those days.

During the Muslim period, Persian was the court language; but it could not supplant Sanskrit; nor could it become the *lingua franca* of India. The vernaculars had just then developed into literary languages. Hindi literature originated with court-bards and charans of Rajputana like Chand Bardai, Bhatta Kedar, Jaganik etc. The Muslim rulers naturally gave preference to the spoken vernaculars that were nearer to what they could easily understand than to Sanskrit. They gave direct impetus to the rise and spread of vernaculars which ultimately supplanted Sanskrit. The other dominant factor which gave a fillip to the growth of vernaculars was the revival of Hindu theistic movements like Vaishnavism of Ramanuja, Madhava, and Chaitanya etc. This new movement which met the popular demand of humanity for a personal God with whom there could be intimate spiritual communion by Bhakti, spread through the languages of the people, just as Buddhism and Jainism had done. Hindi, Bengali and Gujarati in the north and Tamil in the south are outstanding examples. The saints, Hindu and Muslim alike, sang and wrote in the vernaculars. Tamil has a very old history leading up to many centuries before Christ. There were Sanghams (Literary Academies) at Madura that ad-

judicated on literary works. The Vaishnava and Saiva saints of Tamil land composed their devotional songs and wrote religious books; the language had the patronage of their Pandya and Chola kings. Next in antiquity are the Kanarese and Telugu languages.

Sanskrit gave the vernaculars its vocabulary, grammar, system of rhetoric and prosody, literary types and modes, and almost all the themes on which they subsisted upto the 19th century when Western literature began to influence them. Persian poets like Fardusi, Sadi, Hafiz, Mawlana Rum and Omar Khayyam have influenced the Indian vernacular poets. Leila Majnun Shirin Farhad, Gul-e-bakavali, Sohrab and Rustum, Hatim Tai, have all inspired the writers not only of the north, but of the south. Ghazal, Masnavi and Rubai have crept into the languages of the north. Thus we find a double stream of Sanskrit and Persian influences flowing in the course of the development of the modern vernaculars. The third stream of influence, the Western, is now at its height and the vernaculars are advancing in this triple stream of a Triveni confluence.

Hindi developed into a literary language in the Durbars of the Rajput chieftains. The Afghan and Lodhi kings patronised it. The Moghul Emperors not only gave their patronage to Sanskrit and Hindi, but some of them wrote Hindi themselves.¹

Similarly, if we study the History of Urdu language which got separated from Hindi in the time of Shah Jahan, it will be evident that it is based on the Western Hindi dialect which is the descendent of Sauraseni Prakrit. Thus Hindi and Urdu are of the same parentage, but they have taken two different lines of developments. Both Hindus and Muslims have shared in the development of these two languages.² While Urdu sought inspiration from Arabic and Persian, Hindi turned to its original

1. For an account of Muslim patronage to Sanskrit learning see articles by Dr. Jatindra Bimal Chaudhuri published in the *Modern Review* of August 1942 and January 1943

2. See Muhammad Hussain Azad *Abi Hayat* p. 27-68

source, Sanskrit. Literary purism and communal prejudices were foolishly exploited and an unseemly and unnecessary controversy raged as to which of the two languages, Hindi or Urdu, should be adopted as the lingua franca of India. The Pandits wrote in unintelligible and high-flown sanskritised Hindi, and the Moulvis wrote in an equally unintelligible arabicised jargon and called it Urdu—and both of them fought each other. But the time spirit solved these questions in a natural way. It is the exigencies of business and travel, the supreme necessity of being understood, and the proximity of the new language to the languages and culture of the large majority of the people which finally determine the selection of the lingua franca which can only evolve naturally out of the environment and can never be violently superimposed by any external authority. The stage, the talkies, and the radio, are popularising a language in all nooks and corners of the land—you call it Hindi, or Hindustani—whichever you like; it is that language which will become the lingua franca without supplanting the provincial languages which have vast literatures of their own with a history going back to centuries.

Even in matters of script, there are proofs of assimilation. About 15 scripts are used commonly in connection with Indian vernaculars though it is not uncommon for one language to be written in different scripts in this country. Persian characters are used for Urdu, Punjabi, Kashmiri, and Sindhi. The remaining scripts are native to India and are descended from a single form of writing called 'Brahmi' worked out in the Aryan period. For the most part they have been preserved intact with but slight modifications. This legacy of alphabets has been transmitted by India to Greater India viz. Ceylon, Malaya, Tibet and Central Asia.¹

The post-independent developments in the field of linguistic synthesis have been diverse and have to a certain extent produced mixed results. While the controversy regarding the Raj Bhasha was set at rest by the Constitution in 1950, and Hindi written

1. "The Legacy of India" by G. T. Garret p. 48.

in Deva Nagri script was recognised as the official language of the country, the major regional languages were guaranteed their freedom for development. A period of 15 years was fixed for the gradual development of the Hindi language and its acceptance in all parts of India. Experience has shown, however, that despite the expiry of almost half of the period of preparation for the substitution of English by Hindi as the official language, the advance made in that direction has not been satisfactory, and the period will inevitably have to be extended. Apart from that, however, Hindi language itself is passing and will have to pass through a process of transformation and enrichment by profuse borrowing from and assimilation with other regional languages, besides Sanskrit which will of course be the main source of its wealth and fulfilment.

