

**COMPARISON OF LINGAYAT RELIGION WITH MAJOR
RELIGIONS FOLLOWED IN INDIA**

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**This work is dedicated to
the readers without
Curse and Affection
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Prove the relevance of the present study which is to compare Lingayat religion with major Religion followed in India, namely Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism it tries to give relevance of religions at contemporary times. *Lingayatism* being followed by the majority of masses of south India and also significant numbers population from rest of India, is a complete religion. Hitherto it has not been recognized, the present study struggles bring it to light.

All religions require us to look upon life as an opportunity for self-realization *atmanastu kamaya*. They call upon us to strive incessantly and wrest the immortal from the mortal. God is the Universal reality, wisdom and love and we are His children irrespective of race and religious belief. Within each incarnate soul dwells the god-consciousness which we must seek out and awaken. When mankind awakes to the truth, universal brotherhood will follow the at-one-ment with the great fountain head of all creation. One whose life is rooted in the experience of the Supreme spontaneously develops love for all creation. He will be free from hatred of any man. He will not look upon human beings as though they were irresponsible things, means to other people's interest. He will boldly work for a society in which man can be free and fearless, a subject, not an object. He will oppose terror and cruelty and stand by the outcast and the refugee. He will give voice to those who have no voice. (S. Radhakrishnan Indian Religions, P12)

Let us think upon these factors regarding religions.

The necessity of Comparative study

The Doctrines of Religions a Priori

Dangers in the study of Comparative Religion

Aims and objectives of comparative Study of Religion

THE NECESSECITY OF A COMPARATIVE STUDY:

Thinkers all over the world are first concerned with the self-understanding of man. Man wants to know about his own history. In the light of history he determines his own destiny. Arnold Toynbee has done a monumental work in ten volumes regarding the world Inputs and outputs history of man through the ages. His findings are that religion stands in the centre.

“I have come back to a belief that religion holds the key to the mystery of existence; . . .”

And further adds that the

“Catholic minded Indian spirit is the way of salvation for human beings of all religions in an age in which we have to learn to live as a single family if we are not to destroy our-selves”

Thus one good reason for a comparative study is that a thought-structure is reached which will stand against human conflict, religious wars and communal tension. Most probably this is a real fear in the mind of the moderners.

An Indian feels proud to learn that the comparative study of religions (Hinduism, Zorostrainism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity) was started by Akbar in about 1575 A. D. this resulted in the eclectic religion of *Din Ilahi*. In this Durbar of religions, a Sufi saint to have declared,

Whatever be thy religion, associate with those who think differently from thee. If thou canst mix with them freely and are not angered at hearing their discourse, thou hast attained peace and art a master of creation.

A comparative study of religions is supposed,

To make us more catholic in our sympathies, more just and generous, in our attitude to foreign faiths, more magnanimous towards orthodox people....

For understanding man from the earliest times up to the present, one has to study art, architecture, all kinds of remains, literature and beliefs. Religion is the most prominent feature which has found its expressions in human art, literature and his various activities, more in the ancient past in the modern times. Hence, for understanding man, one has to study the architecture of temples, idols, hymns, songs, religious poetry of the *Gathas*, *Zendavesta*, *Rigveda*, the Bible the *Quoran*, *Adigrantha* *Vachana Sahitya* and so on. There is hardly any ancient work of art which was not sanctified and hallowed by religious inspiration. Some of the finest poetry in the world has been dedicated to religion. The Ramayana, Mahabharata, Dante's Divine Comedy, Milton's paradise Lost and the Paradiase regained are some of the most glorious examples of religious poetry. Hence, in order to study man, one has to take religion seriously. One question, however, may be raised at this point.

THE DOCTRINE OF RELIGION A PRIORI

From the past tradition it is clear that man believed in religion a priori. Plato held that all true knowledge is recollection. It is this pristine glory of the soul which makes men pursue what is good, true and beautiful. Following Plato, St, Augustine laid down: "O Lord thou hast made us thyself, and our heart is restless till it rests in thee".

Islam also accepts the doctrine of religion a priori. According to Muhammed Shaltour men are so psychologically constituted that they will confess to the

existence of God, specially when they are free from distractions, or, when they are faced with hardships or misfortunes.

“And if thou (Muhammed) ask them:

Who created the heavens and the earth, they will surely answer: the mighty, the Knower created the.”

(Surah 50.9; 48.9)

It might be conceded that in the past man was religious, but at the present time in an age of science and technology religion appears to be an anachronism. A modern man has ceased to believe in heaven-hell, Virgin birth and many such stories of miracles. Thus, according to this view of debunking religion, it is held that religion is a time-bound phenomenon of man and with the deepening of the scientific spirit in man, it is bound to disappear. From a cursory survey of modern men...this conclusion appears to be the plausible, for most modern men are getting away from religion. This is not only true in the communist countries, but is found in Europe and Britain as well. But is religion really a culture-bound phenomenon and likely to disappear with the slow but invisible advance of a scientific world-view? However, this need not be a true view of religion and even of modern men.

Marxism, Freudianism and Dewey's type of humanism have very systematically tried to destroy the very foundation of traditional religions. But in their turn they have themselves assumed the form of some sort religion. for example, communism in Russia and the Eastern Europe, is studied as seriously as once Christianity was studied in those countries. It is introduced from the infant classes up to the University education. Again, communism is preached throughout the whole world with the same commitment and self-involvement which characterized the preaching of the Christian gospel. In the same manner, Erich From has shown that even Freudianism teaches a religion of human brotherhood, free from psychic complexes and dedicated to the alleviation of human sufferings. Above all Freudianism teaches a religion of resignation to the inevitable. How does this religion of resignation to the inevitable differ from Islamic and Indian teachings of

resignation to the inevitableness? Islam teaches resignation to the sovereign will of Allah and the Indian bows down before the inevitable consequences of one's past Karma. Thus, the Freudian teaching about human brotherhood, free from inner compulsion and given to the resignation of the inevitable is not substantially different from other traditional teachings or other traditional forms of religions. Finally, it is a well-known fact that Dewey's teaching of humanism supporting the American type of democracy of human supporting the American type of democracy is itself a form of religion. Why other forms of democracy practiced by the Communist Party of Russia be not regarded as democracy? John Dewey speaks of his Naturalism in the following eloquent speech:

We who now live are parts of a humanity that extends into the remote past, a humanity that has interacted with nature. The things in civilization we most prize are not of ourselves. They exist by the grace of doings and sufferings of the continuous human community in which we are a link. Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying and expending the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant.

Thus, John Dewey too regards his naturalism as the implicit faith of all mankind. It is also a form a militant religion. Thus, religion cannot be banished from human beings. As such we hold on to the doctrine of religion a priori, according to which religion is implanted in man and cannot be eradicated without doing violence to his nature. We find the confirmation of this statement in the persistence of religion even in Russia where religion was suppressed with an iron hand. Religion is as natural in man as thinking and breathing. Banish religion through the door and it

comes back to you from the window. One religion can give way to another form of religion, but man cannot live without religion. The doctrine of religion a priori follows from holism which is found in all living beings, from the lowest to the highest.

It was Aristotle who observed that there is a tendency in a hatched egg to become a chick. Much later Hans Driesch (1867-1940) found that an embryo has a holistic tendency within it to become a whole and complete animal of the species to which the embryo under study belongs. If some injury is done to the embryo, then all other parts come to compensate the injury by contributing the injured embryo to become complete and whole. Much later on Lastly working on the functioning of the brain in relation to the laws of learning came to the conclusion about the equipotentiality of the brain. In other words, he found that the brain works as a whole. If a part of the brain is injured, then the other parts try to compensate the working of the injured part. In the same strain C.G.Jung found that the human psyche works as a whole, and the course, forces a man to become complete and whole. The holistic tendency in learning, prevailing etc., was demonstrated by the Gestaltists, W. Kohler. K. Koffka and others. However, the most interesting result concerning holism is found in a series of studies with regard to the working of personality. Kurt Goldstein, Andras Angyal, Abraham Maslow, Prescott Lecky, Carl Rogers and many others came to the conclusion that personality tends to become one unified whole. Each personality, either dimly or clearly has a picture of one's own ideal self with it wants to become. Under a strong drive in each man to become an ideal self, a picture of his ideal self is projected into gods, goddesses or God, by worshipping whom he gets the feel of his attaining what his whole being cries forth. Thus religion is an essential overtone of his striving towards his ideal self. Hence, as long as there is the formation of personality in each man, there will be a tendency to become a complete and whole self. And the ideal of an ideal self comes to be projected into deity, by worshipping which each man gets the psychological satisfaction of his reaching the realizing the perfect self. Thus, religion is an inevitable conclusion of every man who consciously or unconsciously wants to reach his perfection. Hence, religion is as natural as breathing, thinking and becoming. The most important thing in religion is not only to know, but to become what concerns

his most ultimate concern in the field of religious philosophy Plato, St. Augustine and Paul Tillich are the stalwart thinkers who have held on to the doctrine of religion a priori. Our conclusion therefore is that any specific form of religion is certainly culture-bound, but religion in general is natural man and is not likely to disappear in near future or at any time.

The doctrine of religion a priori has a deep lesson for man in relation to the evolutionary philosophies of emergentists, creative evolutionism of Bergson and ingressive philosophy of A. N. Whitehead. According to evolutionary philosophy in general, in spite of many failures, set-backs, backsliding, certainly there has been remarkable emergence of new beings and things out of the creative throw of nature. Out of gaseous form, matter did emerge. Whatever the early history of man could be, one thing is certain and no fiction that self-conscious man did emerge slowly, gradually and after a good deal of groping man is today that man is the crown and roof of things in the whole evolutionary scheme of things. With this consciousness in him, he is also painfully realizing that he is very weak, frail, and imperfect. He has to go very far. In this on-goings of the world, he is fully aware of the option of going further towards becoming higher being, or, choosing the option of becoming a failure in the struggle of existence. The dilemma of becoming either a god or extinction is forced on him. The dilemma is posed for not an individual, but for the whole human race.

Looking back at the evolutionary scheme of things, there certainly have been cases of progress along with decline. There is something in the universe which pertains to advance. This push and pull for giving rise to higher emergence has been termed *nisus* by Samuel Alexander. Again, the tendency in each living creature to remain in the state in which it is found has also been termed by Alexander as *conatus*. By virtue of *conatus* in each man. Man perseveres himself as a human being. But there is also a *nisus* which goads each man to become higher than what he is. It is due to the presence of *nisus* which drives a man to have his ideal self and project this ideal self into what he considers to be his highest self in the person of his deity. By worshipping, praising and meditating on his deity he gets the feeling of his becoming a complete and whole being.

But it is not enough to become one's complete self by his individual self alone. He knows that in a society of other competing men and religions, his state of reaching perfection is always open to conflict. The perfection reached at the state of meditation (or, Samadhi) is very short-lived. In the past, the Indian sages cleared stated that individual liberation is not enough. An Arhat has to work still and become a *Bodhisatva* who has to work for the salvation of human race. In the same strain, the *Advaitins* have been preaching for the goal of *Sarvamukti* i.e., salvation for the whole humanity. At the very beginning of Christianity St. Paul has stated that the whole universe has to be own and changed into a New Jerusalem and man has to be transformed into a New Being (col.1.20; Ephesians 1.20).

There has been the ushering in of great religions which appeared to be realizing the dream of infecting all men to be changed into higher beings. Christianity appeared to have realized this dream. At another time in the past the Upanishadic teachings had blazed the trail of becoming Brahmin. In the same strain. The Siddhas hoped to have becoming immortal by practicing *tantra*. Aurobindo also taught the doctrine of becoming super mind. Again, we must not ignore the story of Islam which at one time appeared to have infected the whole civilized world to become gold fit for heaven. But, alas! Man has to go far and yet very far.

In the preceding language of evolutionary scheme of things, the nirus in man came very near of creating a new Jerusalem and a new being. Today, religions differ and instead of combining the insight of each religion to change the whole universe, we find that many thinkers have become very critical of traditional religions. The end of a comparative study of religions is to enkindle the nirus within human beings so that new beings may emerge. Henri Bergson, in 'the two sources of morality and religion' states his vision. According to Bergson, the vital living force has created man. But the universe cannot stop with the creation of man only. This man has to give birth to higher beings. According to him the essential function of the universe is the making of gods. The created human beings have to turn into creations. This can be possible if the whole race gets infected in the task of transforming man into a creator or a god. Hence, a study of living religions might help to evoke in us a vision

of higher beings and to put forth efforts in that direction. Why have religions so far failed us?

DANGERS IN THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS

With the rise of scientific world-view amongst philosophers, anthropologists and psychologists, investigators applied scientific methodology to ascertain the essentials of religions.

Sociologists regard religion as a social phenomenon. For them religion is a social activity which takes society as a reality. Durkheim as such regards God figure as a social truth and necessary for holding the society together as a moral community. For anthropologists too religion is concerned with beliefs and practices in a living community. Historians study religious beliefs in terms of events as influenced by such beliefs. For example, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Nazism have greatly influenced social political events in human history. Freud (1859-1939) and Feuerbach (1804-1872) have declared religion as the projection of human psyche. Hence, statements about God are really statements about man. Again, many thinkers (e.g., G. W. F. Hegel 1770-1831), E. B. Tylor, J. G. Frazer, Robertson Smith have applied their minds to the evolutionary study of religions.

It is but natural to start with the simplest forms of religion, because the higher religions are far too complex to be studied at the beginning. Hence, anthropologists like J.G. Frazer and many others began to study primitive religions like Totemism (J.G. Frazer), Animism (E.B. Tylor), Manaism (Marrett), Fetishism and so on. In this regard ten volumes of 'The Golden Bough' with regard to religion as a whole? The findings of Frazer are negative. Another attempt by Sigmund Freud spelled greater disaster, because his studies pretended to touch the depth of the human psyche in matters of religion. After a good deal of his preoccupation with the theistic form of religion, Freud declared religion to be a mass-neurosis of mankind and wholly infantile. (The Future of an Illusion, 1917). The whole thing in religion, according to Freud: is so patently infantile, so incongruous with reality, that to on

whose attitude to humanity is friendly it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life.

Why has a scientific study of religions failed? For the simple reason that religion is the whole of man, and science deals with what is partial. The language of science is factual and descriptive. In contrast, the language of religion is evocative, beckoning a seeker towards his own depth in the direction of new dimension of reality by changing the whole outlook of the seeker. It requires utmost sympathy for a student of comparative study of religion to enter into the shoes of another believer of the faith other than his own. Perhaps it is difficult for a non-believer to develop that much of sympathy for entering into the feel and throb of believers. It has been held that non-believers are religion-blind. One has to get interested to see things as a believer see the things for himself. In contrast, a scientist has to cultivate his attitude of utmost disinterestedness towards his facts and findings. In our language a scientist of religion can only know the *conatus* of a believer, but not his *nisus*. Hence, a non-believer scientist cannot help having a negative view of religion. The core of religion eludes his grasp. True, a believer having some faith in a religion is better suited to approach other religions differing from his own than a non-believer. But even for a believer there are great pitfalls against which he has to guard himself.

A scientist is condemned to have only the husk and not the grain of religions belief. But even a believer has to be careful, otherwise, he would get only the diseased grain after winnowing religions. A great many times some theologians study religions and at the end of their study conclude their own religion as the best. This is especially the case with missionaries of different faiths. For example, Christian missionaries often studied other religions, viz. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and invariably showed the Christianity was the best religion. This is very well illustrated in the case of John Munir who wrote a booklet called *mata-parikshan* (test of religions, 1839). In this *mata-pariksha*, he tried to show that Christianity was the only true religion. The result was that the Hindu Pundits not only defended their own faith, but came harsh and intolerant towards Christianity. This type of comparative study pertains to the encouragement for fundamentalism in religion and paves the way for in relation to Radhakrishnan's defence of Hinduism. 'Eastern

Religion and Western Thoughts, 1939' in relation to Dr. A. Schweitzer's attack of Hinduism in his book 'Indian thoughts and its Development' 1935.

There is another related danger when a comparative study of religions is undertaken with a view to showing that of all religions. For example, J. N. Fraquhar in 1931 wrote 'The Crown of Hinduism' and showed that Christianity is the fulfillment of Hinduism. This approach did not satisfy the Christian thinkers nor the Hindus. Such an approach is based on the ignorance of theologians with regard to the psychology of believers. Each believer in his faith feels his becoming complete, whole and perfect in terms of the holistic drive within him. Any attempt to show the absurdity, weakness or incompleteness in any religion will evoke tension and conflict.

Hence, by avoiding the dangers in a comparative study of religions, we can fulfill some of the tasks and aims of such a study.

AIMS AND PURPOSE OF A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

First only a believer in religion should understand the task of studying religions belonging to different ages and peoples. Even a historical development of one's own religion will be a rewarding pursuit. For example, Rudolf Bultmann studied Christianity from its inception and has established for himself and for other fellow Christians the task of demythologizing Christianity. By demythologizing Christianity one would know the real message of Christianity for its modern adherents. Again, a comparative and historical study of prophetic religions will bring them much closer and would promote mutual understanding between them. In like manner a comparative study of all living religions with regard to some common salient features would show that after all the disagreement between them is much less than agreement. For example, the doctrine of eternal hell and the doctrine of innumerable rebirths are not as remote as people seem to think. And the same is true with regard to other key-concepts of religions.

Perhaps a word is needed to elucidate the phrase 'mutual understanding of different religions believers'. Mutual understanding of men belonging to different faiths means taking full cognizance of their conviction, commitment and existential decisions involved in their practice and beliefs. For reaching this kind of understanding a high degree of disciplined imagination is necessary by virtue of which one will be able to enter into sympathy with others by transporting themselves into their inside. This may be styled as kathenotheistic or henotheistic Endeavour for placing oneself into the inside of different faiths. This requires us.

To step ourselves into the other fellows' shoes; and this again, as everyone realizes, also implies the capacity to take own shoes off first.

This was successfully practiced by Ramakrishana. His own testimony is:

I had to practice each religion for a time-*Hinduism, Islam, Christianity*. Furthermore, I followed the paths of the *Shaktas, Vaishnavas* and *Vedantists*.

A study of living religions would bring us nearer to the nature of religion. for example, Durkheim held that religion is a social affair of men. As against this A. N. Whitehead stated that religion is what a man does in his solitariness. It is true that for primitive races and for early form of Judaism and for Vedic Hinduism, religion is a matter of social affair. But against this for Christianity, later Judaism and Islam and *Hinayana* Buddhism salvation is for the individual with their moral and religious obligations to society. If Marxism be regarded as a religion, then for it social changes, leading to the withering the state would lead to social millennium where everybody will get what he needs and would produce according to his abilities. Even Isaiah hopes for a millennium, "Wolves and lambs will eat together; lions will eat straw, as cattle do." (65.25). it appears that society and the individual both must be transformed *pari passu*. The one sided emphasis of *Sarvodaya* and *Sarvamukti* go together. Thus a study of different religions will give more a deeper insight into what religion is.

A study of different faiths will show us the common acceptable points found of them, which till now might have been only dimly noticed. For example, Alfred W.

Martin (Comparative Religion, 1926) and Dr. Bhagavan Das find that all religions teach more or less the same moral code. Likewise, Rudolf Otto found that in every religion there is the same numinous feeling of awe, wonder and dread (*mysterium et fascinans*). Excepting the first five commandments given to Moses, all others are included in the *panca mahavrata* of the Jains, which is the common property of all Indian religions. One very important moral code is reflected in the living religions of the world.

‘Do as you would be done by’ (Christianity); ‘One should seek for others the happiness one desires for oneself’ (Buddhism).

This kind of cognizance of the common and sharable teachings of religions will inspire toleration and respect for religions other than one’s own and perhaps many help us to evolve a kind of consensus of agreed beliefs and spiritual values. This is reflected in *Din Illahi* of Akbar.

A study of various religions may serve to enrich and deepen one’s insight into one’s own religion. For example, a study of Hinduism created a new insight in Otto, and thereby he wrote ‘The idea of the Holy’. In like manner, a study of *Advaitism* led Paul Tillich to establish his fruitful theory of symbolism in religion. Hence, Radhakrishnan writes,

Our aim should be not to make converts. Christians into Buddhists or Buddhists into Christians, but enable both Buddhists and Christians to discover the basic principles of their own religions and live up to them.

Thus, a comparative study of religions teaches us to cultivate the virtue of appreciation and appropriation of the different insights of different religions.

A study of religions may cross-fertilize religions, leading to an amalgam of religious insight, or, might give rise to newer forms of religions. There is little doubt that in Dara Shikoh and in many Sufis there was an amalgam of Hinduism and Islam. Their head was Upanishadic and their heart was Islamic.

A study of Christianity and the Upanishads gave rise to a new form of Hinduism known as *Brahmo Samaj*. *Brahmo Samaj* led to fruitful reformation in Hinduism like prevention of sati, condemnation of idolatry, anti-casteism and so on. In the same manner in the movement of Ramakrishna *Ashrama* Hinduism was sought to become a universal religion.

The most important task of comparative study of religions is to find out a principle of unity which will harmonize and balance the claims and counter claims of warring religions into one unity. Unity does not mean uniformity of religious conduct and belief, but a harmonious bending of religious variety into a symphony of spiritual striving and quest. In the opinion of the author such an absolute principle is found in *Shankara's* doctrine of difference less Brahman which every form of religionists can accept without doing much violence to one's faith. The same point may be true of Kabir's teaching about *Purana Brahama* and certainly of Ramakrishna.

For gaining insight into living religions certain common topics have been taken in each religion, for the purpose of relevant comparison. These topics are the doctrine of each religion with regard to God, world, soul, Heaven-hell, the Day of Judgment, ultimate destiny of each soul. Also some standing topics in some religions like the doctrine of atonement in Christianity, the doctrine of rebirth in Hinduism, prayers and meditation have been taken up. An attempt has been made with regard to the historical development of various religions, and a history of India religion. The purpose of this again is bringing the religions together, so far as their nature and origin are concerned.

There is little doubt that God looms large in the living religions of the world. God can neither be proved, nor disproved. Is this God-talk, then, nonsense? Or, it a revelatory event of the universe in travail for giving birth to higher humanity? That there is God and He has been working in the Universe, and, most clearly in human history, and even in individual lives, will remain an article of faith, and, perhaps nothing beyond this stand can ever be maintained. There is a perennial hope that man and his dearest hopes will not perish, there is dawning awareness in man that 'God within man' has to be realized as his highest destiny. This realization of one's inner

being is beyond all books, creeds and warring claims of different religions, even though religious scriptures and religious teachers are necessary in awakening of Godward consciousness in man. May this effort contribute towards the realization of 'God within man'.

The doctrine of 'god within man' or 'a lotus in the heart' is essentially *Upanishadic* and *Vedantic*, and, has been repeatedly emphasized by Ramanuja, Kabir and Guru Nanak and Ramkrishna. The teaching of realizing 'God within man' emphasizes that knowing has to be subordinated to the supreme task of becoming divine (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*). In other words, to know God has to point us the way towards becoming a thing of value, a pearl of great price, or, gold fit for the heaven. A knower of Buddha has ultimately to become a Buddha. This is the real meaning of *Appo Dipo Bhava*. Jesus too said, 'be as perfect as your Father in heaven is'. This earth is a veritable value of soul-making (Keats), or, as Bergson has said the world has undertaken the task of creating gods out of created beings.

Chapter 2 explains "Essentialities of the Hinduism" where in an attempt is made to introduce the ethics and basics of Hindu culture in brief.

Chapter 3 explains "Essentialities of the Lingayat" religion where in an attempt is made to introduce the ethics and basics of Lingayat religion in brief.

Chapter 4 explains "Essentialities of the Buddhism" where in an attempt is made to introduce the ethics and basics of Buddhism in brief.

Chapter 5 explains "Essentialities of the Jainism" where in an attempt is made to introduce the ethics and basics of Jainism in brief.

Chapter 6 explains "Essentialities of the Sikhism" where in an attempt is made to introduce the ethics and basics of Sikhism in brief.

Chapter 7 explains "Essentialities of the Islam" where in an attempt is made to introduce the ethics and basics of Islam in brief.

Chapter 8 explains "Essentialities of the Christianity" where in an attempt is made to introduce the ethics and basics of Christianity in brief.

Chapter 9 "Comparison of Religions" discussion made regarding comparison of Major Religions of India namely Hinduism, Lingayat religion, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity are compared with special reference to the Lingayat religion.

Chapter 10 "Conclusions" Presents the findings of the comparative study of religions regarding the relevance of the doctrines of the religions to the contemporary times. It is concluded that, though present day Lingayat religion has unique features which can establish it to be a Universal religion.

CHAPTER II

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF HINDUISM

This chapter discusses the essential features of Hinduism such as *Chatur Varnas*, *Chatur Ashrama*, Law of *Karma*, *Purusharthas* and *Yoga*. It traces out these features from the roots that are available in Indus valley civilization, Vedic culture and Epics of Hinduism.

The religious tradition we call 'Hinduism' is the product of nearly 5,000 years of continuous development. It has no founder and no prophet. Being one of the oldest of the world's great living religions, it has several origins or roots from different races of people. Followed by nearly 80% of the roughly 700 million people of India, Hinduism is actually a collection of an incredible variety of sects and cults; from primitive forms of animism to the highest reaches of mysticism and philosophy. Many of the sects and cults seem to have distinct religious practices. Yet all have a family relationship since they all spring from certain common traditions and thrive on conditions peculiar to India.

Hindu is a Persian word for Indian. It is the name by which the Persian and the Greek invaders of India (600BC-300BC) designated the people of this country. The progress of these invaders towards this country usually stopped short at the Indus or the Sindhu River. So they called this country as "the land of the Sindhu or Hindu". Since the Persians pronounced the letter 'S' as 'H' so all the old Persian epigraphs called India as Hindu. The Muslim invaders of India since 1000A.D. called this land as 'Hindustan', which was popularized by the British, who later changed it as India. But the people of India were Hindus for them too; this term 'Hindu' being foreign, is nowhere found in the Indian scriptures and other literature. The Indian tradition prefers to speak of this religious tradition as *Sanatana Dharma* or 'Eternal law' which indicates the revelatory character of the beliefs to which the 'Hindu' tradition is committed. "Hinduism" is more a culture than a creed and more a way of life than a religion founded by a prophet.

The prominent feature of Hinduism is its infinite variety. This is due to two major causes: i) the vastness of this country and the diversity of her physical

features, and ii) the diversity of races that settled in this land, which made this country an “ethnological museum”. Six races in India the Negrito, the Proto-Australoid, the Mongoloid, the Mediterranean and the Indo-Europeans (Western Brachycephels). As a result, Hinduism embraces a wide diversity of religious beliefs. Some worship *Shiva*, others *Vishnu*, or his incarnations; yet others a Mother goddess and so on. The individual Hindu may pay reverence to one god, or a few gods, or many Gods or none at all.

Thus for an alien, the name ‘Hinduism’ is an umbrella term which does not demand a total homogeneity. Some scholars point out that Hinduism is a “federation of cults and customs, a collage of ideas and spiritual aspiration”. It embraces a “family of religious beliefs”.

Roots of Hinduism

The sources of Hinduism are generally divided into two. The *Vedic* and the *Non-Vedic*. The *Vedic* origin belongs to the invading *Aryans* since 2000BC. The *Non-Vedic* tradition is divided into two-the *Pre-Vedic* and the *Post-Vedic*. The religion of the Indus valley civilization is the major *Pre-Vedic* source. Many post *Non-Vedic* influences like Buddhism and Jainism too shaped Hinduism. The religious beliefs and practices of the people of the Indus valley, of the people of other parts of India, before and after the *Aryan* invasion, constitute major roots of Hinduism. All these mingled to form two different streams of Hinduism. One is called the classical Hinduism or the *Brhmanical* Hinduism and the other is called folk Hinduism or popular Hinduism. Some scholars call the former as Great tradition and the latter as the little tradition. Buddhism and Jainism also form part of the Great tradition.

