

OUR ARYAN BROTHER.

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INCLUDING administrative officers, there are 334 of our Corps serving constantly in India. It has often been a matter of speculation with me, as to how many of our officers who are serving in India, and how many of the hundreds of similar officers who have served in India, say, during the last thirty years, have formed any correct mental picture of the ideas and beliefs which are associated with and influence the daily lives of the many millions of our fellow subjects, to whom we refer as our Aryan brothers. So far as relates to this article, the term "Aryan brother" is confined to the masses of whom we speak casually as Hindus. That is to say, one excludes the purely Mohammedan races, who are of a non-Aryan origin and such others as profess some form of Christianity.

The difficulties in the way of men, like ourselves, who are mere birds of passage, in acquiring a working conception of what are the ethical ideas and religious beliefs of ordinary Aryans are enormous. True, there is a huge literature bearing on the subject, especially on those aspects which deal with the philosophic side of Hinduism; but few have either the time or inclination to read and study this literature. The result is that the average man serves in and finally leaves India, satisfied with the conception that our Aryan brother is nothing but an idolator, steeped in a mass of degraded superstition devoid at once of an historical basis, of reason, or any message and teaching of an ethical or moral nature. It has occurred to me that perhaps some who like to look deeper than the surface, might find it useful to read a simple and intelligible outline of Hindu ideas and practices, giving information of not only what is the nature of modern Hinduism, but also outlining the causes and modes of thought which have led to its evolution. In the following pages, one has attempted to trace the moral and religious development of our Aryan brother, down from the Vedic times, through the periods of hero-worship and Buddhism to the present day.

THE VEDIC PERIOD.

Although the origin of the Aryans is unknown, it is conceded generally that the cradle of the race was in northern and western latitudes. They were a fair-skinned people, eating horse and ox

flesh, and drinking a fermented liquor known as *soma*, who invaded India some eighteen hundred years before Christ. At that time their religion was apparently a simple form of Nature worship. To them the sky was the Father and earth the Mother; they invoked Indra, the rain god, as a personal friend, and Agni, the fire god, as a protector from evil, while the sun and sunshine, as Surya, was the soul of all things. These Nature gods were not represented by idols. Their ritual was of the simplest, but embraced sacrifices on fire, oblations of the products of the earth, accompanied by prayers and hymns of praise. In their primitive state, the father of the family was priest and sacrificer, but even by the time the Aryans entered India their ritual had evidently become sufficiently complicated as to call for a class of priests. In these times there was clearly no idea of caste, but the priests and poets had evidently begun to concern themselves with speculations regarding the origin and end of all things. Naturally, certain individuals or families acquired repute in these matters, or as to success in sacrifice or prayer, and in knowledge of hymns and lore. From these simple beginnings, the priestly office among the Aryans tended to become more and more an hereditary position of power and responsibility.

The *purohitas* or priests soon acquired an important place in the Aryan social scheme, and though probably subordinate to the chiefs of the warrior class, there is evidence that often priest and warrior were combined. Among these men there gradually grew up a literature of sacred lore, chiefly in the form of hymns and poems, and the ability to remember accurately these hymns and to hand them down orally to others became a cult. It was during this period of dawning intellectuality that the great Vedic hymns were composed. These are word pictures of the traditions of the Aryans associated with times antecedent to their settlement in India. Concurrently, there was a slow compilation of a literature embodying the priestly traditions and ritual of sacrifice and worship. These have come down to this day and are the Brahmanas, an exclusive heritage of the present-day Brahmans or successors of the earlier Aryan *purohitas* or priests. To us, the Brahmanas and Vedic hymns are mainly interesting for the light they throw on modern Hindu ritual and the Aryan legends which they preserve regarding the origin of the world and the fourteen mythical progenitors of mankind, of whom Manu is the most quoted and familiar.

Apart from the Vedic hymns and Brahmanas, the evolution of Aryan thought and religion in these remote times led to the compilation of a third great work, namely, the Upanishads or

philosophical discussions as to the nature and means of realizing a knowledge of Brahma or the universal soul and cause of all things. As revealed in the Upanishads, the ethical and moral standpoint of the Aryan race is little different from the teaching as given in the Sermon on the Mount. The Vedic hymns and Brahmanas show a distinct tendency towards pantheism, but no evidence of the doctrines of metempsychosis and *Karma*, which are such a dominant feature of later Aryan thought. The Upanishads and Brahmanas are incorporated in the four Vedas.