This new development of the recognition of Hindi as an All-India official language has also invigorated the process of mutual lending and borrowing among the 15 major languages of India which had started almost simultaneously with the birth of the nation's freedom movement. There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of translations of literary and other books from one language into another during the last decade covered by the post-Independence period. There is a far greater interest to be found now, both among scholars and lay educated readers of one language and literature, for developing contacts with the languages and literatures of other provinces, than before. The literary journals in the regional languages vie with one another in publishing translations of good works from other languages. The remarkable advance made by the regional languages, as noticed in some earlier chapters, must be welcomed as a necessary and most laudable attempt towards the consolidation of the cultural unity of India, particularly in the context of the recent linguistic squabbles generated by the movement for Reorganisation of States. As Dr. Radhakrishnan says, "There is a unity of outlooks, as the writers in different languages derive their inspiration from a common source and face more or less the same

kind of experience emotional and intellectual. Our country has never been insensitive to ideas which come from abroad, but gives to all of them its own peculiar turn and imprint."¹

SCIENCES, ARTS AND MUSIC

Sciences

All Sciences and Arts of ancient India trace their origin to the Vedas which contain the roots thereof in however condensed and sometimes mystic form. While the principal Vedas called the Thrayi contain more of metaphysical and ritual knowledge, the fourth Veda, Atharva, gives us an insight into the scientific knowledge of Vedic times. The necessity of laying out the Yagnasalas or the sacrificial places accurately and in accordance with measurements given in the instructions, evolved in very early times a simple system of Geometry. But in the sphere of exact sciences, it is probably Mathematics and Astronomy wherein there was phenomenal development in later times especially in the Gupta period and reached a stage far in advance of the ancient nations. The Indian mathematician had a clear conception of abstract number as distinguished from numerical quantity or spacial extension. With the aid of a simple numeral notation, India devised a rudimentary Algebra which allowed more complicated processes than known to the Greeks. The value of Sunya or Zero was a fundamental contribution made by India even before Aryabhata (A.D. 449). The Arabs and the Romans seem to have got this knowledge from India; the former calling mathematics as the 'Indian Art' (Al-Hindsa). There is no doubt that the decimal notation, with the other mathematical lore was learnt by the Muslim world through early commercial contacts with India. Medieval Indian mathematicians such as Brahmagupta (7th century), Mahavira (9th century) and Bhaskara (12th century) made several discoveries which were not known to Europe till the Renaissance or later. They understood the import of positive and negative quantities and developed methods of extracting

1—Foreword to "Contemporary Indian Literature" published by the Sahitya Akademi.

square and cube roots and of solving quadratic and other indeterminate equations. It is Bhaskara who finally proved that the value of zero or Sunya was infinity. Alberuni, the learned Arab traveller, who spent over a decade in India during the period of Mahmud of Ghazni in the beginning of 11th century A.D., freely admits the greatness of Hindu mathematicians and astronomers, though he does not spare any criticism of Hindus in matters of religious and social practices. He has also praised their capability in Engineering, especially their capacity to build water-reservoirs. Alberuni felt a strong inclination towards Indian Philosophy. "He seems to have thought that the philosophers both in ancient Greece and India, whom he most carefully and repeatedly distinguishes from the ignorant, image-loving crowd, held in reality the very same ideas, the same as seem to have been his own, i.e. those of a pure monotheism."¹ His work is a remarkable attempt of an ancient Arab scholar endowed with a rational and scientific spirit to examine and assess the religious, philosophic and scientific thought of India within the limits of the knowledge vouchsafed to him during a period of 12 years' sojourn in India. He has elaborately discussed the metaphysical, cosmological, mathematical, astronomical and other scientific theories then known to the Hindus. It is inconceivable that he was entirely uninfluenced by this knowledge in the presentation of his magnum opus a decade later.

Medical and physiological lore is to be found in the Vedas in its primitive form, especially in the Atharvaveda which contains references to diseases and their treatment through Mantras and medicines. Ayurveda, the science of Indian medicine, and the science of Astronomy (including Astrology) form part of the six angas of the Vedas included in Vedic studies. But the basic texts of Ayurveda which are extant are ascribed to Charaka and Sushruta and they are the products of a fully evolved system resembling those of Hippocrates and Galen in many respects and

1. See Preface to Alberuni's *India* (translated by Sachaa) P. xviii

much more advanced in some other respects. This stage of development of Ayurveda could have been attained only after a long period of gradual evolution both during the pre-Buddhist and pre-Christian eras before these masters. Surgery was not at all unknown, as over 125 surgical instruments have been mentioned in these texts of Sushruta who mainly dealt with surgery. Indian materia medica is considered to be the most comprehensive in the world, and still constitutes in its modern and scientifically developed form the mainstay of Allopathic and other systems of medicine. Both physiology and medicine developed early enough through the phenomena of Yoga practices, and through Buddhism. The Buddhist monk like the Christian missionary served the sick and not being content with the medical magic and mantras, developed a rational attitude. It is inconceivable that a medical science so developed as Ayurveda in those days could have been the result of mere empirical knowledge. On the other hand, the systematic manner in which the Indian sciences of Medicine, Physics, Chemistry, Metallurgy, Engineering and Architecture and others were gradually developed, clearly shows that they followed the same scientific methodology of observation and experiments and logical processes of thought which led scientists of to-day to discovery of truth. It may be that the early Indian mind laid stress on the intuitive perception of these truths and rendered them more liable to be branded as empirical, but the principles of Tarka-Sastra or Logic as understood and propounded by Indian logicians have not been improved upon so far, and it would be clearly untenable to suppose that those principles were not followed by them in the development of their scientific thought. The remains of old Buddhist Viharas and Universities clearly indicate the existence of laboratories for experimenting in positive sciences.

The development of medicine seems to have been stimulated by contact with Hellenic physicians. The resemblance between the Greek and Indian systems suggests mutual borrowing. The Unani system of medicine came to India through the Arabs who improved upon it and passed on to the West again in medieval

times, for further development. The similarity of the Ayurvedic and Unani systems in their fundamentals like the dosha or humoral theory of the origin of diseases and the methodology of treatment is significant. In the Middle East, the Arab system continued to be called as Unani (Greek) Tibb and was patronised by the Eastern Caliphs like Haroon-al-Rashed. During his period many learned Indian scholars including scientists and medical men enjoyed his patronage and the latter exercised considerable influence on the Unani system. It is well known that Vagbhata's work *Ashtanga Hridaya* was translated during the Khalif's time. The Bermacides, a line of the Vazirs of the Khalifs, seemed to trace their lineage from India. The Universities of Bhagdad and Cardova were great centres of scientific and philosophic synthesis. Thus the Ayurveda from its hoary beginnings in the Vedic times assumed a very developed form and continued to grow till the 16th century A.D. when Bhavamisra wrote his *Bhavaprakasa*, the last of the original works on Ayurveda which contains descriptions of new venereal diseases and new prescriptions and drugs of other countries. This shows clearly that the ancient Hindus were not averse to adopting new theories and ideas and were in the habit of including foreign medicines in their pharmacopoeia. After a gap of over 300 years now, the sciences of Ayurveda and Unani are receiving some stimulus and scientific research into herbs, plants, and minerals etc., is being made in laboratories at Lucknow and other places. An integrated study of the modern Allopathic medicine with Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha systems is being attempted at Madras with good results. Though ordinary medical graduates or L.I.M.'s, as they are called, do not seem to satisfy many people, the research being carried on at Jamnagar and by the scholars at Madras and other places are bound to yield fruitful results. There is a definite trend noticeable now in favour of introducing experimental research into the indigenous systems of medicine and take the fullest advantage of the undoubtedly efficacious results of their drugs; and there is also a greater appreciation of their fundamental principles.

