

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN ANCIENT INDIA.

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(Concluded)

V. JAINS AND LOKAYĀTIKANS.

THERE were also two sects not included in the list of orthodox systems, but which yet exercised a very noticeable influence upon the readiness with which those systems were received into the minds of later generations. In religious heterodoxy (so-called by the major religions) the foremost was the Jain sect founded by Mahāvira an older contemporary of Buddha. Like early Buddhism it was a monastic religion which denied the authority and moral sufficiency of the Vedic traditions; and yet its greatest "heresy" was its difference with the Buddhists on the point of the soul's real existence, for the Jains emphasized that the soul's permanence in the cosmic frame is all that will enable it to still be a soul when it has survived this earthly vale of ignorance and the latter's incurred bondage of worldly illusion. This phase of positive psychology, as well as the defense of *free truth* against logical necessity (Nyaya), was, it seems from the Jainist practice commonly made, the prime business of their philosophy. It appeared in practically every argument favoring the Tattvika, the "real possession" or "true principles", which advocated their notion of what constituted absolute freedom of inquiry into a preconceived Reality (which, by the way, when compared with our western standards, seems about two-thirds irrational). . . . A good philosophical account of the principles and practices of the Jains may be found in Alfred F. R. Hoernle's "Uvāsagadasāo", published in Calcutta, 1890.

But with the Lokayātika, "those who turn to the world of sense", the foundation as well as most of the procedure was altogether different. Our sense-experience of Nature does not qualify us to hypothesize any sort of spiritual or psychic Over-Soul; even

individual souls are little else than tenuous postulates. The doctrine of empirical sentiency may have been less easily nullified or adequately opposed by the orthodox systems, but by arranging it into a philosophical and systematic form the materialists had a seemingly tenable position and the purely speculative intellectualism commonly held by the other Hindu thinkers was put to a more than merely negative exertion to refute it. The great majority of so-called refutations amount to no more than arguing that the Lokayätikan materialists must be considered Tarkikas, sophists or sceptics.

Another name for these materialists is Chärvakas, after a mythical ogre in the Mahabhārata on whom is placed the responsibility for this maddening heresy. But I think it is probable that some real historical character by that name lived about the time the doctrine took shape and perhaps shared in the ideas if not the establishment of this teaching. Nevertheless, it is claimed that in founding this school of philosophical materialism (presumably about three centuries before Kanāda's time) Chärvaka had the capable collaboration of Brihāspati, chaplain to the Vedic gods someone tells us, but at least a scholarly man whose doctrines are supposed to have been collected together and edited in the Bārhaspätya Sutra, a document long lost except for a few scattered quotations in not-always-reliable commentaries on the rival dārsanas or schools. It is perhaps only an etymological account of the school's name.

However, it remained for the most part a negligible movement until the advent of Makkhäli Gosāli, "the Sage with the Hairy Coat", who was possibly a contemporary of Pātanjāli. If the numerous accounts are reliable Makkhäli was an intellectual paradox; a sort of Timon who had faith in the efficacy of doubt, and whose cynicism was not grounded so much on vicarious pejorism as on the *crève-coeur* underlying all self-culture. The burden of practically all his inconsistent notions is given in one of the few remarks which have been preserved to us: "The human soul, as the Brahmans say, may very well be of an individual nature; but is no more than the best form to which our material parts have so far felt inclined. . . . There is no such thing as power or energy, or human strength or vigor. . . . Beings are essentially material structures and are bent this way and that by their fate (Daiva, organism) and by their individual nature (Atmānya, selfhood)".

This sceptical sage was in no way ambitious to be a *custos morum* among his fellows, but admitted himself to be simply a Loka-

yätikan or "sense-world devotee". And yet in his doctrine that religion had its origin in the imposed notions of a few cunning priests, there was a two-thousand-year anticipation of an almost identical point of view remarked upon by the encyclopedic deists Diderot and d'Holbach in their theological doctrines.