A major source of non *Vedic* roots of Hinduism is the Indus Valley civilization which is still presented in the *Sloka* form of the country. Vedic culture followed by epics and *Puranas* form from the major source of *Brahmanical* Hinduism. Let us discuss the salient features of both the traditions into which present day Hinduism is rooted.

Indus Valley Civilization

In 1990, archeological excavations carried out at Mohenjodaro in Sindh and Harappa in the Punjab brought to light the vestigates of a highly developed urban civilization of some 5000 years old. This carried back the antiquity of Indian History and that of the origin of Hinduism to nearly 2500BC. This was the period that witnessed the growth of two other civilizations, Egypt and Sumeria. There are good reasons to believe that the religion of the Indus people is an important source for determining the roots of Hinduism.

a. Shiva/Proto Shiva

Let us discuss some of the relevant and significant religions and cultural aspects of Indus Valley Civilization. Some scholars trace the origin of *Shiva* and *Linga* worship to the Harappan civilization. One of the seals from Mohenjodaro has the figure of a three faced man of god with horned head dress. He is seated in a *Yoga* posture and surrounded by wild animals, an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros and a buffalo. The body of this *Yogi* is nude, except for many bangles and necklaces. He is sithyphalic, which indicates that he is a fertility god. His face has a fierce ugerish aspect. The figure assumed as “Proto-Shiva”. Certainly the honored God has much in common with the Shiva of later Hinduism, called *Pashupati*.

The repeated depictions of bull on the seals that too showing it as standing before a cult object make us believe that bull was sacred animal to the Harappans. the bull or *Nandi* is specially associated with God *Siva* as his vehicle. However, in a Harappan civilization this bull does not seem to have been connected with the Proto-*Shiva*. Bull doesn't figure among the animals surrounding the harved God or proto-*Shiva*. Further, the horns of the “Proto-*Shiva*” are not those of an ox but of a buffalo. Similarly, the cow, so revered in later Hinduism, is nowhere depicted.

It is suggested that *Shiva*'s emblem of trident has its origin in the horned head-dress of ‘Proto-*Shiva*’. The identification of the male God with *Shiva* is further strengthening by the discovery of many conical and cylindrical stone pieces in the Harappan civilization. Many scholars think these stone pieces represent *Shivalinga*.

b. The Cult of Mother Goddess

Excavations at Indus sites are yielded many terracotta figures of standing, semi-nude figures. Most of them have girdles around their loins, abundant jewelry and fan-shaped head dresses. Scholars view that these represent a mother Goddess. Probably they are the forerunners of the cult of the divine mother, which forms an important part of later Hinduism and which has the female energy as the source of all creation. This belief in the female *Shakti* is stressed by the *Devi Mahatmya* section of *Markhandeya Purana*.

As some of the excavated tetra-cotta figures of the 'Mother-goddess' mentioned above are smoke-stained, scholars view that the custom of burning oil lamp or incense before the Goddess was a popular practice not only in modern Hinduism, but also in the Harappan age. These figures may be the earliest *Dipa Laxmi*'s known to the Hindu religion.

c. Tree worship

The tree worship that forms a part of modern Hinduism can also be traced back from the Harappan culture. On many seals we have the representation of trees and leave especially the papal leaf.

In one of the seals discovered at Harappa, we see a plant issuing forth the womb of a women seated on the ground with hands raised in supplication. This seems to depict the custom of human sacrifice before the deity.

Yet another seal represents a female figure, probably a Mother goddess, standing in the bifurcated branch of a papal tree. A worshipper brings a goat for sacrifice which is being participated by many people in a standing position. This custom of sacrificing goats to Gods and goddesses still forms a part of folk Hinduism.

d. Snake worship

in Harappa culture, snake appears on painted pottery. A clay amulet depicts a snake before a low stool. A tablet shows a seated deity with a hooded snake serving as a canopy over its head. All these indicate the prevalence of snake (*naga*) worship in the Harappan culture.

e. Demons or demi-Gods

A seal depicts a horned human figure, with the feet and tail of a bull, struggling against a horned tiger. This man-bull appears to be a demigod or demon. Some scholars see in this struggle the fore bear of a demon constantly battling against the gods, which is a major theme in almost all *Puranas* of the Hinduism. Some see the proto-*Devi* of proto-*Shiva* in the tiger. In later Hinduism, *Shiva* has a proto-form of Mahishasura in the man-bull and either tigers hide as his garment and *Devi* has a tiger as her vehicle.

f. Ceremonial ablutions

It is well known that ceremonial ablutions with water form an important feature of Hinduism. This practice can also be traced back to the Harappan civilization. The Great Bath at Mohenjodaro is about 56 meters long and 34 meters wide and it has six entrances. All these elaborate arrangements for bathing seem to indicate that ceremonial ablutions formed a feature of the Harappan religion.

g. Amulets

We have many clay and copper amulets from the Harappan civilization. These people probably believed in the magical potency of the amulets and wore them to ward off the evils. Several legends taken from the episodes of various deities are engraved on these amulets. Many amulets have Swastika engraved on them. Probably these people thought that it was a lucky sign.

Vedas

Vedas are the earlier available sources of literature to understand the religion and philosophy of Hindus. Being derived from the root 'Ved' to know, the word *Veda* means knowledge. The *Vedas*, also known as *Sruti* (that which is heard) constitute a prodigious body of literature, originally oral in character. There are four *Vedas*. *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama* and *Atharva Veda*. Each *Veda* has four sections called the *Samhitas* (1500-1000B.C), the *Brahmans* (900B.C), the *Aranyakas* (800-700 B.C) and the *Upanishad's* (700-500B.C.). These texts are great in length and very varied in

content. Out of the vast literary production of *Vedism*, only a part has survived, but this part is sufficient for understanding the nature of the whole. The massive *Brahmans*, which are looked on as appendices to the Samhitas (the core of *Vedas*), and the mystical *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*, which are in turn appendices to the *Brahmans*, complete the literature generally known as *Vedic*.

a. *Samhitas*

The *Samhitas* (Collection of prayers) being the earliest in time are the core of the *Vedic* literature. They are four in number, *Rig Veda Samhita*, *Yajur Veda Samhita*, *Sama Veda Samhita* and *Atharva Veda Samhita*. These *Samihitas* consist of “Songs of praise and invocation”; composed to meet the various needs of a complex religious system, mostly practical. These songs imply the existence of many mythological legends even before the composition of the *Rig Veda*. So, some scholars point out that the basic beliefs of the *Vedic* religion go back to the period when the *Aryans* lived in Iran.

The poets who composed this *Vedic* hymns are considered as great sages (Rishi's) and these hymns are considered to have great magic potency. These sages worshipped the various phenomena of nature and personified them in their songs. To these personified Natural forces, called *Devas*, these sages offered sacrifices so that they would give in return all prosperity, like rain, wealth in cattle and in sons, health, in long life and finally safe escort to the kingdom of death ruled by *Yama*, the son of Vivasvan.

The *Veda* Rishi's thought that the Gods were pleased with the material gift accompanied by *Vedic* hymns of praise that extolled the might of gods. These hymns were carefully handed down by word of mouth. Around 800-600 B.C. these hymns were collected and arranged. Even when the art of writing was widely known in India these hymns were rarely written. However, even after 3000 years that they have survived to the present day in their original form, without being tempered, thanks to the brilliant feats of memory of many generation of *Vedic* chanters. These hymns are still recited at weddings and funerals, and in the daily devotions of the *Brahmins*.

We have much knowledge of the religion of the early *Aryans* from the *Rig Veda Samhita*, which contains 1028 hymns. These are the oldest religious hymns in the world still looked on as sacred. *Rig Veda* means the “*Veda* of verses”. They are mostly poetic prayers addressed to *Agni*, *Indra*, *Varuna* and so on. The *Yajur Veda* (the *Veda* of sacrificial formulas) contains verses and prose formulas applicable to different rites. The *Sama Veda* (the *Veda* of chants) is made up of selection of verses drawn almost wholly from the *Rig Veda*. They are set to musical notation and intend as an aid to the performance of sacred rituals. The *Atharva Veda*, containing many non-*Aryan* elements of single animism and magical spells, is considered to be of less worthy than the three other *Vedas*.

b. Brahmanas

Each *Veda* has a *Brahmana* section. These prose texts are commentaries to the *Samhitas*. They are compiled separately for the various *Vedas*. They serve to interpret the mantras (hymns) of their ritual.

c. Aranyakas

Composed around 800B.C. *Aranyakas* started questioning the excessive ritualism of the *Vedic* sacrifice. Such rumblings can be detected as early as the *Rig Veda* in which the merit of their sacrifice was questioned and the plurality of gods was doubted. This sceptic voice also questioned the existence of *Indra*. The great genius of the age accommodated the free thinking too and in the *Aranyakas* they gave a symbolic interpretation to the mantras and the rituals. Thus the *Aranyakas* are books dealing with the mysticism and symbolism of the sacrifice. They prescribed meditations rather than sacrificial ritual. These *Aranyakas* became ideal text-books for the forest-hermit. So purely ritualistic passages are to be found in them only casually. They were studied in the forest, away from the community; hence they came to be called the *Aranyakas* or the ‘Forest texts’.

d. Upanishads

The *Upanishads* composed mostly around 600B.C. in the form of a dialogue constitute the culmination of *Vedism*. They favor the egoistic way of knowledge in opposition to the rituals and pleadings with the gods. These short texts summarizing

the speculative thought of the age were more concerned with the discovery of the ground of the universe, the ultimate reality (the *Brahman*). They were also concerned with the nature of human consciousness. They concluded that the timeless Barman is the same as the individual self of *Atman*. Their teachings are mostly through parables or similes. The basic *Upanishads* are thirteen in number. The remainder (about 100) is post *Vedic*.

e. Vedic Gods

The *Aryans* were on the fringes of civilization with an elaborated poetry and an advanced military technique. They are a wild, turbulent people and had few of the taboos of later India. These *Aryans* were the Indo-European stock of which the Iranians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, slaves and Celts also belonged. The great father God of the Indo-European was the personified *Heavenszues* in Greek, Jupiter in Latin and Dyaus in the *Vedas*. However, by the time the *Aryans* had entered India, and their religion has developed far from the old Indo-European faith. To the Indo-*Aryans* of the *Vedic* period, Indra was the greatest God. He had a dual function. He was the greatest war-God and weather God. Like the Greek Zeus and the German Thor, the *Vedic Indra* wielded a thunderbolt (*Vajra*), with which he destroyed his enemies. With it slew the evil dragon *Vritra* who held back the water and caused famine on earth. Thus Indra brought rain to the parched land.

The *Vedic Aryans* also prayed to the *Surya* (Sun God) *Agni* (Fire-god), and *Varuna* was guardian of *Rta*, the cosmic order. This concept of *Rta* is the highest flight of *Rig. Vedic* thought. Whereas all the other *Vedic* Gods are lively and cheerful, *Varuna* is pure and awesome. So the worshippers approached *Varuna* with a sense of fear. Mere performance of sacrifice would not ensure his favor for he abhorred any violation of *Rta* which is sin. He loathed evil deeds prompted by drink, gambling, anger and the influence of wicked men. So when the cheerful *Vedic* priest sings to *Varuna*, he often puts on sack-cloth and ashes, and prayed with fear and humbling. *Varuna* punishes the sinners, like the Jeweh of the Old Testament. The hymn to *Varuna* reminds us of the potential psalms of the Old Testament.

Rudra was an archer God, whose arrows brought disease. Like *Indra*, he was associated with the storm. But he lacked *Indra's* popular and genial character. He dwelt in remote mountains and was generally an object of fear. He was invoked to ward off his arrows of plague and disaster. However, he had a beneficent aspect too. He was the guardian of the healing herbs.

Agni, the fire God was the God of the priests. As *Varuna* and the concept of *Rta* associated with him led to the *Vedic* ethics, *Agni* and his presence everywhere paved way for speculation leading to the *Rig Vedic* mysticism. *Agni*, the God of the home dwelt in the domestic heart, in the fire altar: and he was the intermediary between gods and men, because he carried the sacrifice to the gods. He dwelt in the waters of heaven in the form of lightning and on earth in many forms. He is hidden in the five sticks. In fact he is here, there and everywhere. Is there only one *Agni*, or are there many *Agni's*? How could he be one and many at the same time? Such questions in the *Rig Veda* show the earliest signs of the tendency towards monism, which was to bear fruit in the *Upanishads*.

f. Sacrifice

Sacrifice at the fire alter was the centre of the *Vedic* cult. Many scarifies were made in order to obtain boons from the *Devas* or gods. These Gods gladly responded to the call of the priests through the hymns, descended on earth, drank and ate with the worshippers, and duly rewarded them with plenitude, victory in war, pregnancy, long life, increase of cattle and so on. Men and *Devas* lived on a *quid pro quo* basis. Except the solemn *Varuna* and the grim and unpredictable *Rudra*, all the *Vedic* Gods were good natured. Guilt offerings and thank offerings, of the kind offered by the ancient Hebrews, are almost unheard of in the *Veda*.

In the later part of the *Rig Veda* it was believed that the universe itself arose from a primeval sacrifice by *Purusha*, the God. He sacrificed himself unto himself. This led to the mystical identification God, victim and sacrificer. Since then sacrifice began to attain an even greater importance in the scheme of things. Hence forth by every sacrifice the priest was reenacting the primeval sacrifice of the *Purusha*, and

the world enacting the primeval sacrifice of the Purusha, and the world was born anew. It was also believed that without regular sacrifices all cosmic process would cease and chaos would come again.

g. Brahman

In the *Rig Veda* we often come across a mysterious entity called *Brahman*, which mean the magical power of the sacred mantras (utterances). This is more or less like the supernatural power known in the religious anthropology as Mana. The priest, who alone knew the formula (Mantras) whereby to bring the Gods to the sacrifice, were supposed to be masters of this great mysterious power. So the possessor of *Brahmana* came to be called as *Brahmana*, the *Vedic* priest.

h. Mantra

The entire *Vedic* formulate (Mantras) were believed to have magical power. The metres used in the *Veda* were also thought of as gods. Among them the mantra “Gayatri” is supposed to have the greatest magical power. Later the syllable OM came to be considered as particularly holy and to contain the essence of the *Vedas* and is pregnant with the utmost ‘power’ and mystery.

All these *Vedic* speculations (about Rta, *Agni*’s omnipresence, the concept of *Brahman* etc.) ultimately led to the development of Gnostic monistic and ascetic trend in the *Upanishads*.

Epics

There are two Epics which have predominantly influenced the thought and the life of Hindus. They are *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. *Ramayana* discusses ideal personality of an individual, whereas the *Mahabharata* guides social and political life of human beings. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are called the *Itihasas* (historic narratives) A study of them, together with the *Puranas*, are supposed to be necessary for the correct interpretation of the *Vedas*. It is true that for over 2000 years these *Itihasas* have been influencing the religious and moral thought of India.

The origins of these two *Itihasas* are traced to the *Vedas*. The *Brahmanas* of the *Vedas* contain certain “songs of praise of men” and heroic legends. Recital of them was considered an essential part of the *Vedic* sacrificial rituals. These *Gathas* gradually developed into lengthy ballads. Whereas the transmission of the mantras of the Samhitas was confined to *Brahmin* priests, that of the heroic ballads was taken up by certain professional non-*Brahmanic* bards (the *sutras*), who popularized them among the masses. Thus the mantras of the *Brahmins* were praises of the deities, including sacrificial details and high philosophical speculations. The *Itihasa*’s (heroic ballads and legends) dealt with the great deeds of kings and heroes. They also described war and practical philosophy and ethics.

a. *The Ramayana*

Sage Valmiki, author of the Ramayana, collected the floating mass of the Rama story prevalent in his time and composed an ornate work. In its present form it comprises of seven books (1) *Bala kanda*, 2) *Ayodhya kanda*, 3) *Kiskinda kanda*, 4) *Sundara kanda*, 5) *Yudda kanda*, and 6) *Uttara kanda*) and contains 24,000 stanzas.

Adi Sankara (800A. D) In his *Atmabodha* elucidate the allegorical significance of this epic. He said the soul of (Rama) after crossing the ocean of *Moha* (delusion) destroyed the demons (passions like hatred etc) and regained Shanti (peace) in the form of Sita. In spite of all the allegorical explanations, the internal evidences only show that Valmiki wanted to portray the ideal life of an ideal man, and so wrote the Ramayana. In Rama we get an ideal son, in Lakshmana and Bharata ideal brothers, and in Sita an ideal wife. Rama stands for duty and self-sacrifice, compassion and protection. This epic stresses the importance of moral values. Later this ideal man Rama came to be regarded as an incarnation of *Vishnu*. This led to the inclusion of a lot of additional matter and many supernatural elements into the Ramayana. Several *Puranic* legends were interpolated into it. All these increased the bulk of book. Anyway, the thrust on moral values elevated the Ramayana as a sacred text teaching righteousness. So the Indians equate it with *Dharma Shashtra*.

The Ramayana also deals with war, diplomacy, administration and other topics which fall within the domain of the *Arth-shastra*. This epic is a *Niti Shastra* (ethical work) since it warns mankind of the disastrous effects of moral lapses. Dasharata doted on his young wife Kaikeyi. This resulted in great disaster not only to him but also to the kingdom. Ravana, inspite of his great valor administration and erudition had a weakness for women which destroyed him and those who were dear and near to him.

The Ramayana gives a many-sided nature of a perfect life and its rewards. Rama, inspite of his young age, was honored by all the sages in the forest. The sages who embarked on a life of severe discipline found a towering moral personality in Rama. So they praised him as the special manifestation of the Lord for the protection of righteousness.

Valmiki depicts an ideal kingdom of Kosla and an ideal capital in Ayodhya. The entire kingdom had attained a high level of prosperity. The people were highly virtuous. The king and the officers practiced virtues and were themselves models in raising the cultural level of the subject. Valmiki says there was neither illiterate in that country nor wicked. The author repeatedly points out that the king's personality was the mainspring of all peace prosperity and progress of the kingdom.

Hanuman is faithful, devoted, mighty and intelligent. He is blessed with long life. In the very first meeting he impressed Rama so much that Rama told to Lakshmana that none can speak thus without mastering the *Vedas*. Rama's character captivated the heart of Hanuman so much that he decided to serve Rama. He also chose him as the spiritual ideal. He held Rama's name as a Mantra, which gave him enormous moments of crises energy during moments of crisis. Hanuman succeeds in all his efforts and firmly believed that it was the chanting of "*Rama Nam*" (Rama's name) that was the secret of all his success. Hence he proudly declared in Lanka that "I am the servant of Rama and a thousand Ravana's cannot cope with me in battle". Hanuman was a perfect *Brahmachari* (Calibrate). So while searching for Sita in Lanka he became very much uneasy to see so many ladies sleeping in the harem of Ravana. So he carried on vigorous introspection and concluded that though mere eyes had to see them all, my mind was not attained. Mind is the cause of all sins".

Valmiki shows Sita as the embodiment of a virtuous wife. When Rama was leaving for the forest, she felt it would be wrong on her part to stay behind in the palace. She told Rama, "I have been taught by my parents to follow my husband in all conditions of life. I shall carry out that lesson now". Throughout her life her guiding principles were the happiness of Rama and the maintenance of his reputation.

The Ramayana has been a source of inspiration to many facts. This work has been translated into almost all the major regional languages of India by very eminent poets. Some later poets have been elaborate treatment of particular episodes. It inspired many painters and sculptors all over India to draw their themes from the Ramayana. During the medieval period many temple were built in honor of Rama. The exposition of this epic is a universal phenomenon in all the nooks and corners of India. After days strenuous work villagers gather in the evenings to listen to such exposition or discourses till late night. Men of all ages, women and children listen to this story and try to imbibe the principle of *Dharma* as the ancient sages conceived it. There is no doubt that the characters of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman have shaped the lives of many millions over centuries.

b. The Mahabharata

The *Mahabharata* is not the composition of a single author, nor was written in one generation. The core story may belong to 600 B.C. having prevailed as a ballad orally transmitted for a few centuries. It seems to have reached its final stage around 400 A.D. thus this great epic is the outcome of a long and continuous literary activity over ten centuries.

Mahabharata deals with the great deeds of kings and heroes, wars, practical philosophy and ethics. It was sung by the priests as an essential part of the *Vedic* ritual, later sung in assemblies by wandering bards called the Sutas. Thus the earliest Indian literature of a fundamentally secular character is found in this great epic. It had its origin as martial legends. Later it was worked over by a succession of editors, who interpolated many long passages on theology, morals and statecraft.

The *Mahabharata* is divided into 18 Parvas of unequal length. *Shanti Parva* is the biggest with nearly 14,525 stanzas and the *Maha Prasathanika Parva* the 17th *Parva* is the smallest one with 120 stanzas. The language of this epic is simple and dignified and metres of its stanzas are also simple. The whole work has a moral objective; which is the propagation of the external law, covering the four human values of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*, which means righteousness, wealth, love and salvation respectively.

This editor is the traditionally respected *Vyasa*, also known as *Krishna Dvaipayana*. He introduces himself into the epic and says he is the son of sage Parasara and Satyawati. He establishes a close relationship between himself and the heroes of the epic by claiming to be the procreate of Dhrutarashtra and Pandu on childless widows *Amba* and *Ambalika* by levirate. The tradition holds that after performing penance, *Vyasa* composed the Bharata of 24,000 verses and taught it to his son *Suka* and to one of his promising students namely *Vaisampayana*. This *Vaisampayana* recited it at a great “snake sacrifice” performed by *Janamejaya*. A *Suta* (bard) who heard it from *Vaisampayana* went to the *Naimisha* forest and recited the epic for the sages assembled there.

The Great War between the hundred sons of Dhratarashtra and five of Pandu for the throne of Hastinapura is the central theme of this epic. To this, many other matters were added such as 1) many legends of the wandering bards 2) myths and legends of *Brahmanic* origin stressing the superiority of the *Brahmins* 3) cosmological, genealogical and geographical matter 4) local myths 5) Myths of *Vishnu Shiva* and skanda 6) many moral stories 7) law ethics and 8) philosophical and ascetic poetry.

All these additions, especially law and ethics, made this epic a *Dharma-Shastra* par excellence. The “*Shanti Parva*” “*Anushasana Parva*” deals with *Dharma* in its wider concept. These sections explain the *Raja-Dharma* (the duties of the king), *Pitru Dharma* (the duties of the parents), *Putra Dharma* (duties of the children) *Dharma Apad* (duties of all during crisis), *Moksha-Dharma* (salvation) *Dana-Dharma* (liberty) and so on.

The *Raja Dharma* sections elaborate the *Artha Shastra* (the art of the statecraft-taxation, army, foreign relation, etc). The many didactic episodes and ethical instructions of this epic make it a *Niti-shastra* (ethical work). The inclusion of the Bhagavad-Gita makes it a fountain head of Indian philosophy or *Moksha-Shastra*. These philosophical tracts make this epic a manual of the philosophies like *Sankhya*, *Yoga* and *Vedanta*; religious cults like *Shaivism*, *Vaishnavism* and *Shaktism*, and of *Bhakti*, *Karma* and *Jnana*.

Thus the Mahabharata becomes an encyclopedia of Indian culture more important than its range, its depth of meaning, and consequently its capacity to synthesize different schools and view points into a unitary whole.

All great works of art and literature have an inner and deeper meaning than what meets the eye. Scholars have pointed out the three-dimensional meaning of this epic-the historical meaning the ethical meaning and the transcendental meaning in the meta-physical plane.

On the historical or mundane plane the story deals with the fratricidal (killing of brothers) war of annihilation. On the ethical plane, this war is a conflict between the principles of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, between justice and injustice or between good and evil. In the plane the warrior parties are regarded as the incarnations of *Devas* and *Asuras*. Yudhishtra of *Yama Dharma Raja*, Bhima of *Vayu*, Arjuna of *Indra*, and the Nakula and Sahdeva of *Asvins*, the celestial twins. The war ends in the victory of *Dharma*.

The transcendental plane takes it beyond *Dharma* and *Adharma*. In this plane, Kurukshetra a perpetual battle between the 'higher self' and the 'lower self' of man for the mastery over mind and body. The two-selves are symbolized as cousins. When man has the guidance of the super-self (Krishna), he emerges successful in this conflict. When Arjuna, the man resorts to the sword or arrow of knowledge, he destroys all his unwanted desires and passions symbolized by his relatives, teachers, elders and friends all ranged against him. In this metaphysical or transcendental plane Arjuna is the *Jivatma* (the individual self) and Lord Krishna is the *Paramatma* (the super-self) and *Dhritarashtra* is the symbol of the veil ego

centric self. The ego is shown as blindness. Vidura stands for Buddhi or the one-pointed reason, and Bhishma for tradition, the time bound elements in human life and society.

If these various planes of meaning renders this epic a great masterpiece, its capacity to synthesize varying conflicting schools of philosophy and religious cults elevates it still further as an unparalleled work in world literature. It is because of these qualities that Indian tradition considers this work as the fifth Veda. Outweighing the four earlier *Vedas*. Further it is said to be a *Veda* for all people, irrespective of caste, creed, and sex. The other four *Vedas* closed their doors to women and *Sudras*.

The Mahabharata is a veritable treasure-house of Indian lore, both secular religious. It has been an authoritative book of law, morality and philosophy. It has laid down rules for the attainment of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* called the *Trivarga* in the Indian tradition. It shows that a great seer like (*Vyasa*) and an ideal fighter like (Arjuna) are superman (Nara) and they can become close associates of god (Narayana). This epic combines in it the *Aryan* and the non-*Aryan* elements of mythology and thus lays the foundation for the Hindu religion. Its mythology stands just midway between the *Vedic* and later Puranic mythology. In this epic we see men and gods acting together, at times leading to a fight between a man and a god. The fight of Arjuna with *Shiva* in the guise of a hunter (*Kirata*) is found in this epic. A human say like *Agasthya* curses Nahusha in heaven. Gods marry at times among human beings and beget children mysteriously. The birth of the Pandavas is a case in point. Similarly a king marries the river Ganga and begets children. In this epic we also see the mighty *Vedic* gods pushed back to a secondary level of the eight *Dikpalakas* (guardians of the eight quarters) and gods like *Shiva* and *Vishnu* emerging as powerful gods. It not only depicts the sectarian rivalry between the followers of *Shiva* and *Vishnu*, but also proclaims the identity of *Vishnu* and *Shiva*.

In it *Shaivism* and *Vaishnavism* emerges as two great sects. Both of them arose out of the religious notions and belief of the Dravidian and the *Aryan*. Both these sects easily assimilated the lore of the many tribal's of India. The Mahabharata speaks of different heavens associated with different gods. Thus, Brahma's heaven is

Brahmaloka, those of *Shiva* are *Kailasha*, and of *Vishnu* is *Vaikunta*. The *Ayudhas* and *Vahana* of the sectarian gods also get settled in Mahabharata.