Apart from the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine, the old Siddha system prevalent in South India is directly responsible for the growth of Chemistry which probably originated as a necessary branch of medicine, but later transcended that sphere. The origin of this Siddha system seems to be traceable to Siva cult of Mohenjodaro. The word 'Siddha' means one who has attained perfection (Siddhi) or received the eight supernatural powers. They were called 'Siddhars' in the south and flourished in Tamil Nad. It is said that there are more than 500 Siddha medical works containing over 3,000 valuable formulas, composed of 5 lakhs of poems or stanzas. This system seems to have developed Chemistry and Alchemy to a high degree of perfection. These Siddhars knew the processes of calcination, preparation of essences, extraction from minerals and the preparation of what is known as "Muppu", the chemical agent used in making animated mercury pills or 'kattu' with high potency capable of transmuting metals and rejuvenating the human system. Mercury was the special subject of their study and experimentation. The high degree of development which had been attained in Chemistry and Alchemy during the pre-Buddhist periods in India can be known from the number of valuable works on Rasa Sastra which have been discovered and some of which have been translated into English. It would appear therefore that they had followed a scientific method and had a highly developed Applied Logic of the Sciences 'which was more comprehensive and rigorous than that of J. S. Mill'.¹ It is apparent that the ancient Saivaite Tantras prevalent both in the North and North-West of India and in the South, and their later counterparts of the Buddhist Tantras, stimulated the scientific spirit of enquiry into the physical properties of various forms of matter, apart from their esoteric or mystic aspects which are to be found in them. The renowned Nagarjuna who was born and brought up in the Brahmanic faith but was afterwards converted to Buddhism was not only the originator of the Madhyamika philosophy of the Mahayana school of Buddhism,

1. "History of Hindu Chemistry" by P. C. Ray, p. 234

but a great adept in magic, conjuration and above all a celebrated Alchemist. He seems to have been a contemporary of Satavahana, if the *Rasa-ratnakara*, the Buddhist tantric work ascribed to him on Alchemy is to be believed. From the 5th to the 11th century A.D., the Buddhist Universities of Pataliputra, Nalanda, Vikramasila, and Udandapura and probably Vijayapuri (at Nagarjunakonda) were seats of learning where alchemy was included in the curricula of studies. This spread to Tibet and the Deccan through the monks who fled from the universities after their destruction. The knowledge of chemistry reflected in the later Tantras is considered by some eminent orientalisists as having been derived by the intercourse with Arabs. In fact not only in the matter of medicine, chemistry (including Alchemy) but also in Astronomy, there seems to have been considerable lending and borrowing between the Greeks, the Arabs and the Romans on the one hand and the Indians on the other. Though all the sciences which the Indians developed had an indigenous origin and developed, on their own lines, they seem to have never hesitated to derive knowledge from Mleccha sources, the term being generically applied indiscriminately to Sakas, Yavanas (Greeks or Bactrians), the Chinas (Chinese) and others. In fact Varavamihira expresses his admiration for the Mlecchas and Yavanas for their great proficiency in Astronomy. 'Romaka-Siddhanta', an important work on Astronomy is an ample proof of Roman influence.

The mechanical, physical and chemical theories of the ancient Hindus make an interesting study. The Sankhya Pathanjala system accounts for the universe on principles of cosmic evolution, while the Vaisheshika Nyaya system lays down the scientific methodology and elaborates the concepts of mechanics, physics and chemistry. The Vedanta, the Mimamsa, the Buddha, the Jaina and the Charvaka systems, all make incidental contribution of special interest. Their conception of the universe as Prakriti which is conceived as formless and undifferentiated, limitless and indestructible, without beginning and without end, led them to the differentiation of the three famous Gunas of Satva, Rajas and Tamas. The creation according to them is the result of the dis-

turbances in the equilibrium in these Gunas caused by the Purusha. On this was based their formula of evolution and creation. They had a conception of the atomic theory of matter and worked it out in surprising detail both in the pre-Buddhist and Buddhist periods. We find a gradual evolution of theories of matter into Paramanuvada of the Nyaya-vaisheshika system of thought. The properties of mass and of sound and all other kinds of matter were well-known to them, and if a detailed study of these theories is made, it will be found that in the course of the millennial evolution of scientific knowledge in the ancient days, there has been enough of lending and borrowing from their contemporaries. Sciences and arts are international and universal in their essence. In this realm of human activity, there has always been lending and borrowing, thus making for the advancement of the sum total of human knowledge. Modern education has put all Indians on a common basis and has tended to give uniformity to their attitude regarding sciences and all branches of knowledge which is one of the most important foundations of culture.