The importance of preserving this religious literature and of securing purity of its interpretation undoubtedly emphasized the need of differentiation from among the people of a special class, the Brahmans or priests, and itself constitutes the germinal idea of the complicated system of caste, which for many centuries has been the characteristic of Hindus. But caste, as it is now understood, did not become a fixed institution until many centuries later. Wherever the Aryans went, conquered and settled down, their more intellectual and powerful elements, such as the warriors and priests, naturally claimed the first place in society, by virtue of caste, and for the maintenance of their own pretensions helped to build up or encourage the growth of a social system in which caste was the fundamental feature. Concurrent with this cause doubtless other different and subtle causes have been at work to favour the genesis and evolution of caste as we now know it. Nationality is one of these, as probably a number of present-day castes originated from distinct tribes or clans having their own customs and characteristics. Similarly, some castes are explicable as obvious aggregations of families having a common hereditary occupation, while others have arisen from sectarian or religious schisms.

THE ROMANTIC OR HERO-WORSHIP PERIOD.

Ethnological facts show that the Aryans in this invasion of India were not able to destroy or even displace the Dravidian and other races which formed the bulk of the population of the land. The result was that even at the period of which we now write, some 1000 B.C., the Aryans were not a united people, but composed of tribes and clans, not all of pure Aryan stock, and tainted with all manner of religious beliefs. This condition of affairs naturally affected the original purity of the real Aryan religion, and the most stringent laws were enacted to prevent the Vedas being corrupted. In spite of these efforts, there was a gradual permeation of outside

doctrines, with legends and stories of mythical heroes, into the simpler and purer cult of the early Aryan settlers in India. It is probable that to these influences and to these sources may be attributed the adoption and general acceptance by the Aryans of the two doctrines of metempsychosis and *Karma* which are so dominant throughout their later history. In these times, there were two great parties in the Aryan community; one headed by Vashishtha, of the old priestly class who represented the original orthodoxy, the other headed by a warrior chief named Viohwāmitra, who represented views and beliefs largely of non-Aryan origin. The outcome was a long series of wars and the leaders of the respective elements acquired in varying degree the worship of their adherents. It is as an account of these great wars that the epic poem known as the Mahābhārata came into being. Like the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer this venerated epic was handed down by oral methods, then it was recorded in Sanskrit, but not translated into Hindi until as late as 1574 of our era. In this epic, the heroes on one side are the five Pandava princes who were assisted by Krishna. The heroes on the other side were the hundred Kuru princes, and known as the Kanravas. The end of this quarrel was the total annihilation of the Kanravas and the ultimate absorption of the Pandava survivors into Indra's abode of eternal peace. Around this story have accumulated, in the course of centuries, many legends, moral discourses and treatises, including the Bhagavat Gita or Hindū Bible of the present day. Practically, the Mahābhārata contains in poetic form a moral and religious code which is part and parcel of later Aryan practice and belief.

Later, another terrific struggle took place between rival factions, namely, the Kosalas of Oudh and the Kasis of the upper Gangetic valley. The heroes of the former were Rama and his wife Sita, also his half brother Lakshman. The doings and wanderings of these persons and their relations with Hanuman, the monkey god-king of the Nilgiris, are recorded in another epic, the Ramāyana. This poem differs from the Mahābhārata in that it is characterized by tender sentiments of domestic virtue and affection rather than by tales of bravery. Both these great epics were the product of this period, which may be described as the romantic period of Aryan evolution, and during which hero-worship and deification of mythical or real heroes acquired a definite footing among the Aryans. The general teaching of the earlier Vedic period was towards a pantheism, therefore in these times the Aryan mind found no difficulty in according divine honours to humans con-

sidered to have manifested in some way the nature of the Supreme Soul which they believed to be a part of every human being. At the present day, this mentality is evident among Aryans. A recognition of these facts explains the exalted position which the heroes of the epics hold in later developments of Aryan belief, and why the epics are even now the classic religion and moral literature of the modern Hindu.

THE BUDDHIST OR ASCETIC PERIOD.

We have seen the crystallization out of speculations, among the earlier Aryans, as to the future life in the evolution of a philosophy as formulated in the Upanishads; and the crystallization out of a more material religion in the forms of a quasi hero-worship, centring round the legends and tales incorporated in the great epic poems, the Mahâbhârata and the Ramâyana. As exponents of the spiritual and moral teaching associated with and to be derived from these books the priests or Brahmans generally maintained exclusive and autocratic powers, though the monopoly of leadership in religious thought was challenged spasmodically by the Kshatriyas or warrior class who were still at the head of Aryan society. Owing to the influence of ideas which probably had been derived from contact and intermingling with the Dravidian and other conquered tribes, the fundamental basis of the religious philosophy of the Aryans of this period was the doctrine of transmigration of souls and that human suffering was only to be destroyed by the termination of the cycle of re-births. The much desired termination of re-birth cycles was to be obtained only by penances, elaborate sacrifices and the saying of *mantras* or prayers. The two latter depended for their efficacy mainly on the influence of the Brahmans. The complication of the sacrificial rites became inconceivable, and the tyranny of these rites and penances such that a strong undercurrent of revolt against the orthodox teaching of the Brahmans set in. The chief exponents of this reaction were a numerous class of wandering devotees or mendicants, who though living an ascetic life performed no sacrifices and practised no penances. These were the undoubted forerunners of the *saddhus*, *byragis* and *fakirs* of the present day.