Many famous episodes connecting with *Shiva* will *Daksh Andhakas*, *Tripura* are first found in this epic. *Nandi*, *Shivaganas* and *Linga* are also associated with *Shiva*. It describes *Skanda Karthikeya* as the son *Agni* and *Akashganaga* in one place and as the son of *Agni* and *Svaha* in another place. *Skanda's* marriage with *Devasana* is also described. In yet another place *Skanda*, son of *Shiva*, destroys *Tarakasura*. *Ganapathy* or *Ganesh* (*Pillaiyar* of the *Tamils*) is conspicuous by his absence in the epic literature. The myth of *Ganesh* writing the Mahabharata while being dictated by *Vyasa* is a later addition. In the Mahabharata we find the earliest treatment of the famous philosophical schools like *Yoga*, *Sankhya*, *Vedanta*, *Pasupata* and *Pancharatra*. There we see Indian Philosophical schools in their transitional level between the period of the *Upanishads* and of the later codified six systems.

These three sources, Indus Valley culture, Vedic culture and Epics along with many others contributed extensively to the present day diverse grandeur of the Hindu culture. Though, in general Vedic culture is taken to be the source of Hinduism, the role played by non-Vedic standards of culture in shaping the Hinduism cannot be ignored. All the Shaivate roots and the forms of worship can be traced to Indus Civilizations. Whereas aspects of social system such as *Chaturvarna*, *Ashramadharma*s, *Purusharthas* can be traced from Vedas. These social aspects were consolidated in Epics. The epic Mahabharata also presents the Yogic system of Hinduism in a sitting way. Let us now turn to the features of Hinduism.

Significant features of Hinduism

Given the above discussions on the sources of Hinduism, let us discuss some of the significant and essential features of Hinduism. Four fold divisions of society, four fold division of human life, four fold divisions of objects of life, four fold division of yogic system and law of *Karma* are some of the essential features that are discussed elaborately here.

Chatur Varnas - Four choices of service

On account of the impressions and influences which the souls carry with them from life to life, each individual soul has its own tastes and inclination, talents and capacities. Even a child knows that no two individuals are alike or equal to each other in every respect. The differences in inclinations and capacities are fundamental and, as such they cannot be erased totally by applying any external pressures. The manufacturers of automobiles may be able to manufacture a few thousand vehicles of the same shape, size, color and power. But, even the most efficient, widely read, profoundly learned and scientifically advanced teacher cannot train even two of his students to be equal to each other in every response; and there is no wonder about it. Insentient things can be moulded entirely to our likings but sentient and scient beings, that man are they cannot be shaped wholly according to our ideas and ideals. Wisdom lies in recognising these innate differences in the individuals and trying to help them to develop their personalities according to their own tastes and capacities. The *Vedas* speak quite unequivocally about these inborn differences (Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004: 116).

Recognizing these natural differences, the *Vedas* describe four spears of activities and provide each individual with the scope to develop himself or herself according to his or her choice. Each spear of activity based on solid ground of individual choice, is styled *Varna*; *Varnas* are four in number, and they are termed *Brahman* or intellectual, *Kshatriya* or martial, *Vaishya* of commercial and *Shudra* or manual. These *Varnas* are not invariably based on birth; and as such, they cannot be equated with the present day castes, which run into thousands. The *Varnas* are chosen by individuals, whereas the castes are what individuals are born into. The *Varnas* are scientific and rational division of mankind aimed at progress of the individual as well as of the society; but while the caste system is a bane on humanity, based as it is on the birth of the individuals, creating a lot of heart-burn and blood with its notions of superiority and inferiority.

Varnas are natural and rational divisions that promote the cause of human welfare. Some may not like the nomenclature; but the content of the *Varna Vyavastha* cannot be nullified. According to the *Varna* system, all the activities or professions that human-beings can possibly adopt are broadly divided into 4 classes;

and each individual is at liberty to choose any one of them and belong to it, of course, bearing in mind, his or her own inclination and capacities. Birth in a particular prevailing *Varna* may help one to some extent in making one's choice, but it is neither necessary nor inevitable for *Brahmin's* son to be a *Brahmin* or a *Kshatriya's* son to be a *Kshatriya*. A lawyer's son may or may not become a lawyer. It is not necessary that a doctor's son should invariably become a doctor. The fundamental basis of the *Varna* system, according to the *Vedas* is the merit, profession and the nature of each individual and not birth exclusively. Birth in a particular family supposed to belong to a *Varna* may cast its influence and may also help or impede, to an extent, the individual to make his or her choice, but it is of secondary importance.

a. *Brahmins*

The Rig *Vedas* say: devotion to God, a pleasant attitude of mind, non-violence, the performance of sacrifices, the light of knowledge, severe penance, the propagation of the 4 *Vedas* through discourses, common accessibility, these are the characteristics of *Brahmins*. *Brahmins* then, are the intellectuals, liberal and unselfish by nature, learned and enlightening with knowledge, steadfast in devotion to God and services to mankind. They are indeed like the head of mankind. The so called 'caste' into which they are born is of no consequence, if those characteristics are found in them.¹ Teaching and studying the *Vedas*: sacrificing for their own benefit and for others; giving and accepting alms.

b. *Kshatriyas*

¹ Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 *Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma*. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P 126 (Rk 7.103.8.) (*sominah*) devoted deeply to God and enjoying His bliss, (*adhvaryavah*) absolutely non-violent and engaged in conducting *yejnas*, (*ghartmina*) brilliant with the splendor of knowledge and engaged in penance, (*sisvidanah*) sweating with severe discipline, (*krnavantah*) propagating, (*parivatsarinam brahma*) the universal and divine Vedic knowledge, (*9brahmanasah*) the *Brahmins*, move about openly, (*kecit na guhyah*) though they were hidden before, and , as though, (*avirbhavanti*) they now come out with flying clouds, after completing their spiritual activities like the deep study of the scriptures, concentration, meditations etc.

The *Vedic* concept of a *Kshatriya* is the one who, adheres to spiritual resolve, purity of character, erudition in political and administrative science, zeal to promote non-violent activities, undivided and single-minded devotion to God, constant endeavor to uphold truth and injustice, righteousness and divine revelation and all comprehensive protection of the subjects at times of peace as well as of war by accomplishing noble deeds.² To protect the people; to bestow gifts: to offer sacrifices; to study the *Vedas* but not to teach.

c. *Vaishyas*

According to *Atharva Veda*, *Vaishya* should inspire the others, affluent man of commerce, our guide on the path of prosperity, crushing, miserliness and the inimical sense of greed, being the master of wealth, he may be the giver of wealth. To tend cattle; to bestow gifts; to engage in different professions; to trade; to lend money; to cultivate land and to study the *Vedas*.³

d. *Shoodra*

The *Rigveda* says that the *Shoodra* are not a despicable lot. Simply because they were incapable for taking to any other work than manual labor they should not be looked down. They have their own virtues praise worthy indeed. *Sutras* are described as those who need protection from others, who are bereft of high attachments, who are untiring, indefatigable, un frightened by death, un railing, un

² *Ibid.* P 127 (Rk 7.66.8.) (*Dhrtavratah*) steadfast in abiding by spiritual resolve, (*yajnaniskrtah*) purified by noble deeds, (*brhaddiva*) effulgent with profound knowledge of political science, and having (*adhvaranamabhisriyah*) the grace and luster of non-violent activities, (*agnihotarah*) worshippers of the Refulgent and Omniscient Lord, (*rtasapah*) upholders of truth, justice, righteousness and divine knowledge and, (*adruhah*) free from malice and treachery, (*kshatriyh*) the *Kshatriya*, (*asrjan0*) accomplish, (*apah*) great deeds, (*vrtaturye*) by destroying inimical forces that intrude in invade.

³ *Ibid.* P 128, ³(*Aham*) I, (*codayami*) inspire, (*indram*) the affluent, (*vanijam*) man of commerce, (*sah a etu nah*) may he be favorably disposed to us, (*astu*) may he be, (*nah pura eta*) our four-runner, our guide on the path of prosperity, (*nudan*) crushing, (*aratim*) miserliness and, (*mrigam pripanthinam*) the inimical sense of greed, (*isanah*) being the master of wealth, (*sah astu*) may he be, (*dhanada*) the giver of wealth, (*mahyam*) to me.

deliberated, strong and sturdy, free from ambitions and greed (Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004: 128).⁴

Those who seek truth would do well to remember the etymological sense of the word *Sudra* “*Su asu dravati iti sudra- suca dravatiti va*”. He, who is always swift and active, is a *Shoodra* or he who moves with luster born of unselfishness, is a *Shoodra*.

A *Shoodra* is not inferior, nor is a *Vaishya*, *Kshatriya* or *Brahmin* superior. They are all absolutely equal, serving society, as also themselves according to their capacities and inclinations. The main duty of *Sutras* is to serve the above three *Varnas*.

The *Varnas* are not water-tight compartments. Different members of the same family may belong to different *Varnas* and yet live under the same roof. There is no segregation of these four classes. The construction of separate colonies for these *Varnas* has led to the degeneration and falseness of the *Shoodras*: it has caused their non-contact with and segregation from, the enlightened sections of society; this, in turn, has resulted in the emergence of another class generally known as “untouchables”. The *Vedas* are dead-set against the tearing asunder of the one human society in such grounds.

So, names may change; outward appearances also may change; but classes given to intellectual, martial, mercantile and manual labor have always been there in all the countries; they will always be there in all countries in future too, whether the states are communist or socialist, capitalist or imperialist, theocratic or secular. The *Vedic* principles are eternal and universal. No nation, no society, no individual can evade them, without detriment to itself, himself or herself.

⁴ Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 *Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma*. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 128. (*Amavisnavah*) desirous of protection from others, (*Trdilah*) bereft of high attachments, (*atrdilasah*) still not detached from the word, (*asramanah*) untiring, (*asrthitah*) indefatigable, (*amrtyavah*) unfrightened by death, (*anaturah*) unailing, (*ajarah*) undebilitated by old age, (*supivasah*) strong and sturdy, (*atrsitah*) free from ambitions and, (*atrsnajah*) free from greed, (*adrayah*) rocklike in strength and respectable are the *Shoodras*. (*Rig Veda*)

He who carries out in society the functions performed by the face in body of an individual is a *Brahmin*. All the organs of perception the visual, the olfactory, the palatal, the auditory and the tactile are located in the head. Collecting knowledge and communicating it to the Soul is the function of the head. It is precisely this function that a *Brahmin* does in society. He who fulfils in society the functions carried on in the body of an individual by the arms is *Kshatriyas*. The arms are the administrative as well as protective organs of the body. It is precisely this thing that a *Kshatriya* does in society; he rules and protects. What are the functions of the body central? The thighs represent the central part of the body.⁵

In the central part of the body, from neck downwards are situated the heart, the lungs, the stomach, the alimentary canal, the organs of procreation – in short, all the important organs that keep the body alive and help its development. These organs jointly produce energy and distribute it to all the parts of the body from the top of head to the tips of toes. He who does the same thing in the society i.e., who produces wealth and utilizes it for the benefit of the society is a *Vaishya*. In the very nature of things, *Vaishyas* are in a majority, so much so in the *Vedas*, the word *Vaishya* is used to signify *Praja* or subjects as in : “*tvaamvisho vrinataama raajyaaya*” (*Atharva 3.4.2.*) i. e. , let *Vaishyas* accept you to rule over the land. Let there be no mistake about it. It is not as though the ruler has to rule only over the *Vaishyas*. It is only to be understood that because of their preponderance among the subjects, the word *vit* has been used as a synonym for the word *Praja*. And, just as legs, carry it to the desired place, lower limbs, or say the feet uphold the whole body, he who carries the whole weight of the society is a *Shudra*. No question of looking him down as sub-human or a slave arises here at all.

A little more attention and we can feel the beauty and perceive the significance of this analogy. Suppose a thorn pricks the foot-the *Shudra*, it is the

⁵ Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 *Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma*. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P 120, (*Brahmanah*) *Brahmin*, (*asid asya mukham*) was his face, (*rajnayah*) *Kshatriya*, (*abhavat asya bahy*) was his arms, (*tat*) he, (*yat vaishyah*) who is *vaishya*, (*asya madhyam*) was the central part of the body, (*padbhyam*) for the function of the feet, (*ajayata*) was, (*sudhrah*) the *Shoodra*. (*Atharva 19.6.6.*)

head, the *Brahmin* that sighs in grief first; it is the arm the *Kshatriya* who hurries up to remove the thorn. Let any part of the body be hurt; the head, say the brain is the first to feel it; then the arms swiftly move to the aching part. *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* they are. Similarly, if there is pain in any part of thorax, it is the *Brahmin* that groans first. In society, all these four *Varna*'s are interrelated and inter-linked. There is no question of superiority and inferiority among them. Each *Varna* is equally great and useful in the spheres of their activity for the common good of the society. The *Vedas* strike at the very root of the sense of superiority and inferiority.⁶

A message of equality cannot be more candid, more appealing. One may be a *Brahmin*, a *Kshatriya*, a *Vaishya* or a *Shudra*; that makes no difference. They are all equal and enjoy equal rights, besides commanding equal respect. There is, no doubt, ample room for criminal, heinous and bewildering inequality in the caste system; but the *Varna*'s are definitely not castes. Whereas castes are supposedly inherited, *Varnas* are invariably acquired by choice. While castes are believed to be based on birth, which is a pure chance, *Varnas* are rationally base on the merit, profession and inclination of the individual. According to traditional belief, inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages are taboo; but *Varna* begins a matter of one's own choice, of course, with the scientific basis of the three cardinal factors explained above. The question of inter *Varna* marriages does not arise at all. With the object of maintaining complete harmony, mutual attraction and undivided devotion to each other in married life, a man and woman of like merits professions and inclinations must get married; whether they hail from the same caste or different ones is immaterial. From this stand point, "inter-caste marriage" is a misnomer, because, a man marries only a woman and they are both human beings. They belong to the same caste, we mean human species. Inter- dinning is no problem at all, again, in the

⁶ *Ibid.* P 122, (Ete) these men, (ajyestasah) are without superiors, (akanistasah) without inferiors, (bhratarah) they are mutually brothers, (vavrudh) they march onwards, (saubhagaya) for prosperity, (Yuva) the eternally youthful, (svapa) the soul-protecting, (rudrah) grief alleviating God, (esam pita) is their father, (sudugha) the richly feeding, (prusnih) mother earth, (sudina) produces happy days, (matudbhyah) for these mortals. Again

Varna system. A common eating places, common places of worship, common association are nothing new, they are all as old as the *Vedas* themselves. It is only the later dated superstitious rigidity of the caste-system that stood in the way of a free and common social life.⁷

Chatur Ashrams: The four stages of life

Human life should be as a spring-board for attaining divine heights and achieving immortality. With the object of enabling man to achieve this end, the *Vedas* have divided the duration of human-life into four stages. Each stage is known as an *Ashrama*. Man has to grow strong in every respect mentally, spiritually, intellectually and physically. He has to utilize the strength so acquired to serve society. He has to prepare for the renunciation of worldly attachments with a view to realising the ultimate truth and he has to have a dedicated life towards such realization and for the purpose of bringing about such as awakening in society that people are able to make real progress as human beings. The four stages of acquisition, utilization, preparation and realization are known as *Brahmcharya*, *Grahashtya*, *Vanaprasthya* and *Sanyasa* respectively. A man may live for more than hundred years and the *Vedas* do not rule out its possibility. In special cases, and under completely favorable circumstances, a man can hope to live even for three centuries.

But, under the normal conditions, man's life lasts for one hundred years. According to *Vedas* The hundred years of life, usually available to man, are divided into four quarters and each quarter i.e., two decades and a half, forms one stage.⁸

⁷ Ibid.P. 125 (*Atharva Veda*3.30.6) *O you men,(vah prapa) may your water reservoirs, (samani) be common, (annabhagah) may the shares of food, (saha) be enjoyed jointly, congregationally, (yunaji) I unite, (vah) you all, (samane ypoktre) under the yoke of a common code of conduct, (saha) with the other, (saparyata) worship, (agnim) the lord of lusture, (samyancah) congregationally, (iva) just as, (arah) the spokes, touch, (nabhim) the hub, (abhitah) from all round.*

⁸ Ibid P.135.“*Shatam Jeeva Sharado Vardhamaanah*” “live for a hundred years progressively”. The *Yajurveda* says: “*Jijeevishecchatam samaah*” (*Yaju*.40.2.) “One should desire to live for a hundred years”. The *Atharva* too blesses us thus: - “*tatte badhnaamyayushe varchase balaaya deerghayutvaaya shatashaaradaaya*” (*Atharva*).35.1.) “I bestow on thee power to live with spiritual glow, physical strength and

a. *Brahmacharya*

Brahmacharya the first stage extends from birth to the time when man completes his twenty-fifth year, and it is called *Brahmacharya Ashram* or the “stage of celibacy”.

Though the word Brahamcharin is usually rendered into English as a ‘Celibate’, it should be said that the word touches only the fringe of the total concept of *Brahmacharya*. Literally, the compound word Brahamcharya means “moving about mentally and intellectually in God and the *Vedas*”. The corollary is that, when one’s mind and intellect (rather than one’s energies) are used to contemplate on God and to acquire *Vedic* knowledge, one should not indulge in carnal pleasures. Restraint on the functions of the sensual faculties is thus imposed; and that is celibacy. As an infant, a boy or a girl is under the care and protection of his/her parents. When he or she is about eight years, he or she is to be admitted into a *Gurukula* to be in constant touch with and under the guidance of a really learned, noble hearted and highly qualified Guru or preceptor, away from the din and bustle and distraction and temptations of the cities and also the pampering of the parents. The *Gurukula*, abode of learning, should be situated in a peaceful and beautiful place, remote from the congested towns and cities. The *Vedic* conception of a place of learning is clearly expressed in *Rig Veda* as *mantra*.⁹

In such natural surroundings capable of awakening a sense of theism even in the hearts of atheists, and affording soul-inspiring spiritual thoughts of the purest

longevity, to enjoy a hundred years”. The *Yajurveda* (25.22) too says “the noble souls enjoy life for a hundred autumns” and it puts this prayer into the mouth of devoted men and women “*adeenaah syaama sharadah shatam, bhooyashca sharadah shataat* (Yaju.36.24) “May we live unsubdued for one hundred autumns; rather longer than a century”. But human society does not thrive on exceptions. It rests and moves on the basis of general rules.

⁹ Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 *Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma*. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 137. (*Upahvare*) in the valleys or at the foot of, (*girnam*) the mountains, (*ca*) and, (*sangathe*) in the confluence, (*nandinam*) of the rivers, (*ajayata*) is born, (*dhiya*) by achieving intellectual progress. (Rig 8.6.28)

order and entirely free from the distracting scenes of worldly luxuries, the minds of boys and girls are sure to touch new heights of glory; and their intellectual power definitely improves especially when they are taught by preceptors of erudition and spotless character not only by word of mouth but also by practical example.

Brahmacharya is the foundation of the structure of life. In this stage, besides learning all that is necessary for worldly and spiritual progress, the youngsters develop that most precious feature of human life which is also known as character. Discipline always co-exists with character. A disciplined and noble character is the most valuable asset that man can ever hope to possess. Regarding this first stage of life, the *Atharva Veda*.¹⁰

Atharvana Veda comprises the relation of teacher and disciple to that of the one between a pregnant woman and her baby in the womb the love of the Acharya for his disciple is equal to that of the pregnant woman towards the child in her womb. The disciple being “born” after three nights signifies his stay under the care of his preceptor till he gets over three kinds of darkness or ignorance in regard to God, the soul and matter. When the boy or the girl comes out into the light, i.e., when he or she has acquired real knowledge about God, Soul and matter, even learned people are so pleased that they rush towards him or her to meet and greet him or her. It is in the *Brahmacharya Ashram* that the boy or the girl develops all the powers that are required to make the life ahead of him or her complete success. Who says Strong in body, powerful in mind, brilliant in intellect, noble at heart affectionate in speech, rich with all divine heritages: such is the description of the *Brahmachari* and the *Brahmcharini*. They glow with spiritual light. They know no fear of death, because they are strong in every conceivable respect.

The first twenty five years are to be the period of *Brahmacharya* for a man. Owing to natural biological factors, woman grows faster than man; so for a girl, the *Brahmacharya* period ends when she is sixteen. But it does not mean that a man

¹⁰ Ibid P 138. (Atharva 11.5.3) (Upanayamanaah) initiating the Brahmacharin to the first order, (acaryah) the preceptor, (antah garbham krnute)_ keeps, (brahmcarinam) the brahmahcarin as though keeps in his own interior, (bibhartitam) He keeps him, (udare) in his own person, (tisrah ratrih) for three nights, (devah) the learned and the noble souls, (abhisamyanti) run from all sides, (tam jatam drastum) to see the Brahnacarin born.

must necessarily get into the second stage of life when he is twenty five, and a girl when she is sixteen. A man can remain a *Brahmachari* till he is fortyeight and a woman till she is thirty two, if they are confident that they can control their sense organs and maintain their character untarnished and engage themselves in noble pursuit. But, there will be exceptions, if they are highly gifted and ennobled souls, they can remain unmarried for the whole of their lives and serve mankind, besides carrying on their spiritual endeavors for the realisation of God.

b. *Grahastya*

The second stage of life, known as *Grahastya Ashrama* (generally referred to as *Grihastaashrama*) begins when a man is twenty five years and lasts till he is fifty. This is usually recognized as the householders' life. It is not given to all to dedicate themselves totally and unreservedly to spiritual pursuits. Nor is it God's desire that all men and women should remain single; for if it were so, he would not have treated two different sexes; he would have managed with only one sex. Procreation is the aim behind the creation of the male and female sexes. And, to keep the sexual life under constant check and restraint, God has ordained the sacred institution of marriage. A householder's life is not to be looked down upon, as some religious sects seem to think. According to *Vedic Dharma*, a householder occupies an honored position in the social set-up, as it is on him that the entire stages of life depend and rely. Without householders, where could Brahmacharis come from? Who would support the later two *Ashrams*? All that is acquired through hard and disciplined work in the final stage (all the will-power, intellectual acquisitions, talents, physical strength and learning) is to be used for the service and welfare of the society at large, as also for one's own progress as human being. This is best done as a householder. If the householders of a nation (who, in the very nature of things are in a majority) mould their lives according to the *Vedic* concept, that nation can never be weak, destitute or miserable. It will be a strong and prosperous nation which cannot be vanquished by any power on earth. What is the ideal of the *Grihasta Ashrama*? The *Atharva Veda* says "the couple should recognize their

responsibilities enjoy life by virtue of their greatness, maintain spotless character and rear well behaved, intelligent and obedient children”.¹¹

The homes can really be a heaven on earth, if all members of the family men and women in the family! have noble ideas in view, recognize your duties and responsibilities, be not torn asunder, be not served from one another emotionally, worshipping God congregationally and working to earn your bread in mutual cooperation leading life jointly under the yoke of common righteousness and, speaking sweetly and affectionately to one another, come along progressing and prospering I make, all of you, traders on the same path and, united and understanding mentally. May the son be, obedient to his father, may his spiritual resolve be identical with that of his father, may his mind be in agreement with that of his mother, may the wife speak honey like sweet and soothing words, (patye) to her husband. May not a brother hate his brother and may not a sister hate her sister, single-minded and cherishing common spiritual resolves, speak words with noble intentions.¹²

Polygamy and polyandry are both foreign to the *Vedic* conception of marriage. One woman for one man is the binding rule; it brooks no breach on any account. Human beings are not birds or beasts to sexual enjoyment promiscuously changing their partners as many times as they desire. The husband's fidelity to his

¹¹ Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 *Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma*. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 141-2. (Atharva 14.2.43) O you couple, (*syonadyoneh adhi budhyamanau*) rising to the occasion and recognizing your responsibilities in the house that is an abode of joy, (*hasamudau*) laughing and smiling with cheer in your hearts, (*modamanau mahasa*) enjoying life by virtue of your own greatness, (*sugu*) maintaining spotlessness of character, (*suputrau*) being proud parents of well behaved, intelligent and obedient children and, (*sugrhau*) respectable possessors of a decent well-managed prosperous and hospitable home, (*jivau*) pulsating with ever active and meaningful life, (*tarathah*) pass through, (*vibhatih usash*) bright and promising dawns”.

¹² Ibid page no 143

1. (*jyaysvantah (cittinah) (ma vi yausta) (sam radhayanthah) ,(sadhurah carantah) (anyah anyasmai valgu vadantah) (eta) (krnmi) (vah) (sadhricinam) (sammanasah) (Atharva 3.30)*
2. (*Bhavatu putraah) (pituah anuvratah), (sammanah mantra) (vadatu jaya), (madhumatim santivam vacuum).*(Atharva 3.30.3)
3. (*ma bhrata dviksat), (bhrataram), (uta), (Ma svasa svasaram) (bhutva) becoming (samyancha), (savratah) (vadata vacuum) (bhadraya) (Atharva 3.30)*

wife is compulsory as the wife's fidelity to her husband. The difference of sex is no justification for infidelity on the part of the husband to his wife¹³. The husband's fidelity to his wife should be as firm and steadfast as that of the wife to her husband as stated above. That is why the *Atharva Veda* offers its blessings to the couple be united here be not separated, enjoy and decently the whole span of your life, playing, bringing cheer to the others residing in your own house.¹⁴

So there is no question of separation or divorce; for, according to the *Vedas*, marriage is not a contract, but a sacrament. It is more a coming together of two souls than a union of two bodies. Though it is natural for human beings to lead a normal sexual life (as it is for the other living beings) men and women should not forget for a moment that God's purpose behind sex is not the enjoyment of carnal pleasures, but the perpetuation of human species. Only when there is a desire on the part of both to have progeny, should the sexual act be performed. Married life should not be treated as a license for an unrestrained sex life. The *Vedas* unambiguously exhort us to lead a life of restraint.¹⁵

c. *Vanaprastha*

The third stage of life is *Vanaprastha* i.e., forest dwelling. When the householder has completed twenty-five years of meaningful married life and has served the society, he must transfer all his responsibilities to his son and retreat to some place away from cities, with his wife-if she is willing, without her if she is not.

¹³ *Ibid.* P. 145. (*Atharva* 14.1.42) O lady! (*asaasana*) aspiring for, (*saumansam*) tranquility, (*prajam*) worthy progeny, (*saubhagyam*) prosperity and, (*rayim*) wealth, (*bhutra*) becoming, (*anuvrata patyuh*) compatible to your husband with the same spiritual resolves as that of your spouse, (*nahyasva*) control, (*kam*) mind and body, (*sam*) together, (*amrtya*) for achieving immortality.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* P. 146. (*Atharva* 14.1.22) (*Iha eva stam*), (*ma viyaustam*) (*vyasnutam*) , (*visvam ayuh*) (*kridantau*) (*modamanau*, (*svastakau*) .

¹⁵ *Ibid.* P. 146-7. (*Rig Veda* 10.85.23) (*santu*) let those, (*anrksarah*) thorn less and, (*yjra*) straight, (*panthah*) paths, (*nah*) be ours, (*yebhih*) by which, (*sakhayah yanti vareyam*) the friendly souls achieve prosperity, (*niniyat aryamah bhagah*) may the just and refulgent lord lead, (*nah*) us, (*sam sam*) together and aptly, (*devah*) O you noble souls! (*astu nah sam jaspamyam*) may our married life be, (*sauryamam*) well restrained and properly managed.

The object of this move is to prepare himself for the hard and strenuous life of a *Sanyasin*, after the completion of this period. From the fiftieth year till the seventy fifth years, this stage lasts. The Atharva Veda describes this stage as characterised by grieflessness in which the soul should get over the dense darkness of ignorance, and of worldly attachments in search acquiring knowledge.¹⁶

The object of this *Ashrama* is to do penance i.e., to make fulfill vows of austerity and carry on spiritual practices like meditation, Sandhya, Yajna, Pranayama etc., besides keeping up the deep and concentrated study of the *Vedas*. Even if the wife accompanies her husband; they must live not as husband and wife, but as brother and sister, helping each other in carrying on the spiritual practices.