Arts—Architecture

Indian arts as well as other important aspects of Indian civilisation have come in for extravagant criticism by critics who could not understand and appreciate the foundations of Indian culture. It is the lack of understanding of the spiritual motive which characterised all aspects of Indian culture that provoked once the question, "Is India civilised?". The question was actually put by an eminent writer like Mr. William Archer. It was Sir John Woodroffe who took up the cudgels on behalf of India and tried to explain and answer his criticism. Archer, the famous dramatic critic, had assailed the whole life and culture of India together with all her great achievements in philosophy, religion, poetry, painting, sculpture, Upanishads, Maha Bharata and Ramayana, and indulged in wholesale condemnation of all these as a repulsive mass of unspeakable barbarism. Since then, and even before, there were many western scholars of greater erudition and understanding who had the insight into the fundamentals of Indian culture

and gave a more truthful interpretation, even of the fundamental principles of art followed by India. 'All great artistic work proceeds from an act of intuition, not really an intellectual idea or a splendid imagination—these are only mental translations—but a direct intuition of some truth of life or being, some significant form of that truth, some development of it in the mind of man. To this extent there is no difference between great European and great Indian art.' The essence of the difference is in its ideal. Indian art in fact is identical in its spiritual aim and principle with the rest of Indian culture. 'A seeing in the self accordingly becomes the characteristic method of the Indian artist and it is directly enjoined on him by the canon. He has to see first in his spiritual being the truth of the thing he must express and to create its form in his intuitive mind; he is not bound to look out first on outward life and nature for his model, his authority, his rule, his teacher or his foundation of suggestion.' He also goes to nature, to represent his intuitive picture as closely as possible to nature. But the line and colour and the rest are not his first but his last pre-occupation.¹ It is this distinctive character of Indian art that has to be understood. Indian architecture, painting, sculpture are not only intimately one in inspiration with the central things in Indian philosophy, religion, yoga, culture, but a specially intense expression of their significance. The great temples of the South of India are the architectural self-expression of an ancient spiritual and religious culture. 'If you ignore the spiritual suggestion, the religious significance, and only look at them with the rational secular aesthetic mind, they might even appear as examples of gigantic barbarism'.² This applies more to Dravidian architecture. The architectural language of the north is somewhat different from that of the south, but the same spiritual, meditative and intuitive methods find expression in both the styles. The art of sculpture flourished supremely only in ancient countries where it was conceived against its natural background and supports a greater architecture. Egypt, Greece and India take the premier rank in this

1. Chapters VI and IX, "The Foundations of Indian Culture" by Sri Aurobindo Ghosh.

2. Ibid.

kind of creation. Medieval and modern Europe produced nothing of the same mastery, abundance, and amplitude. In Egypt, and in India specially, sculpture preserved its power of successful evolution from the ravages of time. The earliest recently discovered work in India dates back to the 5th Century B.C. and was already fully evolved with an evident history of previous creation extending over two millenniums of accomplished sculptural creations. But we find in this evolution an attempt to combine the Greek aesthetic sense of idealising external nature with the expression of an inner truth which is the essence of the Indian idea. A combination of these two concepts is to be found in the later arts of sculpture, architecture and painting in our country. It is here that the greatness of Indian sculpture lies, because it expresses in stone and bronze what the Greek aesthetic mind could only conceive and express imperfectly on account of lack of spiritual depth. The Indian thinks, but he produces his work only after he has closed his eyes to the instances of physical circumstances; he sees them in the psychic memory and transforms them within so as to bring out something other than mere physical reality or its intellectual significance. Indian artist had all the same a perfect idea of proportion and rhythm and uses them in certain styles with nobility and power combining perfect grace and lyrical sweetness with intuitive spiritual beauty.

In spite of national peculiarities, we find an age-long assimilation in all the three principal arts of painting, architecture and music. "The vital creative impulse which inspired any period of Indian Art", says Havell, "had its source in the traditional Indian culture planted in Indian soil by Aryan philosophy and influenced the greatest work of the Mohamedan period as much as any other." He also testifies to the fact that in the realm of art, "the fundamental antagonism between Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs which we so often assume never existed at any time".¹ The Indo-Saracenic or Indo-Muslim art must have had its beginnings with the infiltration of Muslim artists and craftsmen from Persia

1. Havell—"Indian Architecture" p. 1-2.

2. Ibid.—p. 3.

and Egypt. India had by that time a highly developed architecture of its own. There was a harmonious blending of the native architectural forms and the Saracenic styles brought by the new comers, and what is called the Indo-Muslim art grew out of it. Even the expert cannot say which part of it is purely "Saracenic" and which part has the impress of purely 'Hindu Art'. Both Hindu and Muslim arts were conditioned by their practical needs of religion and worship. The Hindu is a spiritual anarchist and his intensely personal and individualistic worship consists in ardent self-communion with God in abstraction from all outward phenomena. When he gains the vision of inner unity, he returns to the world and reduces the multiplicity into oneness again; for him every twig and branch and flower has its place in the Virat Swarup or the total aggregate of all. The variety of styles and mouldings and the richness of ornament that we find in Hindu architecture is the objectification of this consciousness. The Islamic art in all its variety of forms embodies the Islamic vision of Reality. On the soil of India, both these elements coalesced to form a new type of architecture. The simple severity of Muslim architecture was toned down and the plastic exuberance of the Hindu was restrained; while the craftsmanship and ornamental richness of design was largely Hindu, the arches and domes, smooth-faced walls and spacious interiors which are characteristic of Muslim architecture were introduced in varying degrees according to local traditions and regional peculiarities. Thus the artistic quality of civil buildings erected since the 13th century both by the Hindus and the Muslims is the same. Even in the construction of temples and mosques, there was a definite blending of the two styles. All the mosques built by Muslim rulers at Delhi, Ajmer, Agra, Malwa, Gujarat, Jaunpur, Bijapur, etc., since the 13th century, bear this impress. The Hindu princes of Rajputana and Bundelkhand who built their temples and palaces at Raipur, Jodhpur, Gwalior and other places adopted this new style. The Visveswar temple at Benares, the golden temple at Amritsar, temples at Gwalior, and the palaces of Ranjit Singh, the princes of Kathiawar, and Udaipur are examples of this synthetic Indian Art.