The somewhat nebulous views of these wandering ascetics, revolting against the extremes of spiritual discipline inculcated by the Brahmans, were definitely shaped by the appearance and teaching of Siddartha Gautama, son of a Sakya chief and born in the Nepal Terai in 580 B.C. Having abandoned all worldly com-

forts and delights, Gautama developed his spiritual nature to such an extent as to become or declare himself the Buddha or Enlightened One. As the Buddha, he settled about 557 B.C. at Sarnath near Benares, and founded there the settlement whose interesting remains have only within the last six years been excavated. Here he preached and disseminated by a rapidly increasing number of disciples the fundamental principle of his doctrine, which was a revolt against the tyrannical Brahmanical practices and superstitions of his time. While believing in the theory of transmigration of souls, the essence of Buddha's teaching was the uselessness of bodily penances, and the uselessness of priests or sacrifices as a means of escaping from the cycle of re-births. The means to this end lay in man's own heart, through the "eight-fold path" of right resolve, right views, right speech, right actions, right living, right effort, right self-knowledge and right meditation.

In spite of the revolutionary nature of his views, Buddha made many converts. While Buddhism cannot be said to have completely ousted the previous Brahmanical teaching throughout Aryan India, still for the next twelve hundred years it may be said to have been the dominant cult among the Aryan races. Contemporary with Buddha was Mahāvira, a well-born ascetic who founded the sect of Jains. This is the only monastic order of this period which has survived and carried its tenets and organization down to our own time. The Jains reverence twenty-four saints who have finished the cycles of human existence, and their founder is considered to be the twenty-fourth. Mahāvira held the same views as Buddha regarding the sacredness of life, but differed from him in accepting the orthodox view of self-mortification by penances. He believed also in the separate existence of the soul, which was denied by Buddha.

THE SHIVA-CULT PERIOD.

Although Buddhism was dominant among the Aryan races in India from the death of Buddha down to the end of the seventh century, that is, for nearly thirteen hundred years, it must be remembered that the orthodox Brahmanical cult, as existing before Buddha's time, had not died out completely. It still had its adherents as a small and relatively unimportant sect. Moreover, profound changes had come over even the Brahmanical religious practices and ideas as the result of Buddhism. The killing of animals as part of the sacrificial rites had nearly ceased, or was practised only by some low castes. Sacrifice had lost most of its

magical value and was regarded rather as of mere symbolic significance. The chief centre of the Brahmans and others who had resisted the teaching of Buddha would appear to have been Benares. In the course of the years which elapsed after Buddha's death, his philosophy and simple rule of life became modified and degenerated in the hands of successive exponents. Gradually superstitious errors were added to his simpler faith and he became to many Aryans but an incarnation of Vishnu, one of their hero-gods of the previous period. The result of this decadence was inevitable; a reaction set in, in the form of a revival of Brahmanical activity led by the Hindu reformer named Sankara. This occurred in the early part of the eighth century, and may be said to mark the beginning of the true Pantheistic period, and from this time may be said to commence the evolution of Hinduism as we meet with it in our day.

To understand the true meaning and nature of this Pantheistic movement it is necessary to appreciate the religious atmosphere when Sankara began his propaganda. Buddha had broken down the crude material religion which the earlier Aryan Brahmans had evolved for the masses or those too unintellectual to understand the higher philosophy and doctrines of the educated Brahmans. Buddhism had purified the national religion and afforded a common basis for all races and sects, but it had failed to provide any material object of worship and also left untouched the problem of the First Cause. Sankara attempted to, and did, provide a practical religious cult appealing to the senses of the masses, basing it upon the earlier Aryan legends with which most were familiar, and yet rendering it not inconsistent with the Vedic philosophy.

For a thousand years or more the Aryan mind had been imbued with three main ideas: these were, a belief in metempsychosis; a belief in *Karma* or action, and a belief that the universe was originally the Soul only and that the origin of Creation proceeded from this Supreme Spirit, that is the Eternal Essence or Brahman. According to metempsychosis, death does not release man's soul permanently from matter, but that the soul may have to return again and again to this world animating other bodies, human, bestial, or vegetal. The doctrine of *Karma* implies that upon man's actions in this life depends the condition or state in which the soul will be re-incarnated. In plain language, the present state is the result of the past, and the future depends upon the present. These two ideas are simple enough, but it is when we come to analyse the Aryan theory of Creation that difficulties

begin. To appreciate, however, the inner meaning of ordinary Aryan ideas and beliefs it is necessary to understand the essential ideas running through the esoteric philosophy and doctrine of the Brahmanical Aryans.