The second aspect of this *Vanaprastha Ashram* is that it would solve the problem of the nation's children. With the learning acquired in the *Brahmacharya Ashram*, and ripen in the *Grihastha Ashram* by the practical experience gathered therein, the *Vanaprastha* persons are the best suited and are absolutely qualified to occupy the high positions of teachers. If old people retire and make room for the younger generation, the unemployment problem also will not be so acute. Thus, the *Vanaprasthas* besides raising their own spiritual standards can also serve society by imparting proper education to the children of the nation.

Out of the five *Yajnas*, only the first two (namely, *Brahmayajana* and *Devayajan*) are prescribed for *Vanaprasthas*. As they themselves would have to depend upon the philanthropy of the public for their maintenance, they cannot perform *Atithiyajna* and *Balivasishvadeva Yajan*, like *Grihasthaasa*. Even so, so far as it lies in their capacity, they also serve the guests and feed the animals. Question of *Pitrayajna* does not arise at all, as they do not stay with their parents.

The hermitage of the forest dweller, as we have already stated under the caption of *Brahmacharya*, is the best place for students to receive proper education.

¹⁶ Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 *Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma*. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 148. (Atharva 9.5.1) (*Etam Anaya*) prepare this soul, (*arabhasva*) have recourse to this stage, (*agacchatu*) let the soul reach, (*sukrtam lokamapi*) state of life achieved by virtuous ones, (*ptajanam*) acquiring knowledge, (*tritva mahanti tamamsi*) getting over the dense darkness of ignorance and of worldly attachments, (*bahudha*) by several types of penance, (*akramtamajah*) may the immortal souls get a hold over, (*tritiyam nakam*) this third stage of grieflessness

Teaching the future citizens of the nation, and disciplining himself with single-minded dedication to studies and spiritual practices is pleasure of *Vanaprastha Ashrama*.

d. *Sanyasa*

The fourth and the last stage of human life are known as *Sanyasa Ashram* i.e., the age of absolute renunciation. Though apparently, the term signifies something like a snapping of all relationship with the world, it actually means nothing of that sort. *Sanyasa* essentially, is an attitude of mind, not an ostentatious running away from the duties which one has to do and responsibilities which one has to shoulder for the sake of mankind and for one's own next life as human being. So long as the physical body exists, its needs are to be meeting and for this, the *Sanyasin* has to depend upon society. Taking something from society but giving it nothing in return would be nothing other than getting indebted to society. And, according to the *Vedas*, indebtedness is a soul teasing liability, binding it to this world.

Positively, indebtedness is a sin. A *Sanyasin* cannot be a sinner. He does not renounce the world as such, but renounce the attachment to the world; but, the whole world belongs to him. He does not belong to any particular nation, community race or sect, but he belongs to every nation, community, race and sect. Attached to none, he owns everyone. His mind is above selfishness, and attachment. It is given only to a *Sanyasin* to present the best model of an ideal man. He is the guide, philosopher and friend of the whole world. He is above the pairs of likes dislikes, pleasure and pain, delight and distress, gladness and sadness, merriment and melancholy, heat and cold, love and hatred. He is not bound to do the last four Yajnas i.e., service to parents, hospitality to uninvited guests and feeding of the poor and the needy, of the destitute and of other creatures, as he own nothing and is not in a position to do these things, and also because he does not stay for a long time at any place in order to keep alive the sense of non-attachment. But, he does keep the fire of knowledge burning brightly; and he inspires house-holders to attend to these Yajnas actively and constantly. By his own spiritual practices, he keeps himself constantly in touch with God. And by carrying the divine message of the *Vedas* to every home, he keeps the flame of service, sacrifice and spirituality, glowing in the

hearts of the people. It is such a soul given to renunciation that makes the best *Athithi*.

If one is to get initiated into the holy order of a *Sanyasin*, the three ambitions to be abandoned are attachment to progeny, attachment to wealth and attachment to fame. Even those who find it easy to get over the first two, find it extremely hard to rise above the last one. But, unless and until all the three are given up totally and unreservedly one cannot do any justice to the holy order; contrarily, one tarnishes its fair name irretrievably.

The *Vedas*, therefore, specify for those who desire to enter into the holy order, certain indispensable qualifications. Though these qualifications are equally applicable to all human beings, they acquire a special significance and assume greater spiritual values when applied to those in the holy order of *Sanyasa*.

Knowledge, action quite in keeping with it, the supreme object of realizing God-this is the minimum that is expected of a *Sanyasin*. Pomp and show, ostentations processions and elegant performances, wealth mutts and hollow but elaborate rituals; these have nothing to do with *Sanyasa* or *Sanyasins*. They renounce all glamour and observe the utmost simplicity to achieve two objects at one stroke to be free from worries and to cause least inconvenience to society. They should be *rtadyumnas* i.e., *Vedic* knowledge and *Dharma* should be their wealth and might; they should be "*satya karanas*" i.e., all their actions should be based on truth and they should be 'somaraajans' i.e., they should glow with spiritual light, radiated by real devotion to God. They should be '*parishkritas*' i.e., purified by contact with god. Being 'Hindus' i.e., merciful and compassionate souls they should be moving from place to place preaching and enlightening the masses and also working for their salvation along with their own.

Such, is the *Vedic* concept of *Sanyas Ashram*. It is obvious that it is not possible any individual soul to rise to this standard by simply changing the color of his cloths and adhering to the external paraphernalia of a *Sanyasin*. An unquenchable thirst for the realisation of God, a through knowledge of *Vedas*, the indomitable courage to renounce all worldly pleasure and attachment the will to

suffer and unmatched desire to serve God's creation these are the characteristics which mark out a *Sanyasin*.

In the normal order of things, a man should pass through all these four stages, to touch the highest mark of perfection as a human-being. But it should always be born in mind that, with the single exception of *Brahmacharya*, the other three *Ashramas* are not compulsory. They are optional and deserve to be adopted only by those who are equal to them. An impotent and sickly person becoming a *Grihastha* or a libidinous taking to *Sanyasa* or *Vanaprastha* can do much harm.

Purusharthas: Objects of life

According to the *Vedic Dharma*, there are four objects of life, which are to be achieved by all human beings in order to realize the ultimate goal of human life i.e. maximum evolution and salvation of the soul. *Vedic Dharma* is not a set of dogmatic beliefs, but it is a rational and scientific way of life. *Vedic Dharma* attaches equal importance to the progress of both kinds; spiritual and material. This harmonious progress can be achieved, by achieving the four objects of human life. The supreme or the ultimate goal of human life is the realization of God, which results in the emancipation of the soul.

The Rig Veda refers to four arts which would help people to grow into highly evolved souls. These four objects of life are referred to *Vedic* literature as *Dharma* (i.e., righteousness), *Artha* (i.e., acquisition of the means of livelihood and of proper enjoyment), *Kama* (i.e., enjoyment of life in a righteous way) and *Moksha* (i.e., the salvation of the soul). If these four objects are achieved, it may be said without fear of contradiction that the ultimate goal of human life has been reached.

a. *Dharma*

Right knowledge, right action and right worship. These three aspects of the *Dharma* give a practical shape to *Dharma*, which consists of all the virtuous qualities that uphold and sustain the human soul. By following the principles of *Dharma*, a man grows into an ideal for mankind. By putting into practice the five spiritual resolves of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, self control and non-accumulation and by strictly adhering to the principle of sacrifice, justice, honesty and *Vedic*

knowledge, individuals bring peace and happiness to the human society, as well as to themselves. By enlightenment and realization of God, they work simultaneously towards spiritual progress. Our readers can thus see that *Vedic Dharma* is not sectarian and dogmatic in nature and content, but universal and pragmatic in every respect. This is the first of the objects to be achieved.

b. *Artha*

The second object is *Artha*, or the acquisition of the means of livelihood. Regarding this, it is interesting to note what the *Vedas* have to say. Non-accumulation doesn't mean naked poverty or destitution. It only means the absence of any concentration of the wealth (to which the whole of society has a right) in a few hands. No individual should suffer from want. O Lord of the Universe may we be the masters of wealth. This is a significant prayer to God almighty, offered by all the followers of *Vedic Dharma*. One must earn; but one should not allow what is earned by one to stagnate by accumulation, and to cause disturbance in the society.

According to Veda, one should earn in hundred ways, and distribute in a thousand ways, but of course, not running into bankruptcy. But, while earning in a hundred ways, one should not lose sight of the dictates of *Dharma* and take to foul means. To ensure honesty while earning, the first place is given to *Dharma* and only after that is *Artha* spoken about. The *Rigveda* says:¹⁷ Gamble not with dice, work hard and put in hard work, be happy and contented with what is thus earned by you, considering it as abundant, therein lies cattle-wealth, and there, the comfort of family life, this omniparous and divinely inspiring lord of the universe, directs me this way. One should put in only hard work and one should not resort to unfair means, to earn easy money. The *Rigveda* points unambiguously, to the proper way of earning, when it states "Man, should know, the wealth that lies hidden everywhere, he

¹⁷ *Aksairma diyvyah krisimit krsasva!! Xcitte ramasva bahu manyamanah!! Tatra gavah kitava tatra jaya!! Tanme vicaste asvitayamaryah!! (Rk.10.34.13.)*

should tread, the path of justice and honesty, with humility, and, he must speak properly, through the instruments of his own noble thoughts and actions, he should, with will power have recourse to, the talent that lead to spiritual prosperity". Wealth earned this way, will definitely prove a divine gift. It manifests the grace and the glory of a real human being. Earn one must; but one must employ only fair means, never foul ones.

c. *Kama*

The third object of human life is *Kama* i.e., the enjoyment of life in a righteous way. Generally, the word *Kama* is understood to mean lust or sexual urge. But in the context of the four objects of life, *Kama* does not invariably mean lust. In the *Vedas*, the word *Kama* is used to refer to the individual soul, as well as the universal spirit. Generally, it means desire, sexual urge being one among many. There are desires and all of them are not congenial or conducive to progress, both material and spiritual. There are many aspects of *Kama* but all of them are not intended to be taken in the context of the four *Purusharthas*.

Only such desires as are conducive to spiritual and material progress of mankind constitute the third object of life, *Kama*. The fulfillment of such noble desires through the proper enjoyment of the life, by utilizing *Artha* is *Kama*. As human life has two contents, spiritual and physical, one cannot overlook, ignore or neglect the material aspects of life. Life for living and not for throwing away. But, the third object *Kama* necessarily shuts out such aspects of enjoyment, as impede real human progress and turn man into a variable brute, retaining and nurturing the desire to eat, drink and make merry, forgetting the soul and God altogether.

d. *Moksha*

The fourth object of life is *Moksha*, i.e., salvation. According to the *Vedas*, *Moksha* or salvation is not a region or place, where, according to the common belief, the liberated souls go to enjoy eternal bliss, in the constant company of God. *Kailash*, *Vaikunta*, eternal heaven and other such names are given by different religions, but the *Vedas* say that salvation is only a state of being, wherein the souls are entirely free from all kinds of grief and enjoy eternal bliss. In this state of being, the souls are

free from bondage of the physical bodies and are in their own form. So far, as the souls are embodied, they can never be touched by pleasures and pains. It is, therefore, quite reasonable that, in order to enjoy external bliss, the souls should be incorporeal. The *Rig Veda* describes this state of being as, disappeared, and, where the state of freedom from all kinds of suffering under God's supervision exists, and, where the qualities that uphold and nourish the soul and contentment reign supreme.

If the human soul has achieved the first three objects and purified itself, vanquishing all sinful thoughts and actions, it qualifies itself to enter the state of salvation, evidently after death. Thus, the fourth object also is achieved.

All religions speak about *Moksha* or something equivalent to that. But, according to the belief of the followers of almost all religions, salvation or *Moksha* is eternal in the sense that it never ends. However, *Vedic Dharma* says that *Moksha* is not eternal in that sense. It is achieved by the soul, and so it has a beginning. And that which has a beginning must have an end too. Further, the various actions that lead the souls to salvation cease to continue the moment the soul achieves salvation. In other words, such actions also have an end; and actions which end somewhere cannot lead the soul to ended salvation. According to the *Vedic* concept, the state of salvation lasts for *an anaanta kaala* i.e., hundred times the time taken for creation. One creation lasts for four hundred Crores of years; hundred times that means forty hundred Crores of years. It is no small achievement for a soul, especially as it is finite in nature and as all its capacities conditioned by this instinct nature of special finitude. It would be wrong to ask why there should be all these endeavors and exacting spiritual practices for the achievement of a state, which after all, is not eternal and ends somewhere?

It is fallacy to believe that the soul merges totally and inseparably in *Brahman* or the universal spirit, completely losing its individual identity forever; for firstly, there can be no additions to the ever-unchanging and substantially-perfect supreme spirit; and secondly, if the soul ceases to retain its individuality, there will be no one left to enjoy the bliss; the fruit of all spiritual practices and penance.

This aspect of *Moksha* may sound peculiar to most readers; but it is the only sensible, rational concept of salvation; and the Veda, the divine revelations, upholds this proposition. Qualifying words like *Amrita*, *Akshata* (immortal and undeceiving) as related to *Moksha* or salvation, apply only to the long period of the time that is taken by the state of salvation to end.

Law of Karma

Law of *Karma* is one of the most influential doctrines of Hinduism which controls the action of individuals. The word *Karma* has many meanings. In this context *Karma* means action or activity that an individual performs in a particular context. Here it is taken to be synonymous with fate or destiny. The doctrine of Law of *Karma* teaches that nothing happens by accident. Every thing that happens, however great or small it may be is the outcome of previous cause. Thus, it lays the foundation of cause and effect doctrine. According to this doctrine, man is not a creature bound in inexorable and pre destined fate which he is helpless to avoid. But is the master of his destiny. So he has the power and the right of free will. Neither the will of god, nor faith is the cause of man's suffering. The law of *Karma* is the controller of justice. It operates in perfectly precise manner. It does not leave any thing to chance. In this sense *Karma* has a three fold aspect.

1. Accumulations of effects of past *Karma* called *Sanchita Karma*.
2. The *Karma* which comes to us in the form of experience in the present life is called *Prarabdha Karma* and
3. All these actions and experiences sow seeds of fresh *Karma* in future, this is called *Agami Karma*.

All creatures are involved in an action without any break continuously since one *Karma* leads to the other. That is, our present actions are decided by our past *Karma* and the present *Karma* contains the seeds of our future notions. *Agami Karma* is the manifested organ state of deed done in thought, work and physical body. It is gross *Karma*. Merits and demerits resulting from deeds are called *Sanchita*, the subtle *Karma*. Pleasure and pain resulting from merit and demerit are called *Prarabdha Karma*, very subtle *Karma*.

Karma is like cultivation. *Agami Karma* is compared to the act of sowing seed. *Sanchita Karma* is compared to the state of seed lying buried under earth till it gets maturation to come out. *Prarabdha Karma* is compared to the emergence of sprout from the seed.

Law of *Karma* has two parts. The first part of the law states that the past determines the present. What we experience now is the result of our past action. This is only one part of law. The second and significant part of the law states that the future is determined by our present action.

Past, present and future are continuous law of *Karma* even though limits our freedom in certain aspects, also provides room for our freedom, to understand the nature of the law of *Karma* and grace, we need to understand the *Sanchita*, *Prarabdha* and *Agami Karma*. *Sanchita* is one's total *Karma*. *Prarabdha* is a part of the *Sanchita Karma* which pertains to the present birth. *Prarabdha Karma* can be destroyed only by experiencing. *Agami Karma* can be stopped when we get knowledge and act accordingly. God wants us to grow spiritually and this could be possible only when we eschew desire and aversion.

When good and bad incidents occur to us, we should remember that the occurrence is the result of our past deeds. When we get spiritual maturity, we know the art of responding to the life situations without adding to our stock of *Karma*. If we maintain our spiritual maturity, our *Prarabdha Karma* may be gradually reduced and finally eliminated. When we get spiritual maturity and act accordingly, God comes as a preceptor and destroys the whole *Sanchita Karma*. *Sanchita* may be large for a particular person. It may not be so for another person. But God sees the individual attaining spiritual maturity and removes *Sanchita* irrespective of the quality and quantity of *Karma* performed by the individual. Destruction of *Sanchita Karma* gives place for the operation of grace. Law of *Karma* is consistent with the law of grace.

We may explain this with an example. Law of gravitation is applicable only to certain extent. After a certain-level, gravitation will not operate. In the same, way when one's understanding transforms the behavior of the individual law of *Karma* is

applicable. If the person understands god's essential nature and act accordingly, *Karma* which is the result of ignorance, will no longer attach to the individual. If the person learns to transcend the law of *Karma* by his actions, the grace of the Lord descends on the individual and his whole life is transformed as a result of the descent of the grace of the Lord. Law of *Karma* and law of grace are applicable to the individual as per the spiritual maturity of the person.

Now the question arises whether the soul experiences the fruits of *Karma* in the order of being done. As already noted, *Karma* is like cultivation. As in cultivation some kinds take a longer time to grow and bear fruits than others. So also some deeds take a longer time to bear fruits than others. It should be noted that the deeds become converted into affects only according to the maturation of them. The maturation consists in a deed becoming perfect in all its' requirement, which are instrumental to it.

Some times it so happens that a person may not experience the fruits of his actions before the end of his life. In such cases the theory of *Karma* becomes futile. To avoid such futility exponents of law of *Karma* argued that *Karma* binds the soul then the material body. If the soul does not experience the fruits of its actions through this body in this life, then it would experience them in subsequent births. This leads to the theory of transmigration of soul or rebirth.

Some of the schools of Indian philosophy have made God regulator of the law of *Karma*, who can release the soul from the *Karmic* bondage. Some other systems gave independent status to law of *Karma* without the interference of God. This theory of law of *Karma* has worked as a regulative principle of the actions of the people.

Yoga

Yoga means union, it is union of man and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his lower and higher self; to the lover, union between himself and god of love; and to the philosopher, it is union of all existence. This is what is meant by *yoga*. This is a *Sanskrit* term, and these four divisions of *Yoga* have, in *Sanskrit*,

different names. The man who seeks after this kind of union is called a *Yogi*. The worker is called the *Karma-Yogin*. He who seeks the union through mysticism is called the *Raja-Yogi*. And he who seeks it through love is called the *Bhakti-Yogi*. He who seeks it through philosophy is called the *Jnana-Yogi*. So this word *Yogi* comprises them all (Swami Vivekananda 2004:43-58).

a. *Raja-Yoga*

Let us now understand what Raja-Yoga means. In this controlling of the mind? In this country it is associating all sorts of hobgoblins with the word Yoga. One must start by telling that it has nothing to do with such things. None of these Yoga's give up reason, none of them asks you to be hoodwinked, or to deliver reason into the hands of priests of any type whatsoever. None of them asks that it should give allegiance to any superhuman messenger. Each one of them tells cling to the reason, to hold fast to it. In all beings there are three sorts of instruments of knowledge. The first is instinct, which may find in most highly developed animals; this is lowest instrument of knowledge. What is the second instrument of knowledge? Reasoning. It may find that most highly developed in man. Now in the first place, instinct is an inadequate instrument; to animals, the sphere of action is very limited, and within that limit instinct acts. When it's come to man, see it is largely developed into reason. The sphere of action also has here become enlarged. Yet even reason is still very insufficient. Reason can go only a little way and then it stops, it cannot go any further; and if tried to push it, the results is helpless confusion, reason itself becomes unreasonable. Logic becomes arguments in a circle. Take for instance the very basis of perception. Matter and force. What is matter? That which is acted upon by force. And force? That which acts upon matter. It is seen the complication, what the logicians call see-saw, one idea depending on the other and this again depending on that. Find a mighty barrier before reason, beyond which reasoning cannot go yet it always feels impatient to get into the reasoning cannot go; yet it always feels impatient to get into the region of the infinite beyond. This world, this universe which our senses feel our mind thinks, is but one atom, so to say, of the infinite,

projected on to the plane of consciousness; and within that narrow limit, defined by the network of consciousness, works our reason, and no beyond. Therefore, there must be some other instrument to take us beyond, and that instrument is inspiration. So instinct, reason, and inspiration are the three instruments of knowledge. Instinct belongs to animals, reason to man and inspiration to God men. But in all human beings are to be found in a more or less developed condition the germs of all these three instruments of knowledge. To have these mental instruments evolved, the germs must be there. And this must also be remembered, that one instrument is a development of the other, and therefore does not contradict it. It is reason that develops into inspiration and therefore inspiration does not contradict reason, but fulfills it. Things which reason cannot get at are brought to light by inspiration; and they do not contradict reason. The old man does not contradict the child but fulfills the child. Therefore it must always be borne in mind that the great danger lies in mistaking the lower form of instrument to be the higher. Many times instinct is presented before the world as inspiration, and then come all the superiors' claims for the gift of prophecy. A fool or a semi-lunatic thinks that the confusion going on in his brain is inspiration, and he wants men to follow him. The most contradictory, irrational nonsense that has been preached the world is simply the instinctive jargon of confused lunatic brains trying to pass for the language of inspiration.

The first test of true teaching must be that the teaching should not contradict reason. It may be seen that such is the base for *Yogas. Raja-Yoga*; the psychological *Yoga*, the Psychological way to union. It is a vast subject; it can only point out to the central idea of this *Yoga*. We have but one method of acquiring knowledge. From the lowest man to the highest *Yogi* all have to use the same method; and that method is what is called concentration. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, as one throws them on the elements; and the elements stand analyzed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer has also concentrated the powers of his mind and brought them into one focus; and throws them on to objects, through his telescope; and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case; with the

professor in his chair, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know. One may hear words that which interests, mind will comes concentrated; and then suppose a clock strikes, one will not hear it on account of concentration, and more able to concentrate mind, the better will understand, and the more one concentrate on his love powers the better it shall be able to give expressions to what one want to convey. The more this power of concentration the more knowledge is acquired, because this is the one and only way of acquiring knowledge. Even the lower shoe back. If he gives more concentration will black shoes better; the cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stranger the power of concentration the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out flood of light. This, the power of concentration, is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. The system of *Raja-Yoga* deals almost exclusively with this. In the present state of our body we are so much distracted, and the mind is fettering away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. As soon as it is tried to calm thoughts and concentrate mind upon one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain; thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check them and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in *Raja-Yoga*.

b. *Karma-Yoga*

Karma-Yoga is the attainment of god through work. It is evident that in society there are many persons who seem to be born for some sort of activity or weather, whose minds cannot be concentrated on the plane of thought alone, and who have but one idea, concertised in work, visible and tangible. There must be a science of this kind of life too. Each one of us is engaged in some work, but the majority of us fritter away the greater portion of our energies because we do not know the secret of work. *Karma-Yoga* explains this secret and teaches where and how to work, how to employ to the greatest advantage the largest part of our energies, in the work that is before us. But with this secret we must take into consideration the great objection against work, namely that it causes pain. All misery and pain come from attachment. I want to do work, I want to do good human being;

and it is ninety to one that that human being, whom I have helped, will prove ungrateful and go against me and the result to me is pain. Such things deter mankind from working; and it spoils a good portion of the work and energy of mankind, this fear of pain and misery. *Karma-yoga* teaches us how to work for work's sake, unattached, with out caring who is helped, and what for. The *Karma-Yogi* works because it is his nature, because he feels that it is good for him to do so and he has no objection beyond that. His position in this world is that of a give, and never cares to receive anything. He knows that he is giving and does not ask for anything in return and therefore he eludes the grasp of misery. The grasp of pain, whenever it comes. Is the result of the reaction of "attachment".

c. *Bhakti-Yoga*

Bhakti-Yoga is for the man of emotional nature, the lover. He wants to love god, he relies upon and uses all sorts of rituals, flowers, incenses, beautiful buildings, forms and all such things. Do you mean to say they are wrong? One fact is to be told is good for to remember, in this country especially, that the world's great spiritual giants have all been in possession of very rich mythology and ritual. All sects that have attempted to worship God without any form or ceremony have crushed without mercy everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. Their religion is a fanaticism at best, a dry thing. The history of the world is a standing witness to this fact. Therefore do not decry these rituals and mythologies. Let people have them; let those who so desire has them. Do not exhibits that unworthy derisive smile, and say, "they are fools; let them have it." Not so; the greatest men seen are the most wonderfully developed in spirituality, have all come through the discipline of these rituals. It does not hold worthy to sit at their feet, and to criticize them! How do it is known how these ideas act upon the human mind, which of them to accept and which to reject? We are apt to criticize everything in the world without sufficient warrant. Let people have all the mythology they want, with its beautiful inspirations; it must always bear in mind that emotional natures do not care for abstract definitions of the truth. God to them is something tangible, the only thing is real; they feel hear and see Him and love. Let them have their God. A rationalist seems to them to be like the fool who, when he saw a beautiful statue, wanted to break it to

find out of what material it was made. *Bhakti-Yoga* teaches them how to love without any ulterior motives, loving god and loving the good because it is good to do so, not for going to heaven, not to get children, wealth or anything else. It teaches them that love itself is the highest recompense of love-that God Himself is love. It teaches them to pay all kinds of tribute to God as the creator, the Omnipresent, Omniscient, Almighty ruler, the Father and the Mother. The highest phrase that can express Him, the highest idea that the human mind can conceive of Him is that He is the God of Love. Wherever there is love, it is He. "Wherever there is any love, it is He, the Lord is present there". Where the husband kisses the wife, He is there in the kiss; where the mother kisses the child, He is there in the kiss; where friend clasp hands, He, the Lord, is present as the God of Love. When a great man loves and wishes to help mankind, he is there giving freely His bounty out of His love to mankind. Wherever the heart expands. He is there manifested. This is what the *Bhakti-Yoga* teaches.

d. Jnana-Yoga

Jnana-Yogi the philosopher, the thinker, he who wants to go beyond the visible. He is the man who is not satisfied with the little things of this world. His ideas is to go beyond the daily routine of eating, drinking and so on; not even the teaching of thousands of books will satisfy him. Not even all the sciences will satisfy him; at the best, they only bring this little world before him. What else will give him satisfaction? Not even myriads of systems of words will satisfy him; they are to him but a drop in the ocean of existence. His soul wants to go beyond all that into the very heart of being, by seeing reality as it is; by realizing it, by being it, by becoming one with that universal Being. That is the philosopher; to say that God is the Father or the Mother, the Creator of this universe, its protector and Guide is to him quite inadequate to express Him. To him, God is the life of his life, the soul of this soul. God is his own Self. Nothing else remains which is other than God. All the mortal

parts of him become pounded by the weighty strokes of philosophy and are brushed away. What at last truly remains is God Himself.