VI. KRISHNA AND THE BHAGAVÄD—GITÄ.

Early in the first part of the second century B. C. when Asôka's ethical laws had become widely adopted into the customs of northern India and the Samkhya-Yoga philosophies were coming into vogue, that singularly inspirational poem called Bhagaväd-Gitâ or "Song of the Holy One" was first inscribed. The Vedantism which is now to be found here and there in its lines is the result of later interpolations, the last of which being made possibly about 200 A. D. Nevertheless it remains to us a poetic summary of the best and noblest teachings, consolations and exhortations to be derived from all the preceding religions and speculative philosophies from the earliest Upanishads to the latest Yoga Sutras. Garbe's German translation brings out the pure monism of its philosophy while Sir Edwin Arnold's English translation emphasizes the almost Christian tone of its religion and ethics.

However, its clearest value lies in the sturdy yet tender character of its great expositor and instructor, Krishna "the Adorable One", who takes human form and appears in time of dire need to Arjuna chief of chariots under the blind king, Dritaräshtira. With Krishna, a man in the moral whirlpool of war is in most urgent need of philosophic and righteous instruction; he must be taught and cautioned to see things in their true perspective, be faithful to divine truth and considerate of his highest ethical relations and duties. With Krishna, the *doctrinal* foundation for this instruction is to be had in the Samkhya's advocacy of an ontological dualism, of a mutually independent pair of realities, Brahma and Prakriti; and in the Samkhya-Yoga's two-fold manner of knowing truth—first, by the subjective means of the renunciative ability and immutable calm of Brahma; and second, by means of the meditation and concentrative intelligence of Purusha (individual soul) dealing objectively with Prakriti (external universe).

And yet on this latter point Krishna held that the Purusha and the Prakriti are but two elements in a more profound and *real* unity of the Cosmos. The *philosophic* foundation was that this monistic argument leaves no room for Purusha as an actual reality in the

universe, nor does it countenance any finite source of activity as adequate to attain any knowledge of truth nor hence any actual redemption from the misery of life. Purusha, as individual mind, is finite both in structure and in function; it operates in the limited zone of the conditional and relative; its whole art and apparatus is subject to the empirical laws of time and space, whence it becomes also subject to the Maya of sense-phenomena and the Avidya of trusting in their deliverances. In such case the Prakriti exercises the superior action; it acts on and tyrannizes over the Purusha which is thus rendered inferior, passive and weak when considered in relation to any real knowledge, practice of virtue, worship or freedom. The Purusha then is a fit ground for illusion and error. It is open to all manner of affection and disaffection, acting both irrational and immodest. It is perhaps so thoroughly affected by the wonders of the phenomenal world that it will try to "rationalize" its errors and illusions into a (specious) system of truth:—a point very shrewdly brought out in a philosophical play by Krishna's famous namesake, Krishna Mishra who flourished about 1150 A. D. In this play, entitled Prabôdha Chandrodâya or "Moonrise of Intelligence", *King Error* gives out results of mental illusion as points of philosophy, and is refuted only when the wisdom of Brahma is shown superior to the Hinayana (worldly wise) Buddha and the Hatha (materialistic) Yoga.

But in the Bhagavad-Gitâ Krishna is the "pure-tongued" spokesman who reaches far beyond this finitude of individual mind, looks through the sense-presentations of things and reads profoundly the deeper principles which underlie the pluralism of apparent reality. As against the notions of the Sarvâstivâdas or maintainers of all existent realities (one of the four Buddhistic Vaibhâshikas, a sect of "vernacular interpreters" supposed to have been founded by Rahula, son of Sakyamuni) a Krishna sees in these super-finite principles the one eternal Type of Divine Reality supreme over the separateness of individuality and the relational foist of human intellect. This Supreme Reality is the ultimate fact of all being (Astitva, universal is-ness); not only of the real existence of the actual Universe as an omnipresent monistic root like the Paramatman of the Iswara-philosophers, but also of human beings and the imaginary beings which are supposed to inhabit the intermediary realms.

Ever since the time of the Samkhya Prarâchana or the "Samkhya philosophy preëminently established" (six lectures by Iswara

Krishnāna on Kapila's Samkhya Sutras), the great problem of humanity has been reduced to the single question of how to do away with the subtle difference, implied herein, between consciousness (which is finite and mutable) and being (which is super-finite and indestructible). The sure-footed manner of answering this question is perhaps the honest if not the only true reason why Krishna has been habitually considered by the old theopathic Vedists to be the eighth incarnation of Vishnu "the Worker" god of the ancient Hindu trinity.