According to this teaching the Creation was really a manifestation or passing into a conditioned state of the Brahman or Eternal Essence; that is, into a concept known as *Ishwara*, which is Self or Cause of all things. The subtlety of this idea is great, but is comparable to the passing of a man from a condition of deep sleep to dreaming and then waking. The essential spirit of *Ishwara* makes manifest *Prakriti*, which is the Essence of Matter originally inherent in Brahman, but only now manifested. By means of his divine power, called *sakti*, *Ishwara* causes *Prakriti* to take form. The forms of *Prakriti* thus evolved are the *Trimurti*, or three aspects of *Ishwara*. These are *Brahma*, representing the conditions of Creating; *Vishnu*, representing equilibrium or rhythm, and commonly described as the Preserver; and *Shiva*, representing dissolving power and commonly described as the Destroyer. Many of us are familiar with Indian drawings in which this drama of creation is represented by a figure, which is *Ishwara*, floating on the waters of chaos and reclining on a serpent, the symbol of Eternity, while *Brahma*, the creator, is depicted as springing from a lotus flower growing from the navel of *Ishwara*. The *Trimurti* are conceived to have three qualities or conditions. Thus *Brahma* represents the quality of Being, *Vishnu* represents the quality of Thinking, and *Shiva* represents the quality of Happiness. Further the *trimurti* have their *saktis*, or divine powers, which enable them to perform their functions in the universe. Among the masses or populace, these *saktis* are regarded as wives of the *Trimurti*, and, in this way, we find the *sakti* of *Brahma* deified as *Saraswati* or goddess of wisdom; the *sakti* of *Vishnu* is *Lakshmi*, or goddess of prosperity; and the *sakti* of *Shiva* is *Kali* or *Durgâ*, the terrible goddess of sacrifice, sickness and destruction.

The foregoing outline will give the reader an idea of the mental attitude of the Aryans and on which *Sankara*, in the eighth century, began to work. *Sankara's* teaching took the form practically of an exaggerated cult of *Shiva*. Conceived originally as a worship of *Shiva* as a god alone, the cult rapidly expanded or degenerated into a polytheism in which the wives of *Shiva*, that is *Devi*, *Durgâ* and *Kali* acquired exaggerated importance. This resulted in the evolution of numerous sects of *saktas* or worshippers of the female energy, using the *yonis* and *yantras* as accepted symbols, just

as the lingam or phallus was, and is, the symbol of Shiva. Sankara emphasized cremation of the dead, infant marriage and non-marriage of widows. Although there is little doubt that Sankara was a devout man and preached a relatively clean religion suitable for his times, yet, after his death, the excrescences which grew gradually upon his original cult of Shiva led to the development of the grossest depravities in the form of religion, especially under the evolution of the *sakta* sects. These degenerate cults were the dominant religions of the masses in India for some three hundred years after the death of Sankara.

THE VISHNU-KRISHNA PERIOD.

We find ourselves now at the beginning of the eleventh century, when the influence of the Mohammedan invaders was beginning to be felt throughout India. Some of the most famous and venerated shrines of Shiva had been destroyed, and the destruction of the gigantic lingam in the temple of Somnath, in Guzerat, made such an impression on the Aryan mind as to discredit seriously Shivaism and its auxiliary cults. In the gloom of these times the legends of glory and victorious deeds of Vishnu were revived from the earlier epics, and took the shape of the Vishnu puranas. The prophet of this new religion was Ramanuja, a Brahman of Southern India. In 1150, he commenced a campaign against Shivaism and substituted for veneration in place of the lingam the images of Vishnu, Krishna, and Rama. All these were personalities familiar by repute to his contemporaries as heroes in old legends and epics. With these male heroes were associated for veneration their respective wives, Lakshmi, Rukmini and Sita. Though Ramanuja's teaching was but the substitution of one set of incarnations of the Trimurti for another, its distinguishing feature was that he believed that the human soul was distinct from the Supreme Spirit, and retained its identity even after absorption into the Supreme Being. Like Sankara, he recognized cremation of the dead, infant marriages, and non-marriage of widows, while the merit of good works was insisted on as a means for obtaining final relief from re-births. His conflict with Shivaism was conducted with spirit and prospered for some hundred years. It received then a set-back by the appearance of Bassava, a Mahratta Brahman, who, claiming to be an incarnation of Shiva, denied the superiority of the Brahman caste, advocated abolition of all caste, opposed cremation and even questioned the inspired nature of the Vidas. Bassava's teaching

made little headway, though a mendicant order which he established survives even to this day.