Upon the same tree there are two birds, one on the top, the other below. The one on the top is calm, silent and majestic, immersed on its own glory; the one on the lower branches, eating sweet and bitter fruits by turns, hopping from branch to branch, is becoming happy and miserable by turns. After a time the lower bird eats an exceptionally bitter fruit and gets digested and looks up and sees the other bird, that wondrous one of golden plumage, who eats neither sweet nor bitter fruit, who is neither happy nor miserable but calm, Self-centered and seeing nothing beyond his self. The lower bird longs for his condition but soon forgets it, and again begins to eat the fruit, in a little while he eats another exceptionally bitter fruit, which makes him feel miserable, and he again looks, up, and tries to get nearer to the upper bird. Once more he forgets and after a time he looks and so on he goes again and again, until he comes very near to the beautiful bird and sees the reflection of light from his plumage playing around his own body, and he feels a change and seems to melt away; still nearer he comes, and everything about him melts away, and at last he understands this wonderful change. The lower bird was, as it were, only the substantial-looking shadow, the reflection of the higher; he himself was in essence the upper bird all the time, this eating of fruits, sweet and bitter, this lower little bird weeping and happy by turns was a vain chimera, a dream; all along the real bird was there above, calm and silent, glorious and majestic, beyond grief, beyond sorrow. The upper bird is God, the Lord of this universe; the lower bird is the human soul' eating the sweet and bitter fruits of this world. Now and then comes a heavy blow to the soul. For a time he stops the eating and goes towards the unknown God; and flood of light comes. He thinks that this world is a vain show. Yet again the senses drag him down, and he begins as before to eat the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. Again an exceptionally hard blow comes. His heart becomes open again to divine light; thus gradually he approaches God, and as he gets nearer he finds his old self melting away. When he has come near enough, he sees that he is no other than God, and he exclaims, "He whom it is being described as the life of this universe, as present in the atom, and in suns and moons,

He is the basis of life, the Soul of soul. *Nay, thou art that*". This is what *Jnan-Yoga* teaches. It tells man that he is essentially divine. It show to mankind the real unity of being, and that each one is the Lord, god Himself, manifested on earth. All of us, from the lowest worm that crawls under our feet to the highest beings to whom we look up with wonder and awe, are manifestations of the same Lord.

It is imperative that all these various Yogas should be carried out in practice; mere theories about them will not do any good. First we have to hear about them, then we have to think about them. We have heard about them, and then we have to think about them. We have to reason the thoughts out, impress them on our minds, and we have to meditate on them, realize them, until at last they become our whole life. No longer will religion remain a bundle of ideas or theories, an intellectual assent; it will enter into our very self. By means of intellectual assent we may today subscribe to many foolish things, and change our minds altogether tomorrow. But true religion never changes. Religion is realization; not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing, to acknowledging, it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.

Essential features of Hinduism such as *Chatur Varna*, *Chaturashramas*, *Purusharthas*, law of *Karma* and *Yogic* systems are discussed elaborately in this chapter to understand the significance of the Hinduism. These essential features have contributed extensively to the growth and sustenance of the Hinduism since ages. Roots of these essential features traced from the Indus civilization, *Vedic* and the *Epic* tradition of India.

CHAPTER-III

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF LINGAYATHISM

The present chapter discusses the essential features of Lingayathism in order to establish the independent status and unique nature of its teachings. Following the discussion on the status and the founder of Lingayathism. The discussion on the status and the founder of the Lingayathism. The chapter discussed its essential features such as the philosophy of Shaktivishishtadvaita, Astavarana, Panchachara, Shatasthala and the worship of Istalinga, along with these some social innovations of Basaveshwara such as Kayaka, Dashooha and Anubhava Mantapa are discussed which paved the way for both social and gender equality.

Lingayathism is often confused as the part, sect of the Hindu, because the origin of *Lingayathism* is from the Hindu society. It seems to be so, because the *Lingayathism* has not yet proved its independent existence. Some of the doctrines of Hindu culture are accepted by the *Lingayathism*.

3.1.0. The Status of *Lingayath* religion

Determining the status of the *Lingayath* religion is knotty problem, whether it is a separate religion or a sub-religion of Hinduism is the concern of the present study. *Lingayaths* are generally considered to be a sect among the Hindus or a subset of the Shaivas. *Shaivism* itself is generally considered as *Vedic* religion or a sub-religion of Hinduism. Hence, it is not argued that *Lingayathism* may not have any recognition as a separate religion. In the first place it has fallen in such deep obscurity that it seems rather difficult to rise up from the obscurity it has fallen into and stand out in bold relief and shine in its glory. It may naturally claim to have its account of intrinsic value and merit.

To determine the status of *Lingayath* religion among the Hinduism, it is necessary for us to know what the Hindu religion is which the Hindus as a body social, political and religious are expected to profess and to have. But it is impossible to say what Hindu religion or Hinduism is, if it is to be a common denominator or the highest common factor of all the Hindu communities of India. Generally Hindu religion is taken to be the religion as taught by *Vedas*. But what is the religion that is

taught by the *Vedas*? This is the most puzzling question; and answer to the question is bound to be equally puzzling and controversial. The *Veda* does not teach any one religion but a variety of religions; they not only teach some common religious philosophy about a variety of philosophy by different schools of philosophical thought; they do not lay down any common religious practice and customs but a multiplicity of rules of religion and custom. It is this variety that has been an object of pride for the Hindus, who say with a sense of elation that Hinduism is a form of eclectic religion having every thing in it. At the most it may be said that the *Vedas*, especially the *Upanishads*, are a literature of profound learning and thoughts being the result of inner spiritual experiences of great ancient sages, regarding the cosmic principle, the cosmic evolution, involution and life, the working of the Universe and the individual souls and advice given to the individual souls to follow a spiritual life to be free from the trammels of the worldly life. But they do not teach any common principles of religion and spiritual life. The four main *Vedas* and the Brahmins mainly elaborate the performance and procedure of sacrifices, though some portions of *RigVeda* contain verses full of deep philosophical thoughts. It is the *Aranyakas* (forest dwelling sages) and the *Upanishads* that contain most vivid and everlasting thought of spiritual experiences and spiritual life. But they do not give any one consistent religion for all to follow. They are merely rich in philosophical speculations and experiences, too obscure to be understood.

Hindu religion is defined as the religion of *Varnashramadharma* which is based on the principle of innate inequality of human beings, and, therefore, lays stress on the inherent incapability of the constituent human beings of the body political and social to have an equal right and share in social and religious practices. The *Varnashramadharma* may be fundamentally reduced to three main characteristics of social and religious-life. 1) The four castes or colors (*Varna*), 2) the four stages of life (*Ashrams*).3) and the duties, assigned to the four castes and stages. The third characteristic is further elaborated into 1) different worldly duties assigned to be discharged by the four castes (*Varnadharma*), 2) and sixteen religious *Samskaras* sacramental rites like *Garbhadan*, *Punsvan*, *Jaatkarm*, *Namkaran* etc. These sixteen sacramental rites are the special privileges of the first three classes. The Shudras, whose duty is only to serve obediently the first three castes like slave, are altogether excluded from the sixteen rites. The exclusion of a particular section of community

from these religious rites and its consequent exclusion from intellectual and spiritual life is quite an iniquitous and opprobrious thing in the world. It seems that at the beginning members of the community were considered as different castes in accordance with their mental and intellectual caliber and physical fitness for particular worldly duties. Then there was some change in the *Varnashramadharma*. But gradually it was based on birth alone. This made the *Varnashramadharma* the most unjust social institution. Being excluded from the sixteen sacramental rites, the *Shudra* came to be reduced to the status of serfs who served the three upper castes. Another notable thing is that the women of the first three castes were considered equal to *Shudras* in status. And therefore, they were assigned the duties of domestic affairs and of serving their husbands to attain *Mukti*. They are thus considered as merely an object of pleasure and only the means of race-propagation. This is also unequally iniquitous thing. It was not possible to understand the reason of the exclusion of all women from the *Samskaras*. It was not possible (at least for us) to understand the meaning of *Punsvan*, which apparently meant causing the birth of male children. If the *Samskaras* intended to have only male children and if they were efficient it would amount to say that there would be only males and no females at all. Consequently, there would be no propagation of the race. The *Lingayath* religion has done away with it and ushered in a new era of socio-religious life. The eradication of *Varnashramadharma* from the new socio-religious system is found in all *Lingayath* religious books. The status of *Lingayaths* as a high class community of *Ativarnashramdharmis* (those above the *Varnashramadharma*) is founding *Veershaivotkarshapradipika* and *Veerashaivandachandrika*. The superior status to *Varnashramadharma*, of *Ativarnashramadharma* as a socio-religious system is established.

In short, the *Varnashramadharma* based on birth is iniquitous in so far as it excludes from it a large portion of the community from real religious life; it makes a difference between men and women in religious life; it takes difference sacramental rites a close preserve of a particular section of the community. It, in brief shows that the community is merely a socio-political Body. Thus Hinduism, if it is *Varnashramadharma*, can in no way include *Lingayathism* in it as a sub-religion. The *Lingayaths* are Hindus in the sense that they are descendents of the Hindu and that they are not people coming from outside India like Parsies. They are Hindus as a race

but not as a religion. They are a different religious entity, a distinct religious factor. In this particular aspect they are like Jains, who is a different religious sect. They violently shattered away, discarding the Hindu religion and forming a separate religion of their own. But Jains differ from *Lingayaths* in one aspect and therefore they are safe in their claims as a different religious community, in respect of not owning their allegiance with the *Vedas* and not owning their faith in them. In this respect, *Lingayaths* differ from Jains, as they seem to respect the *Veda* though they do not own the *Vedas* as the basis of their religion. They profess and own the *Agamas* as they are the base and parents of their religion. However, their respect for the *Vedas* has made confusion worse confounded and the position and status of the community very anomalous.

Hence idol-worship is the religion of the Hindus. If religion can be so defined, *Lingayaths* are not Hindus in religion because they are not idol-worshippers. Only in one respect they are Hindus in religion, namely, in respect of worshipping one of the Hindu Gods, *Shiva*. But mere worship of a God is not religion; it should have philosophy and practice forming its differentia. And because *Lingayath* religion has its own philosophy and practice distinct in itself it cannot be a sub-religion of Hinduism.

After establishment of the religion, the Lingayath community became independent of Hinduism. Questions were raised regarding their status among the Hindus and their religion whatever it was, on account of the new community altogether serving its connection with the Brahmanic priest-hood. The followers of the new religion had to answer the question and ascertain themselves. They tried their level best to maintain their positions. Besides, they claimed to be *Aprakrutbrahman*. They had no clear idea of their status as an independent religion. Moreover it seems that they must have thought it honorable not only to be *Brahmins* but Super-Brahamins, which they christened with the name of *Aprakritabrahman*.

The confusion regarding the status of Lingayathism within could have been avoided if it was maintained that they were an independent religious fold without explaining it as *Ativarnashramadharma* or *Aprakritabrahmanadharma*. The explanation maintains the independent status indirectly but not expressly. The confusion became much worse later, when support of the basic principles of the religion was sought from the *Vedic*, especially *Upnishadic* literature.

Lingadharanachandrika was one such book. But if the creed, the tenants and principles of the religious are closely studied, it will be clear that the *Lingayathism* fundamentally differs from Hindu religion which eludes definition. The position of Jains and Sikhs is safe as both have thrown off their allegiance to the *Vedas*. All Jains are descendents of Hindus. So also many Sikhs are Hindus. But they have maintained their position clearly by asserting. His distinctness of creed, tenets and principles. Anyway Lingayaths treated a sure and safe ground if they boldly maintain that Lingayathism is an independent religious entity, inspite of the confusion and dubiousness caused by the trend of discussion noted above regarding the status of *Lingayaths* and their religion *Veershaivanandachandrika* itself maintains in the following words the independent status of the religion.

Lingayathism is an independent Religion (Mate Mahadevi 2006): There are some important questions which are refused regarding the status of Lingayathism such as; is the *Lingayath* religion an independent Religion? Or else is it a sect, caste or a group? Does it have features to consider as independent? If it is independent Religion, and then what are the relations of it with Hindu? Human beings are also common animals who live with natural habits. Religion is the media to control them by regulating by ethics. It is considered that some ethical rules and faith which regulate the life of the individuals and society is constitution of a religion.

A religion must have some necessary constituents, such as 1) Religious Preceptor 2) Goal 3) Doctrine of vision 4) Consecration 5) Doctrine of society 6) Ethics 7) Doctrine of economics 8) Law 9) Culture 10) Ritual and 12) Literature.

On the basis of above points the deference between other religions can be explained. By this view the *Lingayath* Religion is independent Religion because it has all differentiating aspects to be recognized as an independent religion.

3.2.0 Veerashaivism and Lingayathism

Present confusion about *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism* is so common that, it seems difficult to believe or guess that both are entirely different and both have indefinite differences. The fact concerned is not only with commons, it is indeed with various writers, scholars and dignified personalities. But the ethics, practices,

evidences, logic and various other factors prove that *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism* are entirely different, and they are quite opposite to each other.

3.3.0. Founder of *Lingayathism*

In the contemporary time scholar like M. Chadand Murthy (2006) and Sri Madh Rambhapuri Jagdguru express their skepticism regarding founder of *Lingayathism*. They argued that Basaveshwara is not the founder of *Lingayathism*. They argued that there is nothing that is new in *Lingayathism* and its ethics. The equality, *Kayaka* and the worship of Lord Shiva in form of *Linga* all are having there bases in *Sanatana* Dharma of Hinduism. Hence, they argue Basaveshwara did not found any religion and in fact *Lingayathism* is only an off shot of Hinduism.

The arguments of above scholars are only half true. That *Lingayathism* has drawn substantially from the existing *Sanatana* Dharma of Hinduism. But it also has radically differed from Hinduism, in terms of giving optimum stress on the practice of the ethical principles and the social ideas. For instance the principle of *Kayaka* which is used to cut the social and economical inequalities is a very significant contribution of *Lingayathism*; along with this there are specific unique practices that were introduced by Basaveshwara into *Lingayathism* such as *Panchachara*, *Astavarana*, *Shatasthala*, *Anubhava Mantapa*, which establishes independent status of *Lingayathism*. This use of the forgotten doctrines in vibrant way and innovation of new and unique practices which caused the origin of new socio religious movement called *Lingayathism* proves the status Basaveshwara as the founder of a new unique and independent religion called *Lingayathism*.

3.3.1. Life and times of Basaveshwara

Basaveshwara was the only son of Madarasa and Madalambika a distinguished and devout Shaiva couple of Bagewadi, a small town near modern Bijapur in Karnataka State (South India). He was born during the beginning of the twelfth century A. D. and lived, perhaps till the end of that century (Shivakumar, 1967:15-19).

His parents were ardent followers of Vedic religion. They had their own way of worship, beliefs and traditions. But Basavanna even while he was a young boy,

somehow, developed as aversion for the Brahminical rites which involved the sacrifice of animals. Divisions of the society into several classes on the basis of the birth of an individual did not convince him. He was very unhappy to see that the only so called superior class had the right to perform certain rites and not others. So, he left his parents and his relations out of sheer disgust even while he was in his teens. He went to a Shaiva teacher at Kudala Sangama a sacred place where two big rivers Krishna and Malaprabha meet each other. The philosophy of the Shaiva saint must have been of a progressive nature so as to catch the imagination of this blooming genius.

Basaveshwara was invited to serve in the Court of king Bijjala. He accepted the invitation. Bijjala, a Kalachuri Prince was ruling the Thrdewadi province from Mangalawada at that time. Baladeva Dannayaka one of the ministers of Bijjala, got his daughter Gangambika wedded to him. Gangambika proved a worthy wife to Basavanna in all respects.

By his selfless service, honesty and integrity, Basavanna won the admiration of the King Bijjala. In due course he became the custodian of the King's treasury. A few years later, Bijjala began to rule from Kalyana after overthrowing the Chalukya emperor. Basavanna also went over to Kalyana and continued as a minister under Bijjala.

Basaveshwara invented Lingayathism based on freethinking, universal fraternity, equality, and all round developing ethics. He started to propagate the Lingayath religion from Kalyana.

Kalyana, a famous historical city situated in modern Bidar District of Karnataka State is witness of Lingayath movement under the dynamic leadership of Basavanna. A great social and religious reformer that he was set to work with unflinching zeal to eradicating the social and religion inequity in Hindu society at that time. He preached that all men are brothers, bad conduct is low caste, good conducts is high caste and religion is the birthright of every body. These doctrines of liberty, equality and brotherhood were quite new to common man of the land. It was a great boon to them, particularly women who were thrown to the dark corner. This is the

first prophet perhaps, to extol the dignity of manual labor, since he advocated the equality of all professions. These factors, beside his official position, charity, piety and learning made his new creed very popular.

The movement became well-known throughout the length and breadth of Karnataka and even beyond. There was ready and hearty response from even the nook and corner of the country. Spiritual aspirants from different parts of the country who came under the influence of his profound teachings, clustered around him.

Allama Prabhu, Channabasavanna, Akkamahadevi, Akkanagamma, Moligeya Maraih and a host of others, both men and women coming from various strata of the society worked with him. It is this great galaxy that made the city of Kalyana memorable in the history of Karnataka and created the ever Anubhava Mantapa a congregation of the great saints and mystics. Shunya *Shimhasana*, the sacred seat of the Holy was established in the Mantapa.

Anubhava Mantapa, the temple of religious experience was not built of stones bricks and mortar. The Shunya Simhasana which Allama is said to have adored is not made of precious metals, pearls or stones. It was a conflagration of the highest spiritual wisdom and a centre of divine awareness which could serve as spiritual illumination for all time to come.

Hundreds of saints, both men and women contributed their intuitive experience to the Anubhava Mantapa the fountain of divine experience. They gave utterance to their spiritual experiences which were so original and unique that they were reduced to writing in simple and chaste Kannada. These writings in the style of poetic prose come to be called as Vachana. Till then, no prophet tried to teach in Kannada language of the people of Karnataka. Vachana's, as they were in simple and guanine Kannada made an unprecedented influence of Kannadigas. They enraptured the hearts of thousands of Kannadigas and the movement became very popular and powerful in a very short time. Nobody, not even Bijjala, the monarch at that time could control this powerful movement.

Bijjala who had overthrown the Chalukyan ruler and usurped his throne feared that he may suffer the same fate at the hands of Basavanna and his followers. This fear was baseless. But some people who were highly orthodox and others who were aspiring for power fanned the fire of misunderstanding Basavanna and the king. One significant event which was ahead of the time, provided them an opportunity. The celebration of the marriage of the son of an 'untouchable' named Haralayya with the daughter of Madhuvayya's Brahmin! This shook the very foundation of the caste system and was too much to the orthodoxy to tolerate. They pleaded before the King that the marriage, unholy and irreligious, was performed at the instance of Basavanna, and goaded him to punish the so called heretics. Of course, both Haralayya and Madhuvayya were Lingavanthas. The marriage was just in accordance with the new faith preached by Basavanna who was very highly pleased at it.

Bijjala who was perhaps jealous of the popularity of Basavanna wanted to win the favor of the Orthodoxy and some disgruntled officers who had joined them. He ordered the eyes of the contracting parties to be put out. Basaveshwara's interference was of no avail. It is said that the 'criminals' were finally executed.

Basaveshwara's gentle heart was filled with grief and remorse. He quietly left Kalyana at once with his followers. Kudala Sangama, wherefrom Basavanna emerged as a great teacher, greeted him with open arms. Probably, one or two years after his return to Kudala Sangama he sought union with the Supreme.

3.4.0. Essential features of Lingayathism

Given the above discussion on the confusion regarding *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism*, the founder of *Lingayathism* let us know the turn to the essential features of *Lingayathism* such as *Shaktivishishtadvaita*, *Astavarana*, *Panchachara*, *Shatasthala*, *Istalinga*, *Kayaka* and *Anubhava Mantapa* one by one.

3.4.1. Shaktivishishtadvaita

A religion may be defined as a system of belief in the superhuman power, which governs the course of the universe and the human life in it, and it is entitled to some form of worship from the human beings for attaining eternal happiness. The

system of belief connotes doctrines concerning the relations of the universe and man God, the superhuman Power, and explains how God, as the Almighty Power, creates, sustains, and destroys or reabsorbs the Universe. They also explain and lay down the procedure and methods of worshipping God for the human beings so that they may be free from the trammels of the worldly life and attain eternal happiness by the grace of God. Thus a religion has two parts (1) the philosophy and (2) the practice. The former explains the work of God with the universe and the latter the way of attaining the grace of God for the liberation and final beatitude. The practice of a religion is based on the philosophy of the religion. Such is the idea of religion for all practical purpose, however functionary it may be. The Lingayat religion has both parts in it distinct to itself and can, therefore, claim to be distinct religion.

The philosophy of *Lingayathism* is monotheism and is called *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. (Sakhare, 2004:433) It is, adopted from and improved upon *Kashmere Shaivasiddhanata*. Though adopted from the *Kashmere* school of *Shaivism* it is given the distinct name of “*Shaktivishishtadvaita*” to give prominence to *Shakti*, the power or Energy of the Lord, *Parama Shiva*(the *Parabrahman*), living in intimate union with him. The intimate union or oneness of *Shiva* and His *Shakti*, as we have already stated, is beautifully expressed by Kalidas in the words. *Shakti Parmeshwar* as intimately one as the words and their senses. Words, divested of their sense, are mere babbles and there can be no word without sense: similarly *Shiva* and *Shakti* cannot be apart from each other; they are inseparable one. The attributes of Para Brahman, according to *Vedanta*, are *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*: these are the only three positive qualities that are attributed to Brahman, which can be spoken of in no other positive terms but only in the negative terms as “ *Anita Naiti*” (not this, not that etc.)According to *Shaktivishishtadvaita* these three positive qualities of *Parabrahman* (*Parashiva*) are well expressed in terms of the Lord’s self-consciousness As “Aashmi, Prakashe, Nandami” i.e., the Lord is conscious of His being, Shining, and enjoying independently of anything else. Hence he is *Swatantra* and his *Shakti*, in the form of His self-consciousness, is a part and parcel of His Self. *Shiva* is the supreme entity. He is the all-knowing, all-doing, all-sustaining being called *Prakasha*, the serene Lord, all-pervading indivisible and infinite. He, as the underlying reality in everything, is all-

transcending. That is to say, His nature is primarily a twofold aspect—an immanent aspect in which he pervades the universe, and a transcendental aspect in which He is beyond all universal manifestations. He is the origin and source of the universe and is the *Parabrahman*, as the *Vedantis* are pleased to call him. He is *Vimarsharupa*, i.e. he is Self-conscious. The vibration of the perfect egoity is His *Shakti* and through her He holds and visualizes the entire universe of objects as “this is the *Vimarsh*, the Perfect Egoity, is the *Shakti*.”

The *Pariahs* of *Paramashiva* is the substratum of His psychic images, the result of His reflection, which are merely its modes or forms. Images, psychic or physical, are due to a stimulus received either from external factors or the revived residual traces, as when one imagines of dreams. The mirror is also a substratum of images. But the images reflected in it are merely the effect of external objects that receives light from some other source and not from the mirror itself. A self-luminous jewel shines on some external object and has its image reflected in it. But neither the mirror nor the jewel is conscious either of itself or of the object reflected in itself. Hence the nature of a mirror or a jewel is altogether different from the nature of the Lord’s *Prakasha*. All the three can be the substratum of images. The mirror is not self-luminous and, therefore, can not receive the image of an external object in darkness. A jewel is self-luminous but it is not conscious of its capability of receiving images, while the Lord is not only self-luminous but is conscious of His self-luminosity. The mirror and the jewel are, thus, *Jada* or intangible. But the Lord is all intelligent.

1) The *Parabrahman* is *Prakasharupa* 2) He has self-consciousness (*Atmavimarsha*, *Vimarsha*, or *Paramarsha*). 3) this *Vimarsha* is His *Shakti* 4) And *iccha*, *jnana*, *kriya* are the modes of aspects of that *Vimarsha*. The consciousness of the self-luminosity is also called *Prasavi* or *Chaitanya* or merely *Chit Prakash*. This form is the most distinctive aspect of Shiva. There is another difference between the mirror and the jewel and the Lord’s *Prakasha*. The former receive images from objects that are external to them. But the Lord being all-inclusive there is nothing external to Him. It is the *Vimarsha* or consciousness of perfect egoity that gives rise to the images, which are, therefore, essentially the same (*samarasyatmaka*) as their

substratum, the *Prakasha*. An individual soul has residual traces (*samskara*) of objects external to it and revives those traces. It can also imagine things and can build some grand object by imagining. The Lord, the Universal Consciousness or Self- can similarly imagine or manifest ideally the world of the Universe, just as a *Yogin* creates something and holds it up before the on-looking spectators, which they feel as real as the material world. Thus the world or the universe is the Lord's ideal manifestation or the result of Lord's *Prakasha- Vimarsha*, i.e., the Lord's imagination or reflection or thinking. It is evident that this reflection or idea of the Lord is different from the reflection on a mirror or a jewel. The Lord's reflection is the ideal creation or imagination, just as an individual self's imagination of an object; but the reflection of mirror or a jewel is merely material or physical representation of a thing in the mirror or the jewel. The upshot is that *Shaiva* is *Prakasha* and is conscious of His *Prakasha*, which, therefore, is used for that aspect of Shiva which serves as a substratum for all that is manifested ideally, exactly as the *Buddhi* does for the images that an individual builds at the tome of imagination. And *Vimarsha* stands for that aspect, which is simply a power that may be called consciousness (for want of a better word), a power, which gives rise to self-consciousness, will, knowledge, and action (*Ichha, Jnana, Kriya*) in succession and is responsible for selection from what is already within and manifestation of the universe from the material selected at will, as apparently separate from itself. The Lord's self-consciousness, the power of will, knowledge and action may be said to be different aspects of this very *Vimarsrsha*. The creation of the universe, therefore, is nothing but an ideal projection of psychic reflection or manifestation. The philosophy of the universe or creation is generally named Realistic Idealism.

The power of Shiva is a assort of reflex relation of self-identity and is never dissociated from him. *Shakti* is unalienated conscious nature of Shiva with all the contents un-manifested. She is, therefore, the divine nature that supplies the ground of Shiva's realization of His own Self. She is illumination independent of all other than its own self, which is but the power of limiting the all-transcending Shiva. Shiva of unsurpassed blissfully joy is the enjoyer, and desire and such other contents of His self are His enjoyable. And it is for this reason that He assumes the form of *Shakti*,

Hence the whole world of diverse names and forms exists as real only when it has its roots deeply struck in the nature of Shiva, the Supreme Being, and is, therefore, nothing other than the externalization of Self-conscious Shiva as the object of His own enjoyment. *Shakti* in short is *Atmavimarsh* or *Prakashvimarsh* and worked wonders in obedience to Shiva's will, which again is nothing but a phase or mode of His power. She possesses the common nature of Shiva and is styled of the lawfully wedded wife of Shiva acting in perfect accord with her husband's disposition or will. *Vimarsha* or the vibrating power of *Prakash* is *Svatantra* because its existence does not depend on anything else as does will, knowledge and action, each of which depends for its existence upon what immediately precedes. This representation the principal power of the Highest Lord, *Maheshwara*, as the Self is often so called. This includes all other powers which are attributed to the Ultimate *Parashiva* or *Parabrahman*. The Universal Consciousness is given different names from different points of view. It is called *Chaitanya* because it is conscious of itself and acts for uniting, separating, and dealing in multifarious ways with what is within, it is called *Spanda* because it vibrates and represents the essential nature of the Universal Consciousness of *ParmaShiva*, which is responsible for the apparent change from the state of absolute unity. It is also, called *Mahasatta* because it is the cause of *Ashraya* (substratum) of all that is said to exist in any form. *Parvak* or *parnad* is another name because it represents the speech in its most subtle form. In short *Prakasha* stands not only for the common substratum of all manifestables and the manifested but also for the manifestables and the manifested themselves. Therefore when the Ultimate Principle, Shiva, is spoken of as *Prakasha-Vimarshaya* it means that the Ultimate in its aspect of *Prakasha* is both the Universe in either the manifested or the un-manifested state and its permanent substratum; and that in its aspect as *Vimarsha* it is that power, which is ultimately responsible for keeping the universe in the state of perfect identity with itself, as at the time of *Mahapralaya*, and for manifesting it as apparently separate from itself, as at the time of creation.