Nevertheless, as we read the noble Song itself, we find that Krishna takes on the form of a charioteer in Dritarāshtra's army and lays down to the immediate attention of Arjuna a practical solution which aims to free humanity from its vicious circle of physical bondage and make the finite self-soul of man one with the boundless Soul-Self of Brahma. Like Vārdhamāna (c. 490 B. C.), one of the first Jain disciples and reputed successor to Mahāvira, teaching his true followers (the so-called Svetambāra Jains who were really "white-robed" Brahmo-Buddhist ascetics) the ceaseless practice of stern resistance to the six leading obstacles to human freedom: Kama, lust; Krupa, anger; Maddha, pride; Matsāra, vindictiveness; Lokānyana, worldliness; and Lopa, greed;—Krishna also laid down the laws according to whose keeping mankind may be redeemed from its gross worldly pledge, the illusion, ignorance and passive error of individual existence. And by constant conformity to this functional redemption the soul of man may be rendered one with the positive activity of Brahma's universal Reality, his Immutable Goodness and his Self-Realizing function of control, balance, peace, perfection, and creative harmony in both the human and the divine realms. This condition or state of being is called Nirvana (non-void), the absolute equilibrium of Brahma himself; and yet it is a state of being which is quite possible of human attainment, for (in the eleventh and fourteenth songs) does not Krishna identify himself with the highest Brahm with an "I am *it*" revelation? Surely here was Jaimini's Sabdasruti personified.

Furthermore, Krishna might very well qualify to replace Varuna who, from the earliest Vedic times and long before the quasi-rationalism of the Upanishadic speculations, had been considered the most celestial god in the Hindu pantheon, the founder of the mundane moral order, its preserver in the conscientious heart of man, and the detector and forgiver of human error and transgression. It was in a similar capacity that Krishna served the practical

guidance of mankind in view of the possibility of the apotheosis of soul, of the identification of human and divine Intelligence. This possibility is founded on the three principal paths of human aspiration: positive action, faithfulness (love or devotion) and meditation-without-seed. Each of these paths is in turn to be directed and qualified by its degree of control, simplicity, and concentration of all our energies, physical, mental, and spiritual. Whence, with the proper application of attention and industry, these three paths are sufficient to lead the Seeker to the Holy Truth, the Divine Goodness, and the Spiritual Beauty of the Cosmos. Only in the efficiency of their constant pursuit do they become a means adequate to our glorious destiny.

Like Bhārata (the poet-sage of old who by his pious life and penance won the generosity of Sarasvāti, wife of Brahma, goddess of speech and music, and inventress of the Devanāgarī Sanskrit), Krishna rated the practical as more primarily important than the theoretical. He emphasized the point that to gain the positive power of the Paramātman or Supreme Soul-Self, the seeker must have ceaseless and tireless control over his petty, personal aims, desires and motives; that to attain the blissful state of Spiritual Love, Brahmabhākti or devotion to the Deity, the aspiring seeker must be simple and humbly pure of heart and mind, not self-assertive, luxury-loving nor possession-grasping, which are the worst perhaps of all human vices. In a nut-shell Krishna made it a practical necessity of the moral life that in order to be enabled to reach the highest ideal, the plane of Divine Wisdom and Spiritual Being, the aspirant must renounce totally and absolutely the oblique demands of the Manas or lower mind and its sensuous imagination. He must irrevocably turn away from this lower mind and embrace the higher, the Path of the Three Reasons, Triyatārkadhārma; like the true Jñānyogi he must constantly meditate on the eternal truth of Brahma's Realty, and concentrate all his energies to a focus on this threefold path to Divine Wisdom.

This is the life of Nirvana and Immutable Bliss as Krishna described it and to which he exhorted Arjuna in one of the world's greatest documents of religious instruction—the Bhagavad-Gītā. As the Vedānta-Mīmāṃsā system had been emphasized as the pattern for the only religio-philosophical life, so Krishnaism was soon looked upon as its peer, for here were practical ethical laws to supplement the bare theoretical chronicle of Reality. Where the Vedānta had been founded upon the hymnal aspiration of the Vedas and the

Upanishadic speculations, Krishna adopted the ground established by the Sutra writers and the ascetic sages of old, and based his religious éducation of man, not on mere ceremonial priestcraft and idle presumptions of finite acquisition, but on honest ethical construction, practical religious effort, and true ennoblement of soul.