The political outlook in India became gradually worse. Islam was advancing steadily and the danger to Hinduism still increased owing to the rivalry between the Shivaites and the Vishnuites. The breach was bridged by the appearance early in the thirteenth century of Madhava, a Kanarese Brahman, who preached vigorously the special worship of Krishna, but, unlike Ramanuja, without displaying hostility to Shivaism. He effected a union of Shivaites and Vishnuites under Krishna and permitted Shiva, Durgâ, Kali, and Ganesh, one of the sons of Shiva, to be worshipped alongside of Vishnu, who was represented as Krishna and variously regarded as either Vishnu himself or his eighth incarnation. This cult of Krishna made rapid progress, as he was a familiar name to all as one of the heroes of the Mahâbhârata. Associated with the Krishna cult was the doctrine of the independence of the human soul and Supreme Spirit, coupled with the view that Vishnu or Krishna was the only supreme Eternal Being, all the other gods, like Shiva and Brahma, being subject to dissolution. The cult was subjected to some modification by Ramanand in the fourteenth century, who emphasized the importance of Rama as an incarnation of God in human form. This development is of interest as suggestive of the possible influence of the Christian idea, at this time becoming familiar to the Aryan races by contact with Roman Catholic missionaries. Practically, in this composite form, Krishna worship with tolerance for Shiva veneration dominated Aryan religious thought until the sixteenth century, when political conditions compelled the adoption of more elastic schools of moral and religious thought.

THE CONCILIATORY OR SYNTHETIC PERIOD.

Although the worship of Vishnu under the forms of Krishna and Rama had spread far and wide still, contemporaneously, the more primitive phallic cult of Shiva survived in places; in fact, although the Aryan race were paying homage impartially to both these two gods of the Triad and in certain districts invoking, with many degraded rites, the goddesses of the Sakta sects, yet a steady disintegration of Hindo-Aryanism was taking place under the influence of Mohammedan political power. The question naturally arose, how could Hindo-Aryanism be preserved? Three possible methods suggested themselves; these were: (1) To make the religion sufficiently alluring and voluptuous to attract a people no

longer confident in either their gods or their priesthood; or (2) to evolve a new national religion suitable to the newer ideas awakened by contact with Islam; or (3) to so modify the existing religion as to sufficiently resemble outwardly the Muslim faith as to avoid persecution and derision. Practical efforts on these lines found expression in the rise of corresponding sects in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The first group were those such as the Radha Vallabhis and the Chaitanites. These advocated Radha worship and taught that the best form of devotion was that which Radha, as the favourite mistress of Krishna, felt for him. Although these sects practised vegetarianism and total abstinence from intoxicants, forbade animal sacrifices and favoured the re-marriage of widows, their pronounced sensual idea caused them to make no general headway. Both these sects survive still in Bengal.

Of a different type were the second group of sects, or those founded by Kabir in Oudh and by Guru Nanak in the Punjab. Kabir was a non-Brahman monotheist, but did not deny the existence of other deities. His main idea was that worship of god or gods was not necessary; to him, purity of heart was all important, combined with implicit devotion to the *guru* or spiritual guide. Much of Kabir's teaching was acceptable to the Mohammedans of his day, among whom he obtained many converts. A few of his professed followers are still to be found in India now. It is doubtful whether Kabir made any great headway among the masses; still his teaching was the forerunner of that propounded by Nanak in the Punjab. Nanak, like Kabir, tried to assimilate his inherited Aryan prejudices and teaching with those of the dominant Muslim around him. He claimed that the Supreme Being was his *guru*, who had appointed him as the *guru* of mankind. He admitted all castes into his sect, which is now well known as the Sikhs of the Punjab. Nanak was succeeded by nine *gurus* and under the last of these the Sikhs developed into a powerful political organization, thus transforming Nanak's peaceful religion into a militant creed. Sikhism survives to this day, but it is affected largely by Hindu ideas and practices very different to Nanak's original teaching. Sikhism now is virtually a vague pantheism disguised as a monotheism.

The third group of conciliatory sects established in this period were the Rama worshipping sects of Rajputana which, though they made Rama their special god, allowed no idols to be made or venerated. In their form of worship and customs these sects have

a strong resemblance to Islamism. Two mendicant orders of this sect still exist in Rajputana.

THE MODERN PERIOD.

This extends from the early part of the eighteenth century to the present time, and covers the period of Mohammedan decay and the rise with consolidation of British power in India. During this time, new and potent factors such as Western education and Christianity, have come into play. The result has been the gradual disintegration of some old beliefs and the formation of new ones. But, concurrent with this destructive and constructive process, there has been a survival and, thanks to stability of Government combined with a policy of religious freedom, an actual revival of most of the religious types of the post-Buddhist period.

At the present time, Aryan religious and ethical thought falls into three main groups. These are : (1) The speculative philosophy of the educated and spiritually minded Brahmans; (2) the pantheistic conceptions of the masses and uneducated, which may be termed modern Hinduism; and (3) the Neo-Hinduism or Theism of the educated and travelled Aryans.