Vimarsha or the power of Shiva resides in Him, as stated before, in a sort of reflex relation of identity. Power without the wielder of the powers is unimaginable; and there must be some kind of relation between them. The relation of Shiva and His

Shakti is technically called *Samvaya*, *Samavaya* means a relation by virtue of which two different things like a substance and an attitude residing on that substance, substance and *Karma*, substance and cause and effect, atoms and particularity appear so unified as to represent one whole. It is, in other words, an inseparable union of essential identity and points to a reality that continues to remain in the character of an undivided organic whole. The two things forming one whole are never joined together. But the idea of separateness exists in human mind only, when one concentrate's analytic thought on the compact invisible whole and tries to separate the content from the unified whole by predicating some definite character to it. It is clear from this that Shiva and *Shakti* are one indivisible whole. The Lingayath Philosophers gives a special name "*Samarasya*" to this intimate union. *Samarasya* means essential identity and is different from *Tadatmya*.

The philosophy of Lingayathism is so far the same as the *Kashmere Shivadvaita*. But *Kashmere* philosophers have not given any special name to their *Advaitism*; but the Lingayaths call as *Shaktivishishtadvaita* to give prominence to the wonder-working power of Shiva. However *Shakti* is not as prominent as in *Shaktism*, where Shiva is so negligible without *Shakti* that Shiva becomes a kind of immovable (*Jadavastu*) without the *Shakti*. But according to Lingayath religion *Shakti* is Shiva's obedient hand maid executing the commands of her Lord. She is in a perfectly harmonious relation with Shiva, the ultimate Reality. Hence Shiva is characterized and distinguished by his power or capacity to work, which is only a phase of His *Prakash* in the form of *Vimarsha*. This is *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. The *Kashmere* Philosophers imply the *Shaktivishistatva* of Shiva but do not express it in so many words. While the Lingayaths express it by naming their *Advaita* "*Shaktivishishtadvaita*". This is the first point of difference between the two Schools, which is only a difference in terminology and also an improvement in Lingayath philosophy. Hence *Vishishtatva* (Specialty) does not imply any inseparable union of two or more substances like, Brahman, Jiva, *Achit* of the *Ramanuja* system of South Indian *Shaivism*, as maintained by *Shakti*. *Vishisthatva* simply stresses the nature of *chit* of *Prakash* that can note the power to work wonders.

There is another reason why the essential identity (Samarasya) of Shiva and *Shakti* is stressed and termed *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. The reason is that Lingayath philosophers like the *Kashmereans* do not agree with and approve of *Kaivaldvaita* of *Shankaracharya*, the preacher of *Mayavada*, the theory of illusion. Like the *Kashmere* philosophers the Lingayaths hold that the Lord's creation is real and no illusion. They reject *Mayavada* and prove that creation is the result of *Shaiva's* wonder-working power that is capable of doing things which are impossible for any other agency to do. The capability of the Lord is, therefore, said to be *Aghatanghatnatiyasi*. The *Mayavada* of *Shankaracharya* is demolished and *Shaktivishishtadvaita* is established.

There are two great defects in *Shankaracharya's Mayavada*, which admits *Maya* as the *Shakti* of *Brahman*. There is no explanation of the origin and abode of *Maya*. The second defect is that the relation of *Maya* as the *Shakti* of *Brahman* is not well explained. Hence *Adhara* (substratum) of *Maya* is not clear. The two weak points of *Mayavada* are criticized and the theory refuted, *Shaktivishishtadvaita* explains the connection of *Maya*, the meaning of which is not *Avidhya* but something else as will be noted presently, with the *Brahman* in the way noted hitherto.

The extracts (given above), containing a succinct refutation of *Mayavada*, will speak for and justify themselves. They briefly state and reject the theory of *Maya* of *Shankara*; *Maya* is there in the system of Lingayath Philosophy as the sixth of 36th principles or *Tatva's*, which is not the 36 principles. But the first six principles, as maintained by the South Indian School of *Shaivism* differ in their sense and functions from those of *Kashmere* School and the Lingayath school of *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. It is also not possible for us to note fully the explanation of the *Tatvas* by the difference schools. But it may be said that the South Indian *Shivadvaita* is similar to the *Vishishtadvaita* of *Ramanuja*. But the *Kashmere* and Lingayath Schools differ from both *Ramanuja's* and *Shankara's* doctrines.

Shaktivishishtadvaita is *Nirvisheshadvaita*, for simple reasons that there is no *Vishesh* as maintained by *Ramanuja*. At the same time he means to claim *Shaktivishishtadvaita* to be real *Nirvisheshadvaita* rather than that of

Shankaracharya's Kaivaladvaita which, he means, is not true, being defective and objectionable.

Amayaiyam Eshatvam i.e., the Lordship of the universe not rise to by Maya of *Ajnana* (ignorance) rejects the *Mayavada*, in which Brahman is the Lord of the universe brought into existence by Maya as its material cause. In the school of *Kevaladvaita* Brahman, the Supreme Reality is a mere "surrendered abstraction" sitting apart from the phenomenal universe. The conception of Brahman, the changeless unconditioned reality (*Kutastha*) is tantamount to some inert principle like the *Shankya Purusha*." *Nirvishesh'* rejects the *Vishistadvaita* of *Ramanuja* (and for that matter that of the *Shrikantha* School) in as much as in this school the *parabrahman* has the *Vishesha* in the form of *Chitt* (Jiva) and *Achitt* (*jada*). These two *Chitt* and *Achitt* are separate entities quite distinct from the Brahman though in intimate union with it.

There is perfect agreement between the schools of *Kashmere* and the Lingayaths. But the Lingayaths strikes a new path different from that of *Kashmere* School. And the difference lies in the explanation of the sixth principle; Maya, Maya according to the *Kashmere* School, is *Durghasamaadansmarthah Shaktivisheshaha*. It is Lord's power that accomplishes something that is impossible of accomplishment for any other agency. This seems to be synonymous with the *Aghatanghatnapatiyasi Shakti* of the Lingayath School. But it is not so. Maya in the *Kashmere* School is *Tirodhanashakti* and begins to operate as the sixth principle (*tatva*). While operates it works wonders and accomplishes what is impossible for any other agency. The *tiridhanshakti* becomes a limiting adjunct of the Lord and gives rise to the five *Kanchuka's* (sheaths), of the Universal Experience (Shiva) with His five characteristics limited by the *Shakti*, namely *Nityatva* or eternity, becomes, *Kala* or Time of limited duration; *Vyapaktva* or all pervasiveness becomes *niyati* or space limited; *Purnatva* or all-completeness becomes *Raga* or attachment to something only; *Vidhta* or all-knowledge becomes (*Ashudha*) *vidhaya* or limited knowledge' and *Sarvakartatva* or all-authorship becomes *Kinchintkartatva* or *kalaa*. The Lord is entangles with these and becomes a Jiva. The meaning of Maya approaches here the etymological meaning of Maya, which being derived from Ma to measure, is taken to mean that

by which something is measured if., the power of voluntary self-limitation. The first manifestation of the impure creation is Maya. It is this *Tatva*, the manifestation of which, first of all, apparently breaks the unity of Universal Self in its creative aspect. It manifests diversity independently of any external helper or promoter. It is conceived both as the power of obscuration and as primary cause of all the limited manifestations. In its former aspect it is often referred to as “Moha” and in the latter as “*paranita*”. Its effect also by transference of epithet, (*upachara*) is spoken of as “*maya*”. As such, Maya is limited; for whatever is manifested as apparently separate from the Universal Self is essentially so. It is pervasive, because it is the cause of the universe. It is subtle, because it passes ordinary comprehension. As an aspect of Universal Self it is eternal.

The *Lingayaths*, as religious beings, start with *Linga* and end with *Linga* and therefore they are *Lingayaths* and not merely because they wear *Linga* on their bodies. To a Lingayath, *Linga* is the highest reality capable of being realized through devotional worship and meditation. The conception of *Linga*, as the representation of the thought, symbol of the formless or the all-formed Almighty, is lofty and edifying, and there is no trace of either superstition or any impure and dirty idea attached to it.

3.4.2. Astavarana

The *Astavarana* are the eight fold shields or protective coverings of the devotee. They protect the *Anga* from the onslaughts of *Maya* on him and guide him safely for final beatitude in the world. They shield him from the evils attaching to the worldly life by putting the *Anga* out of the three taints and five sheaths. They guard and guide him on the way to enduring happiness by means of spiritual discipline and exercises. These eight Avaranas or guards have special significance of their own and are the means of Upasana in this religious life. The eight fold Avaranas are the spiritual one. They are *Guru*, *Linga*, *Jangama*, *Padodaka*, *Vibhuti*, *Rudrakshi* and *Mantra*.

a. Guru:

Guru has the precedence over the other 8 Avaranas who is the *Guru* that initiates the *Anga* and guards him in the religious practices and spiritual culture. It is the *Guru* that performs the Deeksha ceremony of the devotee, who receives another or

second birth as it were, the spiritual birth, in contradiction to the physical birth in the world. It is the *Guru* who gives the devotee real insight into the principles of the religion explains the inner meaning of the practices and guides him on the path of *Mukti*. He gives the *Anga* the necessary instruction and training to enable him to get through the arduous courses of spiritual discipline. The *Guru* is the spiritual mother. He by his gracious look of the eyes, expressive of tenderness, wins the *Anga* and consoles, just like the kind gracious look of the mother which calms down in distress and comforts us. He has gained first-hand knowledge of the world by experience. His affection, tenderness, and saintly life, his vast knowledge of men and things charms the pupil, who therefore, finds great delight in serving him, imitating him, and acquiring knowledge from him. The *Guru* lives in the midst of a town or a village but leads a simple, hard, and exemplary religious life. His association is inspiring to the *Anga* or devotee, who follows the instructions of the *Guru* in toto. The devotee proceeds with the study of the principles and philosophy of the religion with the help of *Guru* and takes guidance from him wherever necessary. This is the reason why *Guru* stands first in the list of *Astavarana*'s. The *Guru* at the same time, is worshipped in his meditative attitude, in a particular yogic posture with the control of breathe by *Pranayam*, with the eyes fixed on the *Linga* in contemplation, the *Guru* is one who is a *Jivanmukta* and is an example of *Linga* worship and spiritual discipline. He is *Guru* because he not only gives precepts and oral instruction but also he is a model in *Linga*-worship and moral and religious life for others to follow. Hence the significance of *Guru* is twofold, as a preceptor and as a living example of the religious course strictly followed. The *Guru* is therefore, actually worshipped at least occasionally in every household if not everyday. He is the *Shiva* Himself being a *Jivanmukta*. When he is worshipped he is called *Jangama*, an inherent *Shiva*. The *Guru* is, thus, the first guard or shield of the soul against the assaults of *Maya*.

b. Linga:

The *Istalinga* worn on the body by the *Lingayaths*. The *Istalinga* is *Linga* the gross or physical, the third of the first three modifications of *Ghanalinga*. (The three forms of *Linga* are *Bhavalinga*, *Pranalinga* and *Istalinga*) The *Istalinga* gives the worshipper that entire he desires to be worshipped and is, there fore, worshipped every day in devotion.

The *Linga* is given to the body at the time of birth, as is the custom. The *Linga* is always on the body of a person till his death. The person should never lose his *Linga*, because to lose it is to lose his life. The daily worship of the *Linga*, before the *Deeksha* ceremony of a person is performed, may be informal but necessary for the person, so that he may be imbued with deep reverence for the God and impressed with the significance of spiritual discipline. Though informal, it has its own significance. It makes the wearer and worshipper conscious of his duty to God on account of his uncertain position in worldly life. It makes him aware of the necessity of religious life and spiritual discipline in the way of *Mukti*. The real worship of *Linga* as the religious exercise begins after the *Deeksha* ceremony performed by the *Guru*, who initiates a person into the secrets of religion.

The worship of *Istalinga* is not the worship of an image. The image is merely a substitute of a deity. But the *Istalinga* is not an image of the Lord but the Lord Himself. The devotee is also a modification of Lord and is called *Anga*. Thus the *Anga* and the *Linga* being modifications of the Almighty Lord (*Ghanalinga*) in His *Upasyoopasakaleela*, the worshipper and worshipped are face to face with each other in the worship. The idea underlying the *Upasanas* that the *Upasaka* is in no way different from the *Upasya*, the *Linga*. This is *Ahamgrahopasana*, in which the devotee starts with the idea that he is a part and parcel of Lord. Hence, the truth expressed by “*Ahambrhamasmi*” is put into practical form. This is *sahamarga* or the path of fellowship or friendship of the worshipper with the lord. Here the worshipper is taught that he is Swarup of the Lord; and pure subjective worship of Lord is inculcated in him. The *Anga* looks on the *Linga* as his associate, a friend and a protector, not living apart from him, as in the case of image worship, but living with and in him and making him a part and parcel of himself, the all-powerful Lord. *Anga* is the microcosm of the lord, the macrocosmic *Linga*. The *Anga* has become *Anga* by being cooped up with the body by the working of *Jaadimaya*, the *Shakti* of the Lord. And to be free from the narrow limitations of the body he has to worship the *Linga*, the superior modification in relation with himself but identical with *Ghanalinga*, the macrocosmic soul. He has to worship with the conviction that he will attain his natural or original conditions of Lordship by pure subjective worship of Lord. This is *Ahamgrahopasa*. The *Anga* is taught that his real station is the Lord, in whom he lives, moves and has his being.

The *Istalinga*, as the *Upasyadevata*, is the object of contemplation. The *Anga*, the worshipper and associate of the Lord, fixes his attention on the lord, with a view to become one (*samaras*) with Him ultimately. The *Chitaikagrata* or the thought of the Lord by the subjective worship and subjective *Eshwarapranidhan* with the idea of “*Aham Bahamas*” is the highest spiritual ideal that deserves to be carefully and assiduously cultivated. Instead of fixing one’s attention on something only with a view to concentrate the mind without allowing it to go back, so that it may be brought under full control, it is very much better that the mind fixed on the Lord in meditation as the ultimate resort and the object of attainment.’

In the preparatory stage *Linga* or *Parashiv* is *Swaroop* of the devotee. He is, therefore, his intimate friend and associate. But later the devotee gradually moves towards the higher ideal of *Samarasya* in the advanced stage. In the preparatory stage the *Bhakt* is in the *Savikalp Samadhi*; and in the advanced or perfected stage he is in the *Nirvikalp Samadhi*.

Linga, the *Upasya*, is the only representation of the *Bhakt* in his meditative posture. Thus the *Anga* is reflected in the *Linga*. This makes the idea of *Aahmagrahopasana* actual. The *Linga* and *Anga* are, therefore, the obverse and reverse of the same thing. The *Anga* realizes that *Linga* is macrocosmic because it is free from all limitations; while is microcosmic being confined to the body. He has to expand himself by tearing off the limitations. To attain the ideal and objective, he has to seek the Highest in himself by developing the power in himself. That power is *Bhakti*, the modification of Lord’s *Shakti*, that *Bhakti*, without the sincere devotion and attachment to the Lord, nothing is possible. That is the root cause of self expansion.

The real *Linga* in its various forms is in the body. The six centre of nerve power, called the *Adharas* of *Shakti* by the *Shaktas* and the followers of *Raja yoga*, are the six places that the *Lingas* occupy. The worship of those *Lingas* to develop the human power into a vast all-reaching spiritual power is the real worship. This is internal worship and the superior or the only form of worship. But this is very difficult in the beginning before inculcating a theistic and spiritual attitude and cultivating the habit of devotion to the God with the conviction that is in him. For most men are of the emotional temperament and can be easily attracted to the path

of *Bhakti*. Men of severe intellectual temperament living on the hollow pabulum of abstractions are always rare. An intellectual attitude has to be prepared for gradually by emotion. And devotion to the God in some concrete form is necessary. *Istalinga* does this; and herein lays the real significance of *Istalinga* as the gross form or modification of *Ghanalinga*.

Hence the propriety of that is necessary for gradual psychic culture. The worship of *bahya* (outer) *Linga*, leads to the worship of *Atmalinga* in due course. The *Istalinga*, taken to be the gross form of *Ghanalinga* is to be filled with Shiva-kala or spirit of *Ghanalinga*; and the *Anga*, a part and parcel of the Godhead, is also to be inspired with the sincere spirit of devotion at the same time. The *Anga* is to be taught that the highest is in him and in the *Istalinga*. So the *Bhakta* starts with the worship of *Istalinga* that he is *Shiva* and *Shiva* is *Jeeva*. This is *Ahamgrahopasana* pure and simple.

c. *Jangama*:

Jangama is an itinerant *Jivanamukta* moving about in the country for the guidance of devotees in their spiritual exercise and culture. He is, therefore, considered equal to the godhead, the *Linga* and also *Guru*.

The goal of soul is the liberation from the three limitations and mainly from *Anavamala* (the three malas (taints) *Anavamala* = inferior taint (feeling having bound with god, self limitation, *Mayamala* = illusory taint and *Karmikamala* = Physical taint) because liberation from that *Mala* makes the soul essentially one (*Samaras*) with *Parashiva*. The first fruits of *Anavamala* are the feelings I-ness and my-ness. A person, that has become free from *Anavamala*, has neither I-ness nor my-ness, and does not refer to himself as an individual. He has no thought of his body, his family, his property, and other things that are ordinarily supposed to belong to him. The direct effect of freedom is the free flow of energies to know, to desire and to do. This liberated soul, therefore, possesses unlimited knowledge. It can transcend time

The products of *Maya* only serve as means for the soul's activeness of knowing, desiring and doing. But as the liberated souls have nothing in this world to know, to desire and to do. These products of *Maya* are no more of any use to them. The liberated souls will give them up as soon as they attain liberation, i.e. they will leave the physical body. They require no place to live in or things to enjoy, as they get

completely out of the domain of *Maya*. They move about and reveal the ultimate truths of religion to those that need them. They give valuable guidance in the course of spiritual discipline and religious exercises by their own example. Because they move about self-lessly, they are called *Jangamas*. The liberated men, the *Jangamas*, possess the necessary knowledge and are able to assist others in their endeavours to attain liberation. God, in his infinite mercy, so arranges the evolution that some become *Jivanmukta Jangama*. But these souls are in no way affected by their own mind and body. Having seen the true nature of *Maya*, they cannot be influenced by such insignificant products of *Maya*.

As the liberated souls require no further knowledge, they need not perform any fresh action, and are therefore free from the need of indulging in any activity for their own sake. As regards the fruit of past actions, they must all have been experienced except perhaps those that determine the nature of the body. If the body perishes at liberation it means that all the fruits of past actions have been experienced. If it does not, it follows that there are some acts left whose fruits it has yet to experience. Hence there are two classes of liberated souls, 1) those that leave the body at liberation, and 2) those that continue with the body even after liberation. The latter are *Jivanmukta Jangamas*.

When the soul is liberated from *Anavamala*, it can have a full flow of energy from *Maya* and acquire omniscience. But, if it is deprived of or liberated from *Maya* also, it cannot know or do any thing. It is quiescent. Then the love of God comes to it directly and fills it with divine illumination and makes it one with God. The *Jivanmukta Jangamas* on the contrary merge in the infinite love of God and shower that love on the unliberated souls. Some *Jivanmuktas* remain in their original position as kings, statesmen, or householders, and make themselves useful to others by their acts and lives. Some become religious preachers and tour round the country attracting disciples and followers. But in the midst of these activities, they remain unaffected, all the acts being automatic and unattached.

They are man and God in one and are useful to men in both capacities. As they have been men like ourselves, we can understand them, have direct communication with them, and get from them an idea of true love, true knowledge, and true action. Their very presence uplifts and gives joy to people. They are each, in his measure, the embodiments of God, and thus demonstrate the existence of God. They are also the

best objects of our worship. They are saints (*Shivasharanas*) and men of endless spiritual power. They make an indelible impression on the minds and drive out petty objects of the world that catch the fancy of the people. If we worship them, it will be the first form of worshipping God. This is why the *Jangama* is the third shield and is to be worshipped as reverentially as *Linga* and *Guru*. In fact no difference is made between the first three *Avarana* s, the *Guru*, *Linga*, and *Jangama*.

Jangama, a Sanskrit word, etymologically means that which moves. When this word applied to a person, in the context of *Lingayath* religion, it symbolizes a man who moves from place to place preaching moral and religious values. The two main categories of *Jangama* are 1) *Sthira* and 2) *Chara*. *Sthira Jangama* is a person who, staying in *math* i.e., a *Lingayath* monastery, has to carry on mass education, preaching to the local people, and giving them the necessary guidance to achieve spiritual progress, and to perform certain rites and rituals concerned with birth, marriage, death, holy communication on special occasions etc. *Chara Jangama* is one who constantly moves around, preaching as he goes, without settling himself at any particular place and without accumulating any property of his own.

d. Vibhuti or Ash:

Is the fourth *Avarana* and smearing it on the body is the fourth religious exercise. All ritualistic exercises serve the twofold purpose of increasing the love for God and adherence to the religious life. Every religion has a set of religious exercises for its followers. Wearing of the cross by Roman Catholics is a special exercise intended for reminding them the great solicitude that Jesus had for the salvation of the world. The cross induces them to accept, and to co-operate with for their personal salvation. Similarly, the sacred ashes of the Shaivas and the *Veerashaivas* remind them of the love of God, which reduces the impurities in them to ashes they make us feel that the Lords love is with us and creates in us a desire to lead a spiritual life. This underlying idea of *Vibhuti* and its contemplation and wearing are very important ritualistic exercises.

e. Rudrakshi:

Is the fifth *Avarana*, The origin. Of *Rudrakshi* is described in a Puranic story that *Shiva* looked up in a meditative and concentrated attitude at the three castles of

Tripura. The tears, that fell from his eyes in the act of looking up steadily, became solid and came to be called *Rudrakshi's* (on account of their falling from the eyes of *Rudra*). The *Rudrakshi* is a reminder of *Shiva's* fixed gaze, the Yogic steadfast gaze. The devotee has to bear this in mind and try to cultivate *yogic* steadfastness like *Shiva*, the great matchless *Yogin*. They urge a devotee on to attain perfection in his *Yogic* meditation.

f. Padodaka:

The holy water, with which the *Linga*, the feet of the *Guru*, and the *Jangama* are washed, is the sixth Avarana. Water is the most important of the five elements from the point of view of cleanliness. The *Padodaka* is the symbol of the washing of three (the three taints Anavamala = inferior taint (feeling having bound with god, self limitation, Mayamala = illusory taint and Karmikamala = Physical taint) taints attached to the soul. *Guru* and the *Jangama* being *Jivanmuktas* are free from all taints. And their *Padodaka* is the embodiment of the taints. The devotee has to be free from the taints attached to his soul and take a lesson from the *Padodaka* that he has also to strive to be free from the three taints, when he takes the *Padodaka* of his *Guru* or *Jangama*. The *Padodaka* is thus intended to produce a psychological effect on the devotee that he should wash his soul clean of the three taints, as he has to wash his body clean of all physical dirt. The exercise for making the devotee aware of the three taints and the necessary of washing them away from the soul gradually by cultivating merely ordinary water called *teertha*. It is the symbol of the water of knowledge (*Jnanajal*) that washes away the taints that stick to and constrict to the soul.

g. Prasada:

Prasada, generally, means favor of grace of a superior being. In religion *Prasad* means favor or grace of God shown to the devotee. *Prasad* in Lingayathism signifies more than this. *Prasada* is the grace of god no doubt. But the real *Prasada* leads to the peace of mind by grace of God. Mind and its impure workings become the root-cause of all troubles and worries of life by producing *Karmsanskar*, which causes the cycles of birth and re-birth. And if the mind is kept clean and pure and absorbed in the thought of God, the *Karmasamskar* is destroyed and all troubles and worries of life vanish. Hence the real *Prasad* is the stable cleanliness and calmness of mind; the purity and equanimity of mind, which as the soul's agent and organ, brings

about the purity and freedom of the soul. Such is the real sense and significance of *Prasada*

To obtain favour of the Lord, the devotee has to keep constantly in mind that all that he does, eats, sees, hears, and enjoys is owing to the Lord. He expresses his gratitude to the Lord that whatever he enjoys and whatever he does is his *Prasada*. He should address all that he takes or does to God before taking or doing the same himself. This is *Karma* Yoga of the best type, when the mind is trained like this, and gradually develops the sense of purity and calmness. The soul gradually becomes free from *Karmasamskar* and ultimately attains freedom from further transmigrations, i.e., it attains final beatitude.

The practical example of *Prasada* is that of the *Guru* and *Jangama*, who's *Prasada*. The *Bhakta* receives. He then learns from them the secret of *Prasad* and the way of addressing to God all that he takes and does. Thus, the *Prasada* of *Guru*, *Linga*, and *Jangama* is an exercise of utmost importance in spiritual development.

h. Mantra:

A Mantra consists of certain letters arranged in a definite sequence of sound of which the letters are the representative sequence of sound of which the letters are the representative signs. To produce the designed effect, the Mantra must be intend in the proper way according to both sound (*Vani*) and rhythm (*Svar*); for these reasons a Mantra ceases to be such when translated and becomes a mere sentence. By Mantra the sought for *Devata* appears and by success (*Sidda*) therein vision is had of the three worlds. As the Mantra is in fact *Devata*, by practice of this is known and no amount of theoretical knowledge will do. Not merely do the rhythmical vibrations of the sheaths of the worshipper but there form the image of the *Devata* appears.

Mantrasidda is the ability to make a Mantra efficacious and to gather its fruit, in which case the *Sadhak* is *Mantrasidda*. "Whatever the *Sadhak* desires that he surely obtains" .whilst therefore prayer may end in merely physical sound, Mantra is ever. When rightly said, a potent compelling force, a word of power effective to produce both material gain and accomplish worldly desires, as also to promote the four aims of sentient beings (*chaturvarga*), Advaitic knowledge, and knowledge, and liberation. And thus it is said that *Siddha* or success is the certain result of *Japa* or recitation of Mantra.

The mantra of the Lingayaths is “*Namha Shivaya*” and is called *Panchaxari* on account of its having five syllables. With Om () prefixed, it becomes *Shadaxarimantra*. The mantra is expressive of Shiva and on that account is identical with Shiva, just as a predicate is identical with the subject.

Parashiva, the *Parabrahman*, is the source of all *Tattvas*. The two letters “Shiva”, including and express all the *Tattavs*. Moreover Shiva is *Vedavedantasar* that is, the Highest Spiritual principle and the pith that the Vedas and *Vedangas*. The Highest Principle and the devotee’s devotion to it are needed. The Mantra containing the devotee (*Istadevata*) also expresses the identity of the Jiva or *Anga* (the devotee); this identity is the ultimate goal of the *Anga*.

Thus *Namha* expresses *Anga*, that humbly surrenders itself by his salutation to Shiva, the *Devata* (*Istadevata*), and *Aya* expresses the *Samarassya* or essential identity of Shiva and leads Jiva to the ultimate end. The *Mantrajaya*, therefore, leads to the development of *Jiva’s* Power within him and to the gradual expansion of his soul, which in the end restores the *Anga* to its expresses the Pentads that constitute the *Samsar*.

The practice of the Mantra leads to salvation of Moksha. With *Om* prefixed to it the mantra becomes *Shadakshar* mantra (of six syllables). *Om* is *Pranava* and expresses *Parashiva*. *Om* is made up of a, u, m’ and the three express the trinity of powers (*Ichha, Jnana, Kriya*), which are in turn identical with *Satt, Chitt* and *Anand*, The three positive qualities of *Parabrahman* according to Vedanta. The three powers are the three creative energies. The energy (*Nada*) in *Sadakhataiva* springs from Shiva-*Shakti-Tattava* and solidifies itself (*Ghnibhavati*) as the creative power of the Lord (*Bindu* or *IshavarTattva*) manifesting in the trinity of creative energies. *Om* then stands for the most general aspect of what which is the source of all, namely *Parashiva*.