Qutabminar and the Taj-Mahal (that poem in marble) which are the pride of India are outstanding examples of that medieval Indian Art. Again, can it be said that Ellora and Ajanta are not a source of pride to Indian Muslims because they are exclusively Hindu in their conception and execution? Can any Hindu, however, communal, disclaim the glory of Taj-Mahal, because it was built by a Muslim Emperor as a Mausoleum for his beloved spouse? Islam and Hinduism would be unacceptably narrow religions indeed, if they created or perpetuated such barriers! The great sage Arobindo has said of the Indo-Moslem architecture that "the Indian mind has taken in much from the Arab and Persian imagination" and that there is an 'impress of the robust and bold Afghan and Mogul temperament." He further says about the Taj: "The Taj is not merely a sensuous reminiscence of an imperial amour or a fairy enchantment hewn from the moon's lucent quarries, but the eternal dream of a love that survives death. The great mosques embody often a religious aspiration lifted to a noble austerity which supports and is not lessened by the subordinated ornament and grace. The tombs reach beyond death to the beauty and joy of paradise".¹

The art of painting in ancient and later India does not create quite so great an impression as sculpture and architecture because of the comparative scantiness of its surviving creations. But continuity of theory and practice is evident from the earliest known specimens to the recent development. The history of Indian painting covers as long a period as more or less occupied by other artistic creations. The Silpasutras lay down rules and traditions of this elaborate science. The frequent references in the ancient literature to these arts and to the rules relating to them would have been impossible without a widespread practice and appreciation by both men and women of the cultured classes of this country. There are references in Kalidasa, Bhavabhooti, Bhasa and Buddhist works. This continuity is maintained in its essential spirit and tradition though there have been frequent

1. "The Foundations of Indian Culture," by Sri Arobindo Ghosh, p. 253 and 254.

changes of style and manner. There is essential difference between the art of painting and those of sculpture and architecture. Sculptor must express always in static form; the painter on the contrary has to lavish his mind and soul in colour; and there is a liquidity in the form, a fluent grace and subtility in line. It is therefore naturally the most sensuous of the arts, and the highest ideal open to the painter is to spiritualise this sensuous appeal by making the most vivid outward beauty a revelation of spiritual motion. The six limbs of his art are called the *Shadanga* and are common to all work in line and colour. They are the necessary elements and common to all art in India. Critics of high repute have spoken of the Indian influence on Japanese art, while the art specimens in Java, Bali, Borneo, Indonesia and other countries can be directly traced to Indian art and is in a sense more truly representative of the ancient artistic traditions of India. In fact, it may be said that almost all oriental art is akin in this respect. Even the Mogul paintings are not an exotic importation from Persia. In it we find a harmonious blending of two mentalities. On the one side, there is a leaning to some kind of externalism which is quite different from western naturalism, and on the other, the central aim of spiritual self-expression characteristic of Indian art has also been maintained.

The history of modern Indian painting is the account of the aesthetic expression of a culture which grew out of the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The outstanding remains of ancient Indian art of painting are the frescoes of Ajanta. Europe chose 'colour' and Asia chose 'line' as the language of its art. This 'line' is the common medium both of Hindu and Muslim art. After the 'frescoes', there seems to be an unfilled gap of nearly 900 years after which the second period of Indian art of painting began with the Choghtai rulers of India. The old Muslim art of Samarkand, Herat, Isfahan, and Baghdad is affiliated to the antique and the Christian art of the West. Under Timur, the Moghul style became more individualised. When Babur conquered India, the style of Bihzad was the standard of perfection. The Choghtai rulers set Bihzad before Indian painters as

the master; the elements of the Timuride school were thus engrafted upon the traditions of Ajanta. Upon the richness of form and the plasticity of Ajanta were imposed the new laws of symmetry, proportion and spacing from Samarkand and Herat resulting in the loss of some energy and dynamic of both, but in the acquisition of a marvellous richness of colour and subtlety of line. This new style was soon perfected by a number of artists whose names we find in the Aini-Akbari. The two famous schools of painting that emerged out of this synthesis are the Rajaput and Moghul schools. The differences of technique in these two are negligible; the processes of painting are all alike. The difference of subjects was conditioned by the traditions of the courts that patronised them, but the aesthetic qualities of both are the same. The Raginis and Naikas are all Rajaput ladies sitting like Persian maidens under overhanging branches of blossoming trees. This common style created by Hindu and Muslim artists was copied by artists of Jaipur, Kashmir, Lahore, Amritsar and even Vijayanagar and Tanjore. These traditions of Rajaput and Moghul paintings finally disappeared as the result of the change of taste produced by English education. Raja Ravi Varma partly copied European style. The work of the modern school of Indian Painting is a phase of the national reawakening. Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Ganguly, Gaganendranath Tagore, Asit Kumar Haldar, Hakim M. Khan, and Samarendranath Gupta, and Venkatappiah of Mysore and several others created the modern school of art at Calcutta. This was followed by the Bombay school and the Andhra school at Masulipatam exhibiting varying degrees of grace, perfection and nationalistic revivalism. They are not free from European and Japanese influences, but there is a distinct 'Indianness' about them bearing the clear impress of Ajanta, Moghul, and Rajaput art. Abdul Rahman Chughtai is another great artist whose contribution to Artistic revivalism can hardly be exaggerated. Modern Indian art is thus a synthesis of the aesthetic tendencies of the people, tendencies in which we find an increasing unity of aesthetic sense running through the variety of regional peculiar-

rities, which tend to disappear with the increasing uniformity of taste, being created by the sheer force of time and environment. Even in the sphere of the art of painting, as in literature, we find today an increasing tendency of imitating and following the twentieth century theories of the West in an extravagant and indiscriminate manner. Realism, surrealism, symbolism, and suggestivism and several other 'isms' are being followed by modern Indian artists to the utter disregard of the fundamentals of our national art and leading sometimes to grotesque productions. But this being a transitional phase, we may expect more discrimination on the part of artists in the coming years and the evolution therefrom of a truly national art of Painting with the best combination of the fundamental basis of our culture and the modern spirit of the new age.