The first does not permit of extended analysis here. To some extent its fundamental ideas have been explained. Its dominant tenets are, unity of the human soul with the Supreme Soul, a belief in re-births and in *Karma*, but behind it all is the view that the world, as revealed by the senses, is but an illusion, and that consequently, the real world, or true knowledge, can only be reached by suppressing or getting behind the senses. This can only be done by processes of introspective contemplation. In its simple form, this philosophy is clear, but it is associated with pantheism and veneration of material gods and goddesses, the earthly representations of various manifestations of the super-physical god or Supreme Soul. Of the various shrines or temples of the gods and goddesses of this pantheon, the Brahmans are the exclusive guardians and ministrants.

The Brahmanical religious philosophy of this day is far removed from the simple nature worship of their Aryan forbears. What is the precise ritual associated with the higher philosophy of the Brahmans is more or less a sealed book to those outside their exclusive caste, but we can gain some idea of its nature by observing the actions of a *Saddhu* or other religious devotee. After performing ordinary ablutions, the sun will be saluted by casting water towards it, or by the pouring out of water from various

vessels. Then freedom of the body from pollution of sins will be sought by pouring water over the head. Next, the sacred thread is changed from the right shoulder to the left, and more water poured over the extended fingers. Then the thread is placed on the neck and more water poured between the thumb and forefinger. These are rites addressed to the gods and sages or saints of the past. Then follows a counting of beads on a rosary of rudra berries accompanied by the repeating of *mantras* or prayers. Then follow the curious *pranayama* or exercise of breathing. The nostrils are compressed alternately and breath expelled and inhaled through the other, finally both nostrils are closed and the breath held as long as possible. After this, symbolic signs are made with the fingers and thumb to represent the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Accompanying these manual acts is a repetition of other *mantras* with numerous invocations to the Supreme Being in his endless manifestations; all these are preceded by utterance of the mystic syllable *Om* or *Aum*, which means at once the Aryan Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, or the three worlds of Heaven, Air and Earth. This *sandhya*, or form of worship, is observed at least three times a day; it is regarded as a spiritual exercise to free the human soul from earthly pollution and as a means to place it in direct relation with the superphysical world and so prepare it for the final goal of all Aryan ritual, namely, meditation and contemplation. For efficacy, every rite must be performed with exactitude and order as laid down in the sacred books and prescribed by their spiritual advisers or *gurus*. Prepared and fortified in this way, the Brahman can and does spend hours absorbed in motionless meditation on the Supreme Soul—the Brahma—the only Reality. Apart from these meditation exercises, every Brahman worships at the shrine or temple of some god which represents one or other incarnation of either Vishnu or Shiva, whom he regards as the material representation of the super-physical Supreme Soul or Brahma.

The foregoing is not the form which the religious worship of the masses takes. Theirs is really a material pantheism, evolved by the Brahmans, and based on the mythical personages of the early legends of the Aryan people. But associated with this pantheism is a subtle thread of thought which links it to the esoteric philosophy of the Brahmans. The greater number of the people go through some form of *sandhya* on the lines of the Brahmans, but of a much simpler nature, in most cases amounting to but a repetition of some *mantra* or mystic formula laid down for them by their local Brahman. But such *sandhya* or religious worship is with them

a spiritual exercise associated always with some material god or goddess, whom they are taught to believe, and do believe to be local manifestations of the impersonal and super-physical Supreme Being.

The present day Aryan or Hindu belongs to one or other of the following religious sects : (1) Vaishnavas or worshippers of Vishnu. These can be recognized usually by their caste mark taking the form of three vertical lines. The Vaishnavas are most numerous in the North and North-West of India. They are divisible into two main subsects, namely, (a) those who worship Vishnu in his incarnation as Rama with his wife Sita, and (b) those who worship him as Krishna with his wives Lakshmi and Rukmini, and his favourite mistress Radha.

(2) Saivas or worshippers of Shiva. These are numerous in Benares, in Bengal and some parts of Southern India. The caste mark is usually three horizontal lines.

(3) Saktas or worshippers of the female energy, especially as the goddesses Kali, Devi and Durgâ, all wives of Shiva. This cult is paramount in Bengal.

It is noticeable that there is no sect having Brahma as its titular head. The reason of this is that this member of the *Trimurti* is supposed to have completed his work in this world.

Although the above represents the broad divisions into which the religious ideas of the Aryan masses divide themselves, it must be understood that there are many subdivisions, based on veneration of the various *sakti* or functions and powers of the central god or goddess. This explains the multiplicity of deities in the Aryan or modern Hindu pantheon. While some sects represent a more or less wholesome and clean religious outlook, there are many, particularly subsects of the Saktas, which are examples of most depraved and sensual practices under the mantle of religion. It is true they are relatively few, but they exist more especially in Bengal.