The *Panchakshari Mantra* (*Namha Shivaya*) is but an extended form of *Om*, i.e. *Om* elaborates or explicates itself in the form of “*Namha Shivaya*.”

Thus *Om* and *Namha Shivaya* are one and the same and express *Parashiva*. The six syllables of the mantra (*namha Shivaya Om*) are identical with the six *Linga’s* and six *Chakras*. Thus Na is *Acharalinga* in the *Swadhishtanachakra*, Shi is

Shivalinga in the *Manipurchakra*; *Va* is *Charalinga* in the *Anahatachakra*; *Ya* is *Prasadalinga* in the *Vishuddhichakra*; and lastly *Om* is *Mahalinga* in the *Ajnachakra*.

The *Bijamantra* rouses the *Shaktis* in the form of the Six *Kala*s of the *Shakti*. The *Kala*'s thus roused ultimately develop into primeval Power of *Parashiva* and 'at-one-ment' or *Samarasya* is the result. Hence the practice of Mantra is laid down for the attainment of Moksha. The practice of Mantra is said to be superior to the practices laid down by *Varnashramadharma*.

The *Mantrayoga* of the Lingayathism, which rejecting other mantra of the *Shakta* religion, lays great store by the only Mantra, by the practice of which the highest end of the human beings, the Moksha, is attained. By the practice of different *Shakta* Mantras a variety kind of success (*Siddhi*) is attained. But such *Siddi* feeds the human vanity and is very likely to deflect the practitioner from the straight forward course and the main objective of Moksha. The variety of Success is very likely to lead the human beings into the abuse of the power attained. Hence, to avoid that likelihood, the Lingayaths have retained the only one mantra which enables the devotee to achieve the expansion of the self into ultimate 'at-one-ment' with *Parashiva* of Linga, called *Lingangasamarasya*.

3.4.3. *Panchachara*

The direction of the human beings in society is largely by imitation and suggestion which are psychological in their operation. An extended form of imitation and suggestion is the adoption of local, social or religious customs. The *Panchachara* are intended to convey to the members of the community the principles of religion and religious conduct by these two psychological operations. These *Panchachara* or five codes of conduct lay down for the individual member's rules of behavior as social beings. They are *Shivachara*, *Lingachara*, *Sadachara*, *Bhrutyachara* and *Ganachara*. The first two *Shivachara* and *Lingachara* are purely personal and but reject on other individuals of the community in their intercourse everyday (Sakhare, M. R, 2004:515-518).

a. *Shivachara*:

Shivachara requires a *Lingayath* to believe that *Shiva* is the *Parabrahman*. The devotee (*Anga*) has to maintain all through his life the faith and belief that *Shiva* is the only God and only object of *Upasana*. Whatever devotional acts he performs, prayers

he offers, and thoughts he thinks they must be all about *Shiva* and none else. This is *Shivachara*.

b. *Lingachara*:

Lingachara is the worship of *Shiva* through *Linga*, the amorphous representation or symbol of *Shiva*. The worship of *Linga* is the worship of *Shiva*. The worship of *Linga* (*Istalinga*), the gross or physical, is the beginning of daily religious observances, prayers and contemplation, growing into the worship of the higher modifications of *Shiva*, namely, *Pranalinga* and *Bhavalinga*. *Linga*, the *Istalinga*, is the Godhead of the *Anga*, the devotee, who should remain faithful to *Linga* and serve him faithfully, thought his life, this is *Lingachara*.

c. *Sadachara*:

Sadachara requires a *Lingayath* to follow a profession and live strictly a moral and virtuous life. He should earn money by working in his profession for his livelihood and for supporting his family. He should utilize his savings and surplus for others in their needs. He should furnish his *Guru* with funds for the propagation of religion and service of the public. He should feed *Jangamas*; the *Jivanmuktas* moving about over the country in the service of religion and to help individual devotees by guiding them in their religious practices, By *Sadachara* the members are required to make no difference between one *Lingayath* and another but should take all to be as respectable and good as *Shiva*. He should interdine and intermarry freely; with *Lingayaths*. Character, right moral and religious conduct, should be the only criterion and consideration in the intercourse with other members of the community; and nothing else like a high or low profession should, influence affairs of social life. This is *Sadachara*.

d. *Bhrutyachara*:

Bhrutyachara is the devotee's attitude of complete humility towards *Shiva* and His forms of *Linga*. So also, he has to maintain the attitude of humility towards his *Guru*, who gives him all guidance in spiritual discipline and religious practices. Similarly the *Jangama*'s, the *Jivanmukta* s, and *Shivasharanas* should be treated with all respect and all humility. A *Lingayath* has to adopt the attitude of service and modesty towards all *Lingayaths* as children and followers of the same God. *Shiva* or *Linga* and the same religion. In short, the attitude in general of a *Lingayath* in social

behavior and intercourse should be one of humility, modesty and respect for others; so also he should be kind to all animals and treat them kindly. This is Bhruthyachara. The conduct of a *Lingayath* is as a servant of the society and friend of all animals.

e. Ganachara:

Ganachara is *Lingayath*'s behavior, towards the community as a whole. He should not tolerate scandal of the Godhead and ill-treatment of men and animals by others. As a member of community, he has to strive for its upliftment and development.

The short description of Panchacharas will make it clear how they are intended to cultivate the attitude of devotion and godliness, Universal brotherhood and cooperation between members of the community, and honest life and kindness towards animal world.

3.4.4. *Shatasthala*

The word *Shatasthala* is derived from “*Shat* means six and ‘*sthala* which means stage. The latter in the philosophical context means God. What is currently being practiced by ardent *Lingayaths* was expounded, propounded and systematized some 800 years ago by the *Lingayathism* saints. The practice of path enables one to achieve one's final goal of eternal union of the *Anga* (body) with the *Linga* (God). The *Shatasthala* is not just a lofty religious principle but a path, which permits one to accomplish life's ultimate goal. There is a close relationship between *Shiva*, the human being and the world. A *Bhakta* becomes *Shiva* by breaking the bondage created by ignorance, as accrued by unrighteous deeds and desires. The *Shatsthala* occupies premier position in the religion. The 12th century *Sharanas* practiced it perfectly. It is considered to be the brain child of Channabasava, who was entrusted by Basava with the responsibility and the task of expanding, expounding and explaining the *Shatsthala* path to the laity. It should be noted here that *Kamiagama*, the first of the *Shivagamas*, mentions the terms *Veerashaiva* and *Istalinga*. Both the *Kiranagama* and the *Yogajagama* state that a person without the *Istalinga* becomes unfit to receive the *Prasada* (consecrated food offering to God). The *Vatalagama*, the *Veeragama* and the *Parameshwaragama* provide detailed descriptions of the *Shatsthala* path. It begins by explaining that, an aspirant must have *Shivabhakti* in his/her heart (Munavalli S. 2002: Pp111-113).

a. Bhaktasthala:

Bhaktasthala involves the worship of *Guru*, *Linga* and *Jangama*. When one understands the true meaning of this *Sthala*, one conceives the true meaning of the trinity of *Guru*, *Linga* and *Jangama*. Through this *Sthala* one becomes free from the desires of the body and mind and becomes a *Bhakta* by virtue of his/her belief in *Shiva*.

b. Maheshasthala:

Maheshasthala involves the actual practice of the above concept, which enables to lose the desire for material wealth, not coveting and not longing for unrighteous sensual pleasures. The belief in *Shiva* becomes an unflinching faith through the observance of *Maheshasthala*.

c. Prasaadisthala:

Prasaadisthala states that all things in this world are gifts of *Shiva* and whatever human receives as God's gifts must be returned to him through the intermediacy of the *Jangama*, who represents *Shiva*. Since the seeker offers back the gifts from *Shiva*, this is considered to be the *Prasaadisthala*.

d. Pranalingisthala:

Pranalingisthala makes one aware of the inner being. Here the seeker comes to believe that the *Linga* is the *Jangama* and all actions are transformed into prayers. When one steadfastly practices this *Sthala*, one forgets one's body and mind begins to see and feel the presence of the inner voice, while reaching a state of self-enlightenment through personal experience.

e. Sharanasthala:

Sharanasthala endows an individual with the feeling and knowledge of God's presence in his/her own soul and begins a direct dialogue with *Shiva*. This sublime feeling enables the seeker to see *Shiva* within himself/herself and in every other human being. The soul becomes filled with *Shiva-Jnan*, *Shiva-Bhakti* and *Shiva-worship*. Every thing becomes *Shivamaya* (filled with *Shiva's* presence, and not *Maya* of illusion). At this stage one does not falter; one is self-sustained and self-aware of *Shiva's* Grace.

f. Aikyasthala:

Aikyasthala forms the final stage, which permits a *Lingayath* to fulfill her/his life's destiny. It is the culmination of the sublime achievement. One is at peace from within and without. His/her soul is filled with heavenly bliss. There are no desires and no wants. There is just the Supreme *Shiva* beckoning the soul to come and embrace Him.

3.4.5. *Worship of Linga*

Shivalinga, the amorphous representation of *Shiva*, is the image of *Shiva* based on the inner meaning. The *Linga* worn on the body, technically called *Istalinga*, is the miniature of *Stavaralinga* worshipped in temples. It is made of light gray slate stone obtained from *Parvatgiri* in the North arcot. To be kept intact all through the wearer's life, it is coated all over with fine durable thick black paste of cow dung ash mixed with some suitable oil. Sometimes it is made of ashes mixed with clarified butter. The coating is called "*Kanti*" or covering. The question arises whether the *Istalinga* is as much an image as a *Stavarlinga* and its worship is as much image worship as that of a *Stavaralinga*. The suspicion of the worship of *Istalinga* being image worship is likely to be supported by the worship by *Lingayaths* of image at home of particular family deities, which vary according to local customs and prevalence of local deities, male or female, more generally male deities. The answer to the question, whether *Istalinga* is an image and its worship is image worship, is an emphatic no. *Istalinga* is not image or *Prateeka* of *Shiva* and worship is not *Pratikopasana*. It is *Shiva* himself and its worship *Aahamgrahopasana*. *Daharopasana* is not the *Manasopasana* of the *Prateek* of *Parabhrman* but is the *Upasna* of the *Hridayantarvartilinga*, the *Jyotirlinga* or *Pranalinga* worn or borne in the heart, i.e., residing in the heart. The *Upasana* of the devotee is the *Aahamgrahopasana* of *Parashiva*. The *Istalinga* or the *Linga* in its gross form is *Parashiva* himself; and the *Upasak*, who is the microcosm of the macrocosmic soul, is brought face to face with *Parashiva*, the *Upasnyadevata*, by *Aahamgrahopasana*. In the *Pratikopasana*, on the other hand, the *Upasnyadevata* is not face to face with the *Upasak* or the devotee. It is merely the representative or image of the devata that is worshiped. In the scheme of *Shatssthal* philosophy of *Lingayat* religion, the *Linga* (*SugunaShiva*) and *Anga* (the devotee of a human being) are only the twofold manifestations of *Parashiva*, the *NirgunShiv*, in his sportive activity called *Upasnyopasakaleela*.

This *Linga* is the *upassya* form and *anga* is the *upasak* form of *parashiva*. Similarly *parashakti*; becomes to fold, *kala* associated with *Linga* and *Bhakti* associated with *anga* or the individual soul. In this way *Anga* with *Bhakti* is the smallest possible model or the very abridged form of *Shiva* and his *Shakti*. The *Upasana* is, therefore, *Ahamgrahopasana*, because the *Linga* and *Anga* are not one and the same. *Linga* is three fold 1) *Bhavalinga* or *Linga* the ideal corresponding to (*Karanasharir*) of the devotee 2) *Pranlinga* or *Linga* the vital or mental corresponding to (*Sukshma sharer*) of the devotee 3) *Istalinga* or the gross or physical corresponding to (*stulsharir*) of the devotee. *Istalinga* is connected with the *Pranalinga* and the *Bhavalinga*. The devotee starts with the upasana of *Istalinga* and reaches by stages the *Pranalinga* and the *Bhavalinga* with the idea of him being a part and parcel of *Parashiva*. *Istalinga*, therefore, not being an image but is *Shiva* Himself.

Such a kind of upasana or mode of worship is called *Sahmarga* based on the *Yogavidya* of the *Divvyagamas* or the Divine Shaiva scripture. This corresponds to the remaining three modes of worship based on the remaining three Padas of the *Agamas*, the *achryapada*, the *Kriyapada*, and the *Jnanapada*. They are respectively called the *Dasmarga*, the *Satputramarga*, and the *sanmarga*.

The *Dasamarg*, or the path of servant following the master, is the disciple of the charyapada. It consists in the search of Lord in the objective *Prapanch* and has for its object the disposition of the ancillaries connected with this worship under the form of a material Prateek, the singing of his glorious ever and anon and the extensions of *Aathitya* (honor and hospitality) to his genuine servants. The *satputramarga* of the path of son serving the will of his father takes a higher step of worshipping the Lord under a mental prateek formed in mind in accordance with the description in the *Kriyapada* of the Divine *Agamas*. In this stage the rites signficatory of the purification of *Sthulasharir* (Physical body) of the worshipper and the symbolical and mental imaging of the *Sukshma Sharir* of the same are added on to the externals connected with worship of the Lord under a material Prateek. The worshipper behaves towards the Lord as a son does towards his father with a combination of reverence and affection. The *Sahamarg* that is contemplated by *Lingayathism* is pure subjective worship of the Lord. Here the Jiva is slowly disentangled from the lusts of flesh and its bondage to corruption and joined on to the Lord. The Jiva is taught to discern for itself, that its inveterate identification of its own self with the vrittis of *Chitta* and

Indriyas is due to an inherited *Vasana*, and that its own station is in the Lord, in whom it lives, moves and has its being. For achieving this end, the whole of the *Yogapadas* of the *Agamas* is devoted and their practical bearing on the daily conduct of the search after God, is fully brought. Here the worshipper behaves towards Lord as an associate or a friend. Lastly the *Sanmarg*, the highest mode of worship, is the final step or stage of the *Veerashaiva* devotee, in which the subjective worship of the lord is further inculcated in spirit and in truth for attaining to the condition of *Sayujya* or *Samrassya*, in which condition the sense of triputi ceases to operate, the subject and object became indistinguishable, and the Lord alone is seen in place of His *prapancha* that we all see. This is the *Jnanmarga* where the devotee becomes possessed of *Sahajsamadhi*. The *charya* and *Kriya* disciplines are temporary or *vavharik* and *Yoga* and *Jnaan* disciplines are real and *Parmarthik*. The *sahamarg* is a stage preparatory to the *sanmarga*, in which the objective conduct of the worshipper in *sahmarg* is eliminated. In the *Sahamarg* the worshipper starts with the idea of being similar (*swarup*) to the lord and attains *saruppya* which by the *sanmarga* expands into *Saujjya* or *Lingangasamarassya*, as it is called technically in *Lingayathism*. Hence the *Istalinga* is not the prateek of Lord but the Lord himself and its worship is not that of prateek or image worship.

So far as the image-worship at home of *Lingayatas* is concerned, it has no scriptural sanction behind it. It is merely an imitation of the image worship of the other Hindus which is universal in India. It is certainly an imitation by the *Lingayaths* (Sakhare, M. R, 2004: 329-333).

The *Lingayaths*, as religious beings, start with *Linga* and end with *Linga* and therefore they are *Lingayaths* and not merely because they wear *Linga* on their bodies. To a *Lingayathism*, *Linga* is the highest reality capable of being realized through devotional worship and meditation. The conception of *Linga*, as the representation of the thought, symbol of the formless or the all-formed Almighty, is lofty and edifying, and there is no trace of either superstition or any impure and dirty idea attached to it.

3.4.6. Kayaka and Dashooaha

Principles of *Kayaka* and *Dashooaha* Another very important feature of Basaveshwara philosophy is that he sought to bring about socio-economic equality in the society through his famous twin principles of *Kayaka* and *Dashooaha*. *Kayaka* is

regarded as an important means for the removal of all inequalities—economic, social, religious and spiritual. Basaveshvara gave a concrete meaning to the conception of work or occupation in the form of *Kayaka*. He gave it a spiritual significance, high honor, great importance, dignity and divinity, whether it was a high or low work (Patil. J. S. 2005).

Kayaka is a spiritual view of labor and not merely a materialistic view. According to *Kayaka* man has to sublimate into spiritual motive. Sharana says “work is heaven”. “*Kayakave Kailasha*”. Every labour is looked upon by Sharana with high honor, dignity and spiritual significance. *Kayaka* doesn't encourage massing wealth or hoarding of money. It is motivated by profit. *Kayaka* is to be done in the spirit of Dashooaha. The earning from *Kayaka* is to be dedicated to the preacher or *Jangama* who in turn utilizes it for the good of the society. *Kayaka* is a duty by which each one has to maintain oneself, and render its proceeds to the welfare of all. This is the comprehensive view of *Kayaka* (Javali.V.K, 2004:139-144).

The democratic principle of freedom of occupation is embodied in *Kayaka*. The *Karma* theory which has given rise to Caste system in society is opposed to this principle. It dictates that each man's occupation is pre-determined by birth. It says that man has no freedom to choose any vocation he likes and no freedom to think and act as he likes. The protagonist of the *Karma* theory advocate that one has to follow the hereditary profession; that a farmer's son should become a farmer, a barber's on a barber, a preacher's son a preacher and so on. Basaveshwara revolted against this. He advocated freedom of occupation and dignity of labor. This is crystallized in *Kayaka*. Basavshwara says emphatically that he does not want to ask what *Kayaka* one is following. He condemns vehemently any discrimination on the basis of birth, sex or occupation. He considers *Karma* as an “impurity” (or *Mala*). The history of India reveals that the *Karma* theory has hampered the progress of society and has caused economic stagnation. The *Kayaka* theory on the other hand supports the progressive view of the society and the development of national economy. Begging and idleness have no place in the *Kayaka* system of society. *Kayaka* and Dashooaha emphasize self-denial and charity. *Kayaka*, according to Basaveshwara means, every one should be engaged in his work and it should be beneficial to the society. He stressed that one should be honest and sincere towards one's work. Hence, according to Basaveshwara's principle of *Kayaka* all occupations are equal, have equal dignity and

are equally beneficial to the society Basaveshwara was a practical philosopher. He made a signal contribution to practical philosophy through his concept of *Kayaka* interestingly enough; this concept is almost totally in conformity with the modern democratic principles and socialism. Its goal is equitable distribution of wealth and work. In the *Kayaka* system of society every body works according to his capacity.

Thus, a person's position or status in society should be determined on the basis of his acts and character and not on the basis of his possession. A dustman has a different job from a schoolmaster and is likely to have a different circle of friends; but he ought not to be considered to be an inferior sort of man.

Basaveshwara's principle of *Kayaka* was quite opposed to the theory of *Karma*, which indicates that each man's vocation is pre-determined by birth. *Kayaka* concept opposes the kind of water-tight compartment of laborers which creates a system of hierarchy; it pleads for the free choice of occupation and thereby puts a death blow to the unequal division of laborers by the *Karma* theory.

As per the principle of *Dashooha*, since every one earns his minimum requirement through *Kayaka* he contributes the rest of his labour to the society rather than accumulating personal wealth. Therefore, *Kayaka* does not encourage the amassing of wealth; it is to be done in the spirit of *Dashooha*, which will bring to an end all kinds of exploitations and disparities of wealth. Thus, Basaveshvara enunciated not merely political equality; but also social, political, economic, religious and spiritual. The inequality, which he lamented, was not the inequality of personal endowments, but of the social, economic, religious and spiritual practices which created inequality and came in the way of development of individual personality. He went to the very roots of the state of nature in attacking the inequality created by human beings. As human beings are equal by nature in their wisdom and virtues, that should be maintained.

3.4.7. *Anubhava Mantapa*

Unlike any other religion *Lingayathism* was constitutionalized in a unique manner. In the historical development of religions, we usually see a prophet or a founder preaching a religion that is carried on through oral preaching's which are later systematized and given a proper shape after a gap. *Lingayathism* was systematized hand in hand with its origin, or to express it more clearly, it was first systematized and

later conveyed to the common masses. The reformatory and prophetic *Lingayath* religion was systematized in an academy called “Anubhava Mantapa” which was established in 1140 A. D, at the city of Kalyana.

The house of religious experiences. Anubhava Mantapa is the unique contribution Basaveshwara. This institution attracted seekers of truth so quickly that people from all castes, various occupations, and of different ranks gathered round nucleus. This rare but monumental institution, also called Mahamane, Great House, contributed a vast quantity of mystic literature and a galaxy of seven hundred and seventy saints, together with thousands of followers within a short span of time. Among this constellation three hundred were writers, and sixty ladies were great saints, thirty of these produced a vast quantity of literature.

Many problems concerning the individuals and society were discussed in that assembly. When we go through the dialogues of Anubhava Mantapa we are surprised to see the first idea of a parliament generating in the history of mankind. Prabhudeva, a great Yogi of extraordinary achievement, was the president and Lord Basava acted as the prime minister. Chennabasava can be compared to the speaker while at the same time working as the editor, and compiler of *Vachana* literature. The only difference between the present day parliament and Anubhava Mantapa is that the members were not elected by the people, but were picked up or nominated by the higher authorities of the Mantapa; the necessary qualification expected being spiritual attainment. The problems tackled were of a various nature covering social, religious, spiritual, yogic psychological, economic and literary spheres.

Members of the Mantapa and followers of the religion were given full freedom of thought, speech and action. They were allowed to put any questions or doubts to get them cleared in front of the congregation and a systematic program was launched to record and to preserve the dialogues that were going on in the House. These discussions reminisced us of Dialogues of Plato, the great Greek philosopher. But they differ from the later in being characterized by a high type of mystic experience. As silent documents we can see even today the caves cut out of the brittle stony hillocks, in and around the city of Kalyana. These mystics used to retire for the purpose of intense meditation. Mantapa can be called as Experimental Station where these mystic-scientists were engaged in finding out solutions for various problems of life, both spiritual as well as mundane.

The influence of the House of religious experience on society was immense, due to its multifarious attractions. The rational approach of the institution, and its simple as well as lucid way of communication, overcame the polytheistic and blind beliefs, which existed in the Hindu mind. The new approach, which was pragmatic, practical and realistic and the new concepts of God, soul, salvation etc were sowed in the minds of the common mass through community preaching. A direct method of worship and meditation without the intervention of any priest introduced a tremendous change in society along with an increase in the number of mystics. When the iron curtain of priests and temple craft which had stood between a sincere aspirants and God was cut, genuine seekers after religion were attached more and more towards religious values.

Mystic-philosophers of *Anubhava Mantapa* had no intention of withdrawing from society, from mundane problems, or from their worldly responsibilities, but tried instead to make their mortal life a means for salvation. That is why among the many rules of Anubhava Mantapa the first and a compulsory one was to take up a specific occupation. A person disinterested in '*Kayaka*' or profession would lose the privilege of obtaining membership of the academy. The idea behind this rule was that everybody's bread should be earned by the sweat of his own labour and he should neither become a parasite on nor an exploiter of society. We see in the literary record of Anubhava Mantapa the arrival of a great king Mahadeva Bhoopal from Kashmir, who renounced his kingdom, after being fascinated by Basava's philosophy. To secure membership of the House he had to take up the profession of wood-cutting.

Equal treatment was give to all the members of the Mantapa without any distinction of grade or caste. Haralayya, a shoemaker, was treated as equally and as nobly as Madarasa, a minister. Kakkayya, an untouchable, was equally respected, some times even more, than the Madhuvarasa who was a Brahmin by birth. Prabhudeva, the chairman of Anubhava Mantapa and a great yogi, was from the caste of "Natuvaras" who were considered as Sudras and lower castes in traditional Hindu society. He was installed as the first 'Adhikari' to the pontifical religious seat, Sunya Simhasana or the chair of perfection. He became the first Pope of *Lingayath Virakta* tradition or the traditions of ascetics. This challenge was a thunder bolt for the age old rigid caste system and a unique achievement of Anubhava Mantapa, which declared that.

The people of high caste, with their vested interests tried to impose on the ignorant masses the idea that the former are the issues of meritorious ancestry and that the latter are of sinful birth. Owing to their ignorance the low-castes and untouchables laboured under the delusion that they were born to be slaves because of the sins committed during and inherited from their past births. They believed that to strive to improve their miserable plight was a heinous sin, and that to live where and as they lived was their life's purpose as well as its fulfillment. There was a dire need to lift the evil of such illusions of inferiority. That is why, in order to brain wash this assimilated belief, Basava preached; "You too are human beings harboring the divine spark within you. You have every right to live as men and women in all respects equal to any one else, and the right to achieve saintliness and redemption". A sincere effort was launched to free both the high castes and the low castes from their respective superiority and inferiority complexes.

Anubhava Mantapa criticized sharply the meaningless differentiation of human beings as high or low either on their birth or on their occupation.

Unique preaching's of equality charged with the acceptance of the parenthood of god and the fraternity of humanity fascinated the tortured minds and consoled the gasping hearts of the oppressed and distressed masses. The burning zeal of Basava to place religion on a democratic basis, his passionate love for God and his untiring energy in serving humanity added to the glory of Anubhava Mantapa.

Within a short span of time, the academy became well known all over the four corners of India, and even beyond her border to Afghanistan and Ceylon. Seekers of the truth from Kashmir to Ceylon, and from Afghanistan to Bengal flocked towards Kalyana. Marulu shankaradeva, a silent aspirant of the Mantapa is thought to be a convert from Sufism; and Singalada Siddabasavideva who wrote a commentary on the *Vachanas* of Basava was from Ceylon. The galaxies of saints were divided into three 1) *Avatarika Guru* 2) *SiddaGuru* and 3) *Sadhaka Guru*. Basava, believed to be the Avatarika, Primal *Guru* and founder of the Faith. Three great saints Prabhudeva, Chennabasava, Siddarama and the woman saint Akkamahadevi were sturdy pillars of the institutions, and were placed in the Siddaguru. Many other hundreds of great saints, who acted as different organs of the system were classified in the category of *Sadhaka Gurus*.

This missionary system introduced into society by the Anubhava Mantapa acted as a successful means of communication to inculcate the progressive ideas of *Lingayathism* and to enliven the spiritual urge hidden in the self of man. We hear from many literary sources of *Lingayathism* that these *Jangamas* traveled to far away places like Kashmir, Nepal etc, and attracted thinkers and sincere aspirants of truth towards the Kingdom of God. Thus due to its humanistic and compassionate outlook towards society and specially towards downtrodden people, Anubhava Mantapa became a spiritual power-house of that time ; it set on fire in many a clod soul and introduced a miraculous change in their lives. Stirring the minds of many sinful men and women it metamorphosised them into saints of an extraordinary caliber.

A point needs to be made clear before ending this issue. The *Lingayath* religion, being reformatory in its out-looking was more progressive than aggressive. It placed more emphasis on evolution by tergiversation or change of mind rather than on sanguinary revolution. So it is not to say that Basaveshwara and his followers were imbued with an antagonistic spirit towards any other community. But as, Rev. N. C. Sargent aptly says, “Basava’s aim was not to oppose or propose any religious or philosophical system; but to show people the existing social and religious evils and, if possible, to remove these evils from society”.