Music

Though the early history of the origins of Indian music and dance is shrouded in mystic and mythological legends, the name of the sage Bharata stands as the earliest of law-givers in the field of these arts. The full history of the development of the art of music in India tracing its various stages of transformation has yet to be written, but even the scrappy information available to us is sufficient to give a general idea of the hoary traditions as well as the eclectic spirit which permeated in India through the sages in all matters of cultural progress. The *Vedic Index* lists a variety of musical instruments like drums, cymbals, lutes, veenas and other stringed instruments and wind instruments like flutes. By the time of the Yajur Veda several kinds of professional musicians appear to have arisen; for lute-players, drummers, flute-players and conch-blowers are mentioned in the list of callings. The fact that the complicated method of chanting the Sama Veda can be traced to the Indo-Iranian age, is a conclusive proof that by then vocal music had already got beyond the primitive stage. These hymns of the Rig and Sama Vedas are the earliest examples of words set to music, unless of course it is proved that the Zendavesta was also being chanted. There

were strict rules governing the chanting of Sama Veda. It appears that in the earlier period the musical scale was based on the tetrachord (*Chatuhsvara*), but the whole series of seven notes or *saptasvaras* of the octave seem to have been recognised by the 5th century B. C. According to the South Indian tradition the *samam* scale was pentatonic before it became heptatonic; the South Indian musical tradition still maintains some ancient traditions intact, though they underwent a change in the North in later times. The *Chandogya* and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads* (600 B. C.) mention the chanting of Sama Veda and refer to musical implements. The great grammarian Panini (326 B. C.) refers to *sutras* on dancing. The disciples of Gautama Buddha are said to have attended dramatic preferences. In Valmiki's *Ramayana* there are many references to singing of ballads, and musical similies of stringed instruments and *Mridanga* and lute are to be found. Lakshmana heard in Sugriva's harem ravishing strains of *Vina*. Ravana was a great master of music and is said to have appeased Siva by his musical chanting of Vedas. *Mahabharata* speaks of the seven *svaras* and makes mention of music frequently. The Buddhist *Jatakas* refer to musical instruments like drums, gongs and cymbals. In the old Tamil books of the 1st century A. D. the drum occupies a position of honour, especially the battle-drum. In early Tamil literature of the first and second centuries, the seven *Palai* (old Dravidian modes), and an instrument, probably resembling the modern *Vina*, called *Yal* is frequently referred to. The old Tamil classic, *Silapadikaram* (A. D. 300) mentions the seven notes or *svaras*, but gives different names which are purely Tamil words. There are other sources found by scholars which indicate that music had reached a high state of development in South India by the early centuries of the Christian era.

The external relations of India in the early centuries of the Christian era are too obscure to be able to say whether the musical systems of Greece, Arabia and Persia had definite relationship with that of India. But it is certain that there was considerable inter-communication and commercial intercourse be-

tween India and these countries. Recent researches have proved that there was considerable Persian influence in India during the Mauryan Empire (300 B. C.). The musical systems show much resemblance in certain essential features. It is well known that Gandhara (Kandhar) was in those days a centre of Greco-Indian culture and Taxila was a very important Buddhist University. Though direct evidence is not available, it is extremely significant that one of the important notes of the gamut is called Gandhara. Raga is the basis of melody in Indian music, and the variety of these Ragas whose systematic classification is admitted to present considerable difficulty, is the result of a continuous and laborious attempt of an artistic nation to reduce to law and order the melodies that come and go on the lips of the people. The Ragas are different series of notes within the octave, which form the basis of all Indian melodies which can be sung in varied forms in accordance with certain well recognized principles based on the Sthayi, Arohi, Avarohi, and Sanchari variations of the fixed notes. They probably originated from the sources of the local tribal songs, poetical creations, devotional songs, and compositions of scientific musicians. Bharat gives only 14 Jatis and Murchanas but they were developed and multiplied by shifting of tones and various additions of grace which is the essence of the melody of Indian music. In fact the process is never-ending and even now talented musicians are engaged in the process of formation of new Ragas, which shows that the science and art of music, at least, cannot be static in any sense of the term. For the last 400 years the South has had a more or less uniform system of what is generally known as the Carnatic music and has crystallised into its present form, mostly based on the scientific system evolved by Venkatamakhi (C 1600), but the Northern or the Hindustani system of music has undergone frequent and many changes which almost defy systematisation mainly on account of the impact of Turkish, Persian and other influences on its development. But in spite of the fact that since Shahjehan's time, the differences between the Carnatic and Hindustani musical systems was accentuated, the basis of both

systems remains the same and the latter system can be said to be the direct result of the synthetic process silently going on during the last 1000 years of Muslim contact.

The seventh and eighth centuries of Christian era witnessed a great religious revival in South India associated with the Bhakti movement connected with the theistic sects of Vishnu and Siva, which were made popular and spread far and wide by devotional songs composed by the religious leaders known as Alwars and Nayanars respectively. This gave an impetus to the development of musical activity among the people. The old melodies to which these songs were sung are now lost and are in complete disuse in the South except in Kerala which was the homeland of the Chera Kingdom and the seat of an ancient Tamil culture. It is said that the song-traditions embodied in Silappadikaram have been preserved to this day in Kerala in the large variety of "Pattus" which form the bulk of the musical heritage of Kerala. The music of the Thevaram and the sonorous chanting of Thiruvaymozi evolved a style of singing called the 'Sopana style' which is prevalent now only in Kerala. The first north Indian musician Jayadeva who lived at the end of the 12th century near Bolpur in Bengal at Kenduta or 'Thindubilva' as he called it, exercised the greatest influence all over India. He wrote and sang his Gita-Govinda, a collection of Sanskrit lyrical songs describing the amours of Radha and Krishna; he belongs to the top-ranking composers of the Bhakti school. His 'Ashtapadis' as they are called are sung both by Hindustani and Carnatic musicians in styles peculiar to their respective schools. In Kerala, these Ashtapadis are also sung in temples in the 'Margi' or 'Sopana' style of singing. The introduction of Gita-Govinda effected a remarkable transformation in the music of Kerala during the 14th and 15th centuries A.D. The use of 'Padmas' or musical compositions on the model of Jayadeva was sponsored by the Zamorins of Calicut and the Maharajas of Travancore and introduced into the 'attams' or dance-dramas of Kerala which later developed into the famous Kathakali which is a unique combination of dance, drama and

music. Some of the ancient ragas mentioned in the Tamil classics seem to have been preserved in the Kathakali songs.¹