Associated with the two main sects among modern Aryans are a number of ascetic sects or mendicant orders. These constitute the bulk of the wandering *saddhus* and *byragis* of India. Among the Saivas, we find Sunyasis, Dandis, Paramanhas and Brahmacharis, all followers of Sankara, referred to in the Shiva cult period. There are also Lingaites or followers of Bassava, who appeared somewhat later at the end of the twelfth century. Similarly, among the Vaishnavas are followers of Ramanuja, Madhava, Ramanand, Kabir, Ballava and Chaitan. All these sect leaders or

quasi-reformers have been mentioned in the preceding historical outline. Among the Sikhs or followers of Nanak are three ascetic orders, the Udasis, the Nirmalis and the Nihangs. All the ascetic sects have their distinguishing views and customs. Though in several instances their *raison d'être* is based on an opposition to the Brahmans, these mendicant devotees constitute some of the most potent links in the wonderful chain which, even now, appears to bind the Hindo-Aryans together and which, too, has enabled some of their primal beliefs to survive in a form which apparently had disappeared.

Coming back to the practical religion of the Aryan masses, we find that they recognize three different aspects of worship. First, each village or commune has its patron deity. Images or symbols of them are found everywhere. Next, there is the household god or that deity which is regarded by each family as its special protector. Then, there is the personal god whom the *guru* or spiritual adviser appoints to each individual as his or her patron deity. All these take the name or form of one or other of the many manifestations, or incarnations, or attributes associated with the central god in which they believe, that is either Vishnu or Shiva. There is no limit to the attentions which a devout Aryan will pay to his idol or symbol of his household or personal deity. In response to these attentions the patron deity is expected to bestow corresponding favours. The ordinary person who has not the means or time for regular household worship hires a Brahman occasionally to recite the necessary and suitable *mantras*; this vicarious service is supplemented by occasional visits to the temple on festival days, accompanied, of course, by suitable offerings at the shrine. The expenses associated with an active observance of his religion by the ordinary Aryan, outside the Brahman caste, are often heavy. This is particularly so in respect of observances for the dead. According to the Aryan doctrine of the future life, souls of the dead follow one of two paths according to their *Karma*. Thus, souls of saints who have fulfilled their *Karma* travel through the rays of the sun, and never return to this earth. Ordinary souls who have not finished their cycle of re-births will always remain tied to this earth unless certain *shradha* ceremonies are duly performed to help them on their way to Yama or the state of Bliss. The belief in the efficacy of these *shradha* ceremonies, which extend over twelve months up to three years, is a constant source of reckless expenditure.

There remains for brief review the ethical and religious tenets

of the educated and most westernized Aryans. These tenets may be described as a Neo-Hinduism or Theism. It is true they are held by a numerically small number of present-day Aryans, but it is not unlikely that the movement which they express may influence profoundly in years to come the further evolution of moral and religious codes among the whole Aryan race. This movement dates from about 1825, when a high-caste Brahman, named Ram Mohun Roy, started what he called the Brahmo Somaj. This was really nothing but an unorthodox Hindu sect advocating a monotheism based upon the Upanishads, but strongly tainted, as regards its ethics, by ideas derived from Muslim and Christian literature. The Somaj made little headway during its founder's lifetime. In 1843, it was resuscitated by Debendra Nath Tagore, who, as the result of an inquiry into the nature of the doctrines of the Vedas, forced the sect to an open rupture with orthodox Hinduism, on the ground that a pure Theism could not be based upon the Vedic literature. The Brahmo Somaj now fell back upon what they called Natural Religion, having no written scriptures, but basing their doctrines on the laws of Nature and the primitive convictions implanted in the mind of man. Unfortunately, many members, though outwardly professing this simple faith and abhorrence of idolatry, differed in their domestic life little from their orthodox idolatrous countrymen. As the facts became known, a schism in the society was unavoidable. The more conservative members formed a sect of their own known as the Adi Brahmo Somaj, while the more advanced thinkers styled themselves the Brahmo Somaj. The Adi (original) Brahmo Somaj remained under the guidance of Debendra Nath Tagore till his death, but the society at this present time numbers barely five hundred members. The leader of the progressive party was Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, and under his energetic guidance the Brahmo Somaj increased rapidly both in numbers and influence. Under him, the Society adopted new principles of thought and action, and became nothing more than advanced Unitarianism, using impartially all that was best from the writings of the Vedas, the Quran and the Bible. Later Chunder Sen attempted to lead the Somaj through the devious ways of his own inherited Aryan mysticism into pure asceticism, with a strong leaning towards the adoration of *sakti* or female energy. A further schism in the Brahmo Somaj resulted owing to the revolt of a party of uncompromising theists under the lead of Pundit Sevanath Sastri, who in 1878 established the Sadharan (universal) Brahmo Somaj. The creed of this body of non-Hindu Theists, which is

now in an active state of existence, amounts practically to the following: Belief in the necessity and duty of spiritual worship of God; a total disbelief in any infallible book or man, as the means to salvation; belief in an immortal and infinite Creator, and a belief in the immortality of the soul. This Somaj is definitely opposed to both caste and idolatry. As a purely theistic sect, the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj is in touch with Unitarian bodies in both America and Europe. The activity of this sect is chiefly in Kathiawar and Western India. Its freedom of thought is wider than that of the Brahmo Somaj of Bengal.