Bharata's *Natya Sastra* contains in 9 chapters, the oldest detailed exposition of Indian musical theory dealing with svaras, srutis, gramas, murchanas and jatis. The principles of his theory are still active in Indian music whether it is Hindustani or Carnatic; the details of his system are said to "belong to the past and not easily intelligible to the present generation. From the 2nd century B. C. when Bharata's *Natya Sastra* is said to have been composed till the 12th century A. D., very few works on music are said to be available which explains this vacuum and unintelligibility. The next greatest authority seems to be Saringadeva (A. D. 1210-1247) who was at the court of Yadava King of Devagiri in the Deccan. His work '*Sangitaratnakara*' is a highly respected authority dealing with the whole range of musical form and composition and giving a detailed account of ancient musical theory. It is said that his work indicates his contact with both systems and seems to attempt an exposition of 'the common theory which underlies both systems.'² The 14th and 15th centuries are the next important periods of the development of the Hindustani or the Northern system. The Sultans and Emperors of Delhi encouraged music by attaching reputed musicians to their courts. Sultan Allauddin Khilji (1295-1316 A.D.), entertained besides Amir Khusro, the famous multi-linguist poet and reputed musician, a famous South Indian musician from Vijayanagar known as Gopala Naik. Amir Khusro is the father of the Qawwali music. He is said to have introduced the Sitar, a modification of Vina. He seems to have introduced a judicious mixture of Persian and Indian models and is said to have introduced new Ragas like Khayal which is associated with him. The sultans of Delhi and other kings patronised a lot of Southern musicians and it appears that many authors of musical works on the northern system are southerners as their

1. *The Music of Kerala and other Essays* by Pudukal

2. See "*Music of India*" by Rev. Popley (*Heritage of India Series*)

names indicate, like Lochanakavi; Pundarika Vittal, and Ahobila Pandit who lived in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries A. D. respectively. The Hindustani system of music also had its inspiration from the Bhakti schools of the North of Chaitanya in Bengal, Ramanand, Kabir, Thulsidas, Surdas, Mirabai and others. Of the Moghul Emperors, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah-jehan were great patrons of this art and their courts had reputed musicians of both schools. It was in Akbar's court that the famous Tansen, the pupil of the greater musician Haridas Swami, flourished. Tansen is the doyen of the Hindustani music and has become a legend. His chain of disciples and their descendants still continues. Raja Mansingh, Akbar's Minister, is said to have introduced the Dhrupad style of singing. In Akbar's time, ragas were modified considerably under Persian and other foreign influence, even violating the established practice; but the result seems to have been altogether advantageous to the Hindustani system of music. The courts of Gwalior, Indore and Rampur notably, after the Moghul Emperors, and the Nawabs of Oudh, patronised reputed musicians in the North, while the kings of Vijayanagar and their vassals, the courts of Mysore, the Naiks of Madura and Tanjore, the rulers of Travancore and Cochin, and the Zamorins of Calicut did yeoman service to the cause of music in the South. In fact many of them were themselves great masters and exponents of the Art like Maharaja Swati Tirunal of Travancore, who composed in six languages. He was an illustrious contemporary of the famous trio of Carnatic music, Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar, and Syama Sastri. It is remarkable that all these four composers were great Bhaktas as their Kritis would indicate, the foremost of them being undoubtedly Thyagaraja, the Tansen of the South. South Indian music and the later Telugu literature are indebted to the Maharatta kings of Tanjore and particularly to Thuljaji and Raghunth Naik. It is remarkable that these Maharashtra kings became lovers of South Indian music and literature, and not only patronised them but became masterly composers and learned poets in Telugu and Tamil. Maharaja Swati Thirunal had an extraordinary

genius for synthesis; his courts consisted of not only reputed singers of Kerala like Govinda Marar, Kochi Kunju Namboodri etc., the famous musicians called the four Tanjore brothers (said to belong to Andhra), but also Imam Fakir of Lahore and Haridas Gosai of Ayodhya.

During the last few decades the scientific study and practice of music has made great advances in spite of the somewhat degenerating influence of the screen. Musical associations exist in all parts of India, and great institutions like the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya at Bombay and other places and the Schools of Music at Madras, Mysore, and Trivandrum etc. provide facilities for the study of music. There is a marked tendency towards greater scientific co-ordination between the two schools of music. The screen and the Radio have popularised both systems of music all over the country. The All India Music Conferences and the periodical conferences held in both regions, are bringing them closer together leading to better understanding and appreciation. Masters like Bhatkhande, Ratanjankar and others of the Hindustani school, and Tiger Varadachari, Prof. Sambamurthy and others of the Carnatic school have rendered yeoman service for the advancement of scientific study of music. The celebrated musicians, both men and women of the North, are eagerly heard in the South, and their counterparts of the South are becoming popular in the North. The encouragement given by the A. I. R. and the Sangeet Natak Academy to scientific music of both schools with which the ears of listening public of the whole country are becoming increasingly familiar, is bound to popularise both systems throughout India, so that the basic historical unity underlying them is realised in practice by the people in general to their lasting advantage.

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND CULTURAL LIFE

The history and development of Religious thought in India has been elaborately dealt with in the previous chapters of this book by authoritative writers, and it would be unnecessary for me to recapitulate it. Even a cursory study of the living progressive

religions of the world will show that there is an essential unity in all of them and that the differences relate to accents and emphasis traceable to social environments and historic circumstances. The fundamentals of all religions are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, although in details there has been always action and inter-action among different religious systems throughout their history of evolution.

An analysis of contemporary cultural life in India will show as vast a variety and complexity as are seen in its ancient culture and the same core of essential unity as ran through it, in the words of the Gita, like a thread running through the several beads or precious stones composing a necklace. While there is no lack of individuals and institutions maintaining religious and social conservatism of the most orthodox type, they are limited to certain sections of the so-called higher classes of all castes. The religious and cultural life of the vast masses of India is regulated by the teachings of the Hindu and Muslim saints that flourished in medieval India and flourish even today, teachings which are all characterised by a disregard of scriptural traditions and ritualism, denunciation of orthodox priestly classes, clear and definite declaration of the equality of all human beings, complete belief in and utter resignation to the will of God, and the efficacy of devotion coupled with love and service of humanity to be the royal road to salvation or realisation. All the literature of the Indian saints whether it is a Muslim Sufi or a Hindu Vedanti or a less learned but an inspired commoner, bears the clearest evidence of the common characteristics mentioned above. Whatever the doctrinal affiliations or traditional and social loyalties of the common people, their general conduct of life conforms to the above principles. So far as the Hindus are concerned, the religious and social counterparts of the national awakening in India during the last two centuries especially, have led them rapidly towards a simple and common faith devoid of its ritual and orthodoxy, freed from the oppressive yoke of symbolism and caste which distinguish it from other systems of religious and cultural life.

The last four decades of Indian history were dominated by the influence of Mahatma Gandhi whose contribution to the evolution of religious, spiritual, social and economic life of modern India can hardly be exaggerated. The spirit of his teachings has had an all-pervading effect on the country, an effect which is even more important than the revolution wrought by Buddha. The emphasis on Ahimsa laid by Buddha and further high-lighted by Mahavira reached its culmination in its application to conduct not of individuals alone but also nations. The essentially socialistic content of Gandhi's teachings consisting of removal of all human inequalities of race, sex, caste, creed, and colour has been translated into governmental and public action, and has been tacitly accepted as the essence of modern Indian thought, with the least amount of disturbance to national equilibrium.

Today there is a greater uniformity of cultural practices and social conduct throughout the country than at any time in its history. A new society based on the foundations of educational and economic status which had already emerged through a long process of historic evolution is becoming more democratised on a plane of social equality. Orthodoxy is fast giving way, and the socialistic pattern of society recently accepted as the objective of our plans for national reconstruction, is permeating into the life of the nation in all its walks of life with a phenomenal speed which is somewhat disconcerting to the conservative element in the country. There is little opposition, if any, to even the most heterodox measure of legislation adopted by the Parliament whether it is social or economic, or dealing with personal law which had always been considered as sacrosanct under the British rule. The adoption of adult franchise as the basic measure of democratic and political freedom has entirely revolutionised the social outlook of the people. The removal of untouchability, a long-standing stigma on the social structure of Hindu India, the establishment of the principle of equality of sexes translated into action not only by conferment of equal political franchise but also equal rights of inheritance recently are mile-stones of progress achieved during a brief period of ten years of political freedom—mile-stones which

have been reached by even advanced democracies, only in centuries.

The formulation of Five Year Plans aiming at the rapid economic development of the country, the creation of equal opportunities of all-round development for all classes of people, and the production and distribution of wealth on a socialistic basis, has further revolutionised all Indian thought. Whatever the handicaps and difficulties in the way of the implementing of these new national policies, the very grandeur of their conception and the very magnificence of the all-out attempt for their implementation, have necessitated not only uniformity of outlook but also of action throughout the country.

India's cultural unity which has been ever-existing from immemorial times, has now been completely cemented by the political unity achieved recently through freedom. The very idea that today the whole of India extending from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari and Dwarka to Puri is a single political unit within the Union of Indian Republic with a centralised federal constitution under one National Flag, must be a thrilling and inspiring thought to all Indians, for it is a unity which had never been enjoyed so far within the memory of history. It is in this background that we have to analyse the fastly growing synthetic forces of thought and action in various fields of activity in contemporary India.

It is true that the nation is often faced with the delicate and difficult task of choosing what it has to preserve from its ancient cultural heritage, and what to discard, in view of the fast-changing world conditions. The question is not really one of mere selection of things to preserve and discard: it is more complex than that. It is rather the creation of a new order wherein the fundamentals of our Svadharma are not disintegrated and we are free to exercise our intuitive selection and mastering assimilation, and give a new meaning and content to the new order in accordance with the principles of our Svadharma. External impact, which is always irritant, results in a sense of peril in the beginning, but it sets in motion an internal struggle resulting ulti-

mately in a long process of change and growth, enriched by experience. As a result of such impacts a nation which does not like to seal its death-warrant, soon begins to discard the idea of living in an 'ivory tower' as Mr. Nehru calls it, and is stimulated by the constant knocks that it receives to the awakening of its latent and slumbering energies. These new ideas and influences serve as "a material which has then to be reshaped to a form of the inner energy, harmonised with the inner being, reinterpreted in the light of its own characteristic self-consciousness".¹ In this long process, there are difficulties and troubles. But what is reassuring is that "at no time did Indian culture exclude altogether external influences; on the contrary, a very great power of selective assimilation, subordination and transformation of external elements was a characteristic of its process; it protected itself from any considerable or overwhelming invasion, but laid hands on and included whatever struck or impressed it, and in the act of inclusion subjected it to a characteristic change which harmonised the new element with the spirit of its own culture"² In the main, it is this spirit and process that is working through our attempts to build a new and a greater India. The application, in an increasing measure, of the principle of Ahimsa not only in the political and economic field in the national sphere, but also in the international sphere by the foundation of the Pancha Sheel and the 'philosophy of co-existence', has given a new meaning and content to the western ideal of 'One world' which is clearly emphasized in the Hindu prayer "Lokah Samasthah Sukhino Bhavantu". It is only a partial application of the idea of the prayer because the latter prays for 'all the worlds' and does not contemplate merely this world of human beings. 'Unity in Diversity' as opposed to dead uniformity has been the characteristic ideal of Indian culture and it is this that India stands for today. At a crowded meeting in Stockholm, Nehru emphasized in his characteristic way, "how much necessary it is in the world of today to think in terms of a synthesis of various parts of the world, of various peoples, even of various urges and opinions

1. "The Foundations of Indian Culture," by Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, p. 439.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 440.

and faiths". That is also the basis of the deliberate policy of 'non-alignment' and 'dynamic neutrality' which is being followed by India in its international relations. Living in an Atomic Age and with real and early possibilities of space-travel and of visiting the other planets, man still suffers from his three conflicts (1) with Nature, (2) with other men and (3) with himself. But we can still hope with Bertrand Russell¹ that the four conditions that he has mentioned as the pre-requisites for the stability of a scientific society will be fulfilled and that one of these viz., the idea of a World Government will materialise. To this mighty task of preparing the World for a peaceful evolution of humanity, India, with its essentially synthetic outlook on life can hope to make a valuable and by no means an insignificant contribution.

1. "The Impact of Science on Society", pp. 139-140.

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