After the death of Keshub Chunder Sen, the Brahmo Somaj fell under the dominant influence of Babu Majoomder, who, freeing it from some of the later developments of Keshub's time, has worked it up into a large and flourishing sect, mainly in Bengal. The present day tenets of the Brahmo Somaj are a belief in one Supreme Deity, the non-inspired nature of the Vedas, the acceptance of such portions of the Bible and Quran as bear up and support a simple code of right living, a belief in the transmigration of souls, no recognition of caste or idolatry in any form, the forbidding of child marriage and recognition of widow marriage. If we except the doctrine of metempsychosis, the tenets of the Brahmo Somaj of Bengal differ little from those of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj of Kathiawar.

Concurrent with the evolution of the various phases of the Brahmo Somaj, there has arisen another sect of Aryan Theists. These are the Arya Somaj, a body who follow the teaching of Dayananda Saraovati, who died in 1883. The Aryan Somaj is mostly to be met with in the Punjab and United Provinces. It is an unorthodox Hindu Sect, differing only in its views from the Brahmo Somaj in the fact that it derives its inspiration from, and attaches weight and veneration to the Vedas. Its views as to caste are less liberal than the Brahmo Somaj, but to all intents and purposes their range of view is the same; except that the Arya is Hindu in theory, while the Brahmo is non-Hindu. The Arya Somaj is opposed to idolatry and child marriage, favours a modified caste system and the re-marriage of widows. Like the Brahmo, the Arya Somaj believes in the immortality but independence of the human soul.

SUMMARY.

The foregoing historical survey gives in outline the evolution of moral, ethical and religious thought among our Aryan brothers from some two thousand years before Christ to our own times.

To the superficial thinker it will seem merely kaleidoscopic. It is true there have been many changes, but, for all that, we find that there has been a marvellous continuity of thought and ideas through the last three thousand years. We find our Aryan brother still imbued with the fundamental ideas of metempsychosis and *Karma*. We find the greater number of our present day fellow Aryans to be pantheists, that is worshippers of one or more incarnations or manifestations of functions of either Vishnu or Shiva, who themselves were, as heroes in the mythical origin of the race, but incarnations of the super-physical Being into whom all wish and look for ultimate absorption. Even the very forms of popular pantheism are but survivals of cults in general acceptance throughout the land in the times which immediately followed the collapse of Buddhism. Over this apparently shoreless sea of chaotic superstition and often gross licence, which is practically the religion of the Aryan masses, is a veil of subtle and fascinating philosophy; while floating in it are undoubted elements of fine and noble sentiment. Though the gulf is wide which separates us and our beliefs from our Aryan brother and his beliefs, yet there is sufficient evidence in his ideas and practices to show that both he and we are merely striving to reach a common goal. It is the realization of this pathetic fact that should make us sympathetic rather than scornful and hypercritical of the particular path which he has chosen.

That the Aryan has chosen or drifted into this path is not that he is not a religious man, for no one who knows the people of India can doubt for a moment that they are essentially a religious people. That their ethical, moral and religious outlook should have taken the form it has is to be explained largely by their history and the physico-geographical conditions under which they live. For centuries they have been the prey of wars and pestilence, while for ages dense forest and swamp covered a considerable portion of their land. A study of the psychology of the Aryan races reveals to us that, combined with intellectual qualities of the highest order, they possess in an exaggerated degree imaginativeness, emotionalism, credulity and religious fervour. The combined influence of the political, physical and social conditions, aided by the intellectual and moral peculiarities of the people, has favoured and conduced to mental depression and gloomy religious speculations, leading naturally to mysticism, self-abnegation and the evolution among them of an ethical, moral and religious code at once full of far-fetched superstitions and asceticism.

What is the outlook for the future? It is impossible to be dogmatic. If one may venture to express views at all, one may say that whatever may be the modifications produced on our Aryan brother in ways of thought, sentiment, or customs by contact with the West, still his inherited tendencies are too strong, and his inherited beliefs too subtle and deep-rooted to allow him to break away in any notable degree from his immemorial past. Ethical, moral and religious evolution among the vast Aryan masses will probably still follow the old lines of pantheism and an ascetic philosophy. The modern Theism of the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj, of the Brahmo Somaj of Keshub Chunder Sen, and of the Arya Somaj appears to have a future. The first two are both non-Hindu, while the latter is definitely Hindu in sentiment. The latter is nothing but a liberal orthodoxy; the question is, Will prolonged contact with Western scholarship not extinguish it? Such a danger and contingency is less obvious with regard to the Brahmo Somaj. Through these sects, that is the Brahmo Somaj and the Arya Somaj, alone lies any real hope of a reformed Aryan faith; but, to be national and successful, they must be allowed to evolve on purely Aryan lines, and be unfinanced by Western enthusiasts.