This institution is unique in several respects. In the history of spiritual movements in the world there is no other example, except that of Basava, where a founder of a faith or a reformist has adopted the democratic method of meeting together for discussing and for laying down the path of spiritual advancement and social reconstruction based on free thinking. Almost all the renowned teachers of the various countries in the world moved from place to place to preach their gospel or to interpret the earlier scriptures. Basava adopted a new method. He did not renounce life like Buddha nor did he move from place to place preaching the gospel. He did not write his commentaries like Sankara on old scriptures. He was a free thinker and led a host of people to think freely like him. The members of Anubhava Mantapa who participated in its deliberations followed various *Kayaka*’s or occupations. The deliberations and discussions took places in Kannada. They have been recorded in the form of *Vachana*’s. Each saying or *Vachana* is a self-contained unit and is a free expression of the Sharanas on spiritual, ethical or economic subject.

The fundamental principles accepted by Basava and the other Sharanas of the Anubhava Mantapa may be summarized as follows:

All are equal; No man is high or low either by birth, sex or occupation. Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution. Each one should follow a profession of his own choice. All *Kayaka*'s are honorable professions. No *Kayaka* is either low or high. *Varnas* (or castes) and *Ashrams* (or stages) are to be discarded. Renunciation and dwelling in forest are ruled out as cowardly tendencies to escape from life. Inter-group marriages and free dining should be encouraged. Untouchability has no place in the society. Every man is free to think on all spiritual and social subjects. Reason and experience are the only guiding lights for free thinking and spiritual advancement. Language of the people should be the medium for imparting spiritual and secular education. All men have equal rights to participate in spiritual discussions, to acquire spiritual knowledge and follow the same path of self evolution (Javali, V. K, 2004: 139-144).

Equality and eradication of Untouchability

Basaveshwara led a social and religious revolution in order to kill the demon of caste and creed, which had threatened to rule the destiny of human beings in India on the basis of irrational notions of *Karma* or destiny. Born in a Brahmin family, Basaveshwara set his own example by rejecting the ritual-ridden *Vedic* religion in favour of *Lingayathism*, an emerging vibrant religion having a great concern for the mankind as a whole including the ill treated, exploited and downtrodden classes of untouchables. Refusing to undergo the thread ceremony as per the Brahmin tradition, Basaveshwara championed the cause of the less privileged and led a revolution at the grass-root level. His revolution rallied around the low-cast people and created in them an awareness about the importance of their role in building the new community transcending the barriers of caste and establishing equality of social status and providing opportunities to blossom themselves out in all spheres of human life. He regarded all humans including the highborn priest and the lowborn untouchable as equal and gave them equal opportunities to work for their own salvation as well as for the welfare of others in the community. Basaveshwara's message to mankind was that religion and society are nobody's private properties and that all individuals are equal in the eyes of God and that they should be treated with equal justice and honor (Patil. J. S. 2005).

One of the most popular *Vachanas* of Basaveshvara, which gives a good impression of the close connection between social values and spirituality, is a situation of everyday life as narrated by him is as follows: “O Lord, let them not say; to whom belongs he, to whom, to whom? Let them say: he is ours, yes ours, ours! O Lord Kudala Sangama, Let them say: a son of your house!”¹⁸ In this *Vachana* Basaveshvara says that we should not question the people as to who they are. We should consider everyone as our own person. Every human being is a son of God and therefore he is our own man. Basaveshvara does not want even a stranger to be respected on the basis of his background, his family or caste, but he hopes to be admitted into the new circle of people who share the same spiritual heritage. This idea of universal brotherhood preached by Basaveshvara is in a way similar to the Hindu philosophy of *Vasudaivakutumbakam* under which entire mankind of the world is considered as one family. Basaveshvara works out the theme of the meaningless traditional divisions in contrast to the only real difference between people, which he sees in their attitude towards devotion. He says “I shall call all devotees of Siva equal, from *Brahmana* at one end, to the lowest-born man at the other end; I shall call all unbelievers equal, from the *Brahmana* at one end, to the untouchable at the other end; this is what my heart believes! In saying this—should I have any doubt.”¹⁹

Here Basaveshvara explicitly refers to caste stratification, with *Brahmana* at the top and the low caste untouchable at the bottom, which has lost this meaning among the devotees of Lord Siva. In this way, the traditional division of the people into various castes is completely rejected. He rationally explains away the traditional caste divisions by adopting the most scientific method in the following *Vachana*: “The fetal seed cannot be implanted in the womb, except after menstrual flow. The function of semen-drops is ever the same; lust, greed, anger, joy and all other passions, are the same. One might read the sacred books, and hear the preaching of the sacred word; but what is the proof of one’s high birth? The embryo is formed of the seven elements. It has the same birth in the same womb. The alliance of self and

¹⁸ Evanarava, evanarava, evanaravanendenisdirayya. eva nammava, eva nammava evanammavanendenisayya. Kudalasanganaama deva, nemma maneya mganendenisayya. SVS1/62

¹⁹ Deva, deva binnha avadharu;, vipr modalu, antyaja kadeyagi, shivabhaktaradavaranelanonde embe. Haruva modalu, shvapacha kadeyagi, bhaviyadavaranelanonde embe. Hingendu namubudenna mana. E nudiylage ella moneyashtu sandehaullade, haliudore muga koyyi. Kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/711

soul is ever the same. When born in the same way, all are one; none superior, none inferior. What is the usefulness of caste, that discriminates between human beings? As it is so, one became a blacksmith by heating iron; one became a washer man by washing clothes; one became a weaver by weaving cloth; one became a Haruva by reading the *Vedas*! Did anyone ever born through the ear? Therefore, one who knows the secret of the *Linga*, alone is well-born,”²⁰

Thus, all are born out of the same womb, whether they are of high-caste or untouchables and the soul is the same in all of them. Therefore, caste discriminations are of no use. Castes are nothing but occupational and functional groupings. On the basis of this idea, Basaveshvara rejected traditional classification of people into castes, but another division between devotees and worldlings that remains is no less strict than the old one. There are a few *Vachanas* in which Basaveshvara transcends all divisions. For example, he says that the earth on which all of us dwell is the same; and the water used for rites and other routine purposes is the same; hence there cannot be any person who can be condemned as an untouchable.²¹

In this way, Basaveshvara uproots the conservative Indian understanding that the temple is ritually pure and the settlement of the untouchables a polluted place and must be avoided from ritual point of view. The temple is centrally situated, whereas the untouchables have their quarters outside the village or town. But the temple and the untouchables' settlement are both built upon the same earth, and in this image Basaveshvara connects both extremes of the purity scale. Further, he laments that it is the devotion of the devotee to Lord Siva that makes any place pure and significant and not by its ritualistic symbol.

Symbolism of *Linga* is related by Basaveshwara to his egalitarian social views. The effect of *Linga* worship means a drastic change in social circumstances. The message of the *Vachana* is very clear: because of the divine presence in the *Linga*

²⁰ Hologandallade pindada nelegashrayavilla, jala-binduvin vfyavaharvonde, Asheyamisharoshaharusha vishayadiglella vonde.enanodi, ena keli, enu phala? Kulajanembudakkavudu drashta?, saptadhatusamamo pindam samyonisamudbhavam. Atmajivasamayuktam varnananum kim prayojanam eMdodagi, kasi kammaranada, bisi mwivalnada, hasnikki saliganada, vedavanodi haruvnad, karnadlli janisidavrunte jagadolage? Edu karana kudalasangamadeva, lingastahalavanaridavanekulajanu. SVS1/ 590

²¹ Nelanonde:holgeri Shivalayakke, jalvonde: shauchachamanakke, kulvonde: tnna tAnridvNge, phalvonde: shadusrushana muktige, niluvonde: kudalasangamadeva, nimfminaridavange. SVS1/ 879

even the community of the untouchables can be elevated to the higher level. Just as the *Linga* can have an upgrading function for the untouchables, the reverse is also true and this is made evident by Basaveshvara in a metaphoric way when he says “What kind of man he might be, without the touch of *Linga* he is of inferior caste. But with the touch of *Linga* he gains a background, like the touch of the philosophers, Stone does change into gold. The Lord Kudala Sangama does not like those, who have all kinds of doubts about this.”²²

The concept of *Linga* dispels all ritual purity and impurity. This is a revolutionary idea that could not even be thought by ordinary human beings at that point of time in 12th century when it was practically implemented by Basaveshvara. He brings out this revolutionary idea in a very lucid manner in the following *Vachana*: “Can there be impurity, where the *Linga* is? Can there be discrimination of caste? Where the *Jangama* is? Can *Prasada* be defiled, if it is tasted by the devotee, before offering it to *Jangama*? The impurity of unholy utterance is sin. None else but Lord Kudalasanga’s devotees have achieved the consummation of the triple unity.”²³

Basaveshwara’s concepts of *Linga*, *Jangama* and *Prasada* clearly established the ineffectiveness and insignificance of pollution of caste, which made it possible for people of all castes to join *Veerashaiva* community. Wherever *Jangama* resides there shall not be any kind of discrimination based on caste. Tasting it before being served does not spoil food in terms of *Prasada* to be offered to *Jangama*. This is the way in which Basaveshvara filled rationality into the religious faith of *Lingayathism* and transformed it into a vibrant and socially relevant religion acceptable to everyone. Many people belonging to low-castes and untouchables were attracted by the teachings of Basaveshvara and joined his movement for establishment of casteless society.

Basaveshvara would not call any devotee of Siva by his caste, and never called himself by any caste. He would condemn the people including himself if it were to be an attempt to identify people on the basis of their caste. So he asked in a pungent way “Can I call Siriyala a tradesman, And Machayya a washer man? Can I call Kakkayya

²² Parusha muttida balika kabbunavagadu noda, linga muttida balika kuchittacharavagadu noda, kudalasangana sharanru anyavanariyargi. SVS1/137

²³ Lingadalli kathinavunte? Jangamadalli kulavunte? Prasadaadalli aruchiyun te? E trividhadalli bhavabhedhavanarasuvenu, kudalasangamadeva, dha(ra)vattalenna bhakti SVS1/286

a tanner, And Channayya a cobbler? And if I call myself a *Haruva*, Lord Kudalasangama will just laugh at me.”²⁴

Basaveshvara himself practiced first whatever he would preach others. To weed out the ideas of caste from the minds of the people he did not even hesitate a bit to identify himself as a relative of untouchables and felt proud of it. This point is made out by Basaveshvara on and again to root out the devil of caste from the minds of the people, which was so deep rooted in them. *Vachanas* narrating his relationship with the so-called low-caste people are abound and a few are narrated here to reveal the ideological base upon which his notion of secular society is built up. In a *Vachana* Basaveshvara narrates his relationship with the elders coming from the untouchable sector and pleads with the Lord about his identity on the basis of his relation with these people, in the following manner: “Our Madara Channayya is my father; Our Dohara Kakkayya is my elder uncle; Look, Chikkayya is my grand-father; Our Kinnara Bommayya is my brother; Then how do you not know me, O Lord Kudalasangama”²⁵

In this way, it is the low-caste people that constituted his family pedigree. During the period of Basaveshvara the high-caste people as a matter of right take low-caste people for illicit sexual relationships. The low-caste is always blamed as not having a good family background precisely because of this reason. To nullify this unfounded blameworthy attitude towards the low-caste people, Basaveshvara describes and eulogizes his new family ties in a piercing language in *Vachana* in the following way: “The boy of the servant in Channayya’s house, And the girl of the maid in Kakkayya’s house –, They went both to the field to gather dung, And then they made love. A child was born to them – that was me. Lord Kudala Sangama is the witness to this!”²⁶

²⁴ Settioyembene siriyalana? Madivalanembene machayyana? Doharanembene kakkayyana? Madarnenmbene chennayyana? Anu haruvnebdade kudalasangayya naguvanayya. SVS 1/345

²⁵ Appany namma madara chennayya, boppanu namma dohara kakkayya, chikkayyanemmayya kanayya, annanu namma kinnara bommayya, ennanetakkariyiri, kudalasangamadeva? SVS1/ 349

²⁶ Chennayyaana maneya dasana maganu, kakkayyana maneya dasiymaglu, evaribbaru holdalu bernige hogi sangavamadidaru. Evaribbarige huttida maga nanu. Kudalasangamadeva sakshiyagi. SVS1/346

There cannot be any other better way than this to castigate the people who insulted low-caste people for the sexual exploitation they are subjected to by the higher ups in the society. Basaveshvara calls himself a product of one such illicit relationship. More so the relationship is between the lowest of the lowest being the children of the servants in the houses of untouchables. There could not be any other fellow who can be described as inferior to a child born of such a relationship. By claiming his social status as of such condemnable type he opens the eyes of the people as to their mistakes in ill-treating the low-caste people. When jealous persons jeered at him saying that he had no roots in the new religion since he had no relations there, he boldly answered them in the following *Vachana*: “You can say I have no kin, why? Nimbavve is my mother: She lives by fetching water; Chennayya is my father: He fetches fodder for the royal stable. You say I have no kin, why? I have a sister who cooks at Kanchi, O Lord Kudala Sangama, I but receive through your hands, the devotion my ancestors have hoarded.”²⁷

Basaveshwara measured the worth of a man by his conduct and character and not by his caste. He used caste concept in a new sense in his moral teachings. A person is high-caste or low-caste not by birth but by his deeds. This can be seen in a series of *Vachanas* written by him

An untouchable is one who is involved in evil actions, hurts others and is bad he says, in his character. He who wishes good to others is a man of real caste.²⁸ Character is vehemently emphasized as the main consideration for a man to be described as of high or low status. Basaveshvara was unequivocal in praising those who were good in their character and deeds irrespective of the fact whether they were born in a high-caste or low-caste.

Madara Channayya, who was an untouchable by caste and about whom Basaveshvara had a very high regard as a great devotee of the Lord and whom he respected as his father, was also a great *Sharana* and has formulated a number of *Vachanas* reflecting the same ideas as those of Basaveshvara regarding the problem of

²⁷ Emma tayi nimbiyavve nirneranedumbalu, emmayya chennayya rayakampanava heruv, emage aru ellavembiri, emmakka kanchiyalli banasava maduvlu. Emage aruu ellavembiri, emma ajjara ajjaru hadeda bhaktiya nimma kayyalu kombe, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/352.

²⁸ Koluvvane madiga, hoalsu timbavane holeya. Kulaveno Avandira kulveno? Sakalajivatmarige lesane bayasuva, namma kudalasangana sharanare kulajaru. SVS1/591

untouchability. According to him, if one's word and action are in agreement, then he belongs to high caste. If they are not in agreement then such a person cannot be of high caste, right action signifies high caste and wrong action, low caste.

Another contemporary of Basaveshvara was in full praise of Prabhudeva, the presiding deity of Sunya Simhasana in Anubhava Mantapa, for his kindness in elevating the people belonging to the lower-caste. Dohara Kakkayya expresses his gratitude to Basaveshvara for his kindness and grace in elevating him from the ordinary plane to the higher plane of life. He praises Allama for touching him and sanctifying him from his divine touch. *Linga* is a divine instrument to adorn the body of every *Sharana* to elevate him from his low-status to higher-status. He narrates the thrilling experience of electrified change that takes place in his body by the touch of *Linga*. This is how the whole movement becomes the saga of wonderful experiences of elevation of everyone of them onto the same plane by same process of wearing of *Linga* irrespective of the caste or creed in which they were born. *Vachanas* of the above type indicate how these Sharanas redeemed themselves of the taints of caste, of body and mind, of senses, life and will, of ignorance and forgetfulness with the aid of Basavanna.

Basaveshvara as a spiritual physician felt and realised the need for preparing the minds and hearts of people for generating the spirit of emotional integration, eschewing artificially created caste barriers. He was fully convinced that the political stability, economic prosperity, social cohesion, and ideas on unity and equality could be achieved only through the spirit of emotional integration. He did not merely preach solutions to do away with the evils of caste system and practice of untouchability, but practiced them himself. He was convinced that the evil of untouchability can be erased out of the society by developing the practice of inter-dining and inter-marriage, which he started as an invincible movement and able to penetrate the minds of people to a great extent.

As regard to inter-dining, Basaveshvara himself used to visit the untouchables' colony and mix up with the people there. One day, while moving about in that area, Basaveshvara entered the house of an untouchable devotee named Kambaliya Nagideva and took his food. This matter was immediately reported to the king Bijjala that by his promiscuous intercourse with the untouchables, Basaveshvara is spilling disaster around. When reprimanded by the king for his reckless behaviour,

Basaveshvara stood firm and justified his conduct proclaiming that there was no difference between men and men or a low-born untouchable and a learned Brahmana. According to Basaveshvara, in the spheres of marriage and sharing of food and other things caste should not become a hurdle. If any one tries to make use of caste as a weapon to prevent inter-caste marriage and inter-dining, he is not a true devotee of Lord *Shiva*. He is like an impure woman taking bath in pure water.²⁹

He tells the people that even the Lord takes food in the house of a devotee who belongs to the caste of untouchables and wears their clothes and sees the human world through their eyes. When the Lord *Shiva* himself does not discriminate, how can ordinary human beings do that?

Basaveshvara beautifully explains how Hindu traditionalism was shaken by the consumption of food by Lord *Shiva* in an untouchable, Channayya's house: when he says "Because our Lord Kudala Sangama, Ate at the low-born Channayya's house: The *Veda* trembled in fear; The *Shastra* stepped aside; The Tarka, unable to argue, became dumb; The *Agama* swerved away from its path."³⁰ This *Vachana* indicates symbolically the of failure the traditional instruments like *Veda*, *Shastra*, *Tarka* and *Agama* to stand in the way of rationally conceived social and religious revolution that was taking place during that point of time. All these traditional weapons upon which the Hindu tradition of untouchability was built become ineffective and were unable to answer the questions raised by the revolutionaries regarding the heinous practice of untouchability. Basaveshvara goes even a step ahead in another *Vachana*, where he says that the food that is being cooked by a Svapacha of a dead dog's meat gets spoiled by the very shade of a Brahmana falling upon it and therefore it cannot be offered to *Linga* as a *Prasada*:³¹

²⁹ They say their vows of righteous! Living was infringed, by eating at the house of untouchables! And by wearing their clothes! They look for caste in making marriages! How can I call them devotees? How can I call them worthies? Listen, O Lord Kudalasangama! Their behavior is like that of an! Impure woman bathing in pure water.

³⁰ Veda nadanad nadugittu, shastravagali kelkke sariddittayya! Tarka tarkisalarayade muguvattidditayya! agama heratolagi agaliddittayya! Namm kudalasangayyanu madara chennayyana maneyalundakarana SVS1/750

³¹ The pot in which the superiors cook food! Is a dog's skull, sir. The low-caste Svapacha's act of covering food with slippers! Lest the high-caste Samavedi cast eyes on it is a right one! It's Agama in practice; none should see him preparing food. That "the food seen by the worldly is unworthy of! Offering to the Linga" is Thy word! Lord Kudala Sangama!

This is the most offensive way in which he defends the low-caste devotees doing their routine of offerings to the *Linga*. Any individual, even if he is a Brahmin by birth, should not watch the cooking of food to be offered to the *Linga*, if that person is not a true devotee. By the very sight of such worldly persons the food being cooked becomes impure. Therefore, it can be rightly be covered by the slippers of a devotee to protect it from becoming impure. In this way, Basaveshvara asserts that the slippers of *Sharanas* are much superior to the eyes of the *Brahmins* who have lost their credibility. Basaveshvara had gone to unimaginable levels in providing dignity to the lowborn. In an exaggerated version of a *Vachana*, Basaveshvara even goes to the extent of saying that he would eat the pan chewed by them, wear the clothes cast off by them and guard their slippers, if only they are the Lord's devotees irrespective of the fact that they are untouchables³²

Castigates those who question the credibility of an untouchable devotee about his impure way of living and eating. Devotion is the main force of purity and not the externally visible aspects of it. He exhibits his restlessness when these low-caste people show apprehension in giving him food as he belonged to a superior caste in a *Vachana* in his indubitable style: "Lord, do not lay on me the burden, of being born in a superior caste. Look, Kakkayya will not offer, even the cast-off food to me. Look, Dasayya will not offer, Even the buttermilk to me. The reverend Channayya will not accept me, Alas! Alas! Lord Kudala Sangama!"³³

In the *Anubhava Mantapa*, which he had established as a democratic forum for divine and intellectual discussion and discourse and thereby find solutions to all kinds of social, economic and religious problems, Basaveshvara advocated the eradication of untouchability.

It is very important to note that the movement led by Basaveshvara against the practice of untouchability was at a time when it was just not possible for any one to think in those lines. Such was the truth-value of his ideas that even after eight hundred years his ideas remain relevant to our society. It is true that his war against the

³² Aavanadadenu shreemahadevana nenevana, bayatambula meluve, biludugeya hodeve, padaraksheya kaydu bdukuve, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/464

³³ Uttama kuladlli huttidenmba, kastatanada horya horisadirayya, kakkayyanokkudanikka nodayya, dasayya shivadanavnereya nodayya, mananeyya cennayyanennuva mannisa. Unnata mahima, kudalasangmadeva shivadho shivadho!SVS1/344

practice of untouchability was disturbed by some traditional minds that were successful in owing the ears of the ruler of the kingdom. But the point to be noted is that his idea of abolition of untouchability was a great idea. Though his movement failed, his idea did not fail. It continued to linger in the minds of the people of the country and got its due recognition under the Constitution when India became independent. It is in this way Basaveshvara and his ideas become relevant to 21st century.

3.4.9. Gender equality

If one makes the perusal of the classical religio-juridical literature, the *Dharmashastras*, the position of women in early India, appears to be miserable and degrading. *Manusmriti* contains verses, which are explicitly hostile towards women. The lawgiver warns men about women whose nature it is to seduce men. In a well-known verse, it is stated that a woman always needs protection by men: her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in her youth and in her old age, and her sons will protect her. A married woman should worship her husband constantly as a god, whatever be his character. Furthermore, all kinds of bad qualities are attributed to women in *Manusmriti*. They are created with a predilection for bed, seat and ornaments, with desire, fervor and unreliability, with a hostile disposition and evil conduct. Like this, the tendency was to present a pessimistic picture of the status of women during the ancient times.

This is only one aspect of the story. There is the other aspect under which, favorable interpretations can also be found in the classical Indian literature regarding the status of women. *Dharmashastra* raised a chaste wife to the rank of a goddess; it has the mother to the rank of divinity, along with the teacher and the father, and placed them immeasurably below her to the right to love and veneration. She is the best of the teachers, and a super-teacher according to *Vishnusmriti*. So long as one has a mother he never feels old. Abandoning a mother, even if she is an outcaste, is both a sin and a crime. The first earnings of the student must be tendered to his mother.

The position of women in Medieval Karnataka was astonishingly different from what the laws of *Manu* suggest. Women were dominant not only in the cultural field; they were as much active in exercising their political power. The contribution of women in religious and other social activities of the society were in no way was

inferior to that of men. The status of women was as high as that of men in the middle Ages in Karnataka.

In the entire Indian history, Medieval Karnataka stands as a unique period and place where movements for the emancipation of women from the traditional taboos were led by social reformers. Basaveshwara's social movement during 12th century was one such great movement, which brought about revolutionary changes in socio-legal conditions of women (Patil. J. S. 2005).

Basaveshwara and other *Sharanas* of his time have made exclusive efforts by putting all their energy for building a society of equals where both men and women could participate in spiritual and religious spheres of human activities on an equal footing. Discrimination or exploitation of women on the basis of sex is against the very principle of rationalism that was developed by Basaveshvara. The socio-religious movement led by Basaveshvara against the discrimination of caste, creed or sex attracted people from across the country including women. According to the *Lingayathism* of which Basaveshvara was a champion, men and women differ only in physiological level but they are one and the same in metaphysical aspect.

The *Shivasharanas* of 12th century understood and realized the position of women of their time and provided an equal status and opportunity on par with men in spiritual matters. Their action towards the emancipation of women can be considered as the first such movement systematically launched in country. The system of family preached by the *Sharanas* is quite unique, for spirituality is the starting point for any transformation to take place at the level of family which can have its influence upon the society as a whole. Therefore the *Sharanas* propounded the concept of equality between men and women first from the spiritual level According to the *Sharanas*, the soul is basically the same; it is only the body which appears as man and woman.

The *Lingayath* view of a man and woman can be best understood by the following *Vachana* of Devara Dasimayya, an elderly contemporary of who was deeply influenced by the philosophy of Basaveshvara: "A woman is identified, By her breasts and plaits, And a man, by his beards and mustaches, But the soul within the two, Is neither woman nor man, O lord Ramanatha."³⁴

³⁴ Mole mudi bandade hennembaru. Gadda mise bandade gandembaru. Naduve sulivatmanu, hennuu alla ganduu alla kana! Ramanatha SVS7/844/135

The *Sharana* have also pointed out that woman is not an illusion, but a living being like man in every walk of life. Considering woman as an illusion represents the self-aggrandizement of the male, which is unfair. Allama Prabhu, the presiding deity of the *Anubhava Mantapa*, a seat of intellectual discourse about the socio-religious aspects of human life exalts as under: “They say that woman is an enticement, No, no, she is not so. The real enticement is the insatiable appetite of mind, O Lord Guheshwara.”³⁵

All *Sharana* including Basaveshwara unanimously shared this view. Woman, property and wealth are not temptations. The real cause of temptation is man’s uncontrolled and unchecked inner desire to possess them.

The *Sharanas* raise the question that when both men and women are made of the same metal why is it that one only can attain divinity? On the basis of this argument the *Lingayatha* philosophy does not dismiss woman as an obstacle in the path of spirituality. Siddharama, a notable *Sharana* of Basaveshwara’s time upholding the nobility of womanhood proclaims that she is the embodiment of the God!

One of the distinguished female saint who emerged as colossus in the social revolution championed under the leadership of Basaveshvara was Akkamahadevi. She received highest praise from Basaveshvara because of her sheer perseverance and deep commitment to the ideas of liberation of the soul. Basaveshvara described Akkamahadevi as his mother and finds no appropriate words to praise her. Basaveshvara and other *Sharanas* joined in the chorus of her praise, as she was considered as the main source of *Bhakti*, *Mukti* and *Yukti*. In the same way Akkamahadevi also referred to Basaveshvara as her spiritual father. On the guidance and the spiritual leadership of Basaveshvara, Akkamahadevi contributed considerably to the cause of womanhood. Although she was married to king Kaushika, she did not consider herself as his wife. She even tried to enlighten him when he tried to molest her in the following *Vachana*: “Get back, I hate you, don’t hold my sari, you fool, a she-buffalo is worried of its life, and the butcher, of its killings, the pious thinks of virtues, And the wicked of vices. I am worried of my self and you of lust. Listen, the only worry that haunts me is: whether my Lord Chenna Mallikarjuna, loves me or

³⁵ Honnu mayeembaru, honnu mayeyalla, hennu mayeembaru, hennu mayeyalla, mannu mayeyembaru, mannu mayeyalla, manada mundane aseye maye kana Guheshvara. SVS2/72

not.”³⁶ Realizing that she can no longer stay with him, she throws away all her clothes at him and walks to the streets quite nude. The king was staggered and dazzled to see all such spiritual luster of Akkamahadevi. It is said that he repented and cursed himself for having stretched his sinful hands on to her spiritual heights.

Akkamahadevi makes an appeal and also gives warning to such men, who have that lust or temptation, to tease or harass women. She appears to be the first and the most courageous woman of the spiritual world of womanhood.

She lambastes all such men who try to look at her nude body with passion. After renouncing her husband King Kaushika and worldliness, she goes in search of her real husband Lord Mallikarjuna whom she describes as eternal, immortal, ever beautiful and changeless.

When Akkamahadevi enters the *Anubhava Mantapa*, all *Sharanas* including Allama Prabhu and Basaveshwara put her to very stringent tests of spiritualism and thereafter accord her a hearty and warm welcome appreciating her attainments of spiritual heights. All of them were surprised to see how she could overcome the bodily passions at such a young age. All *Sharanas* and *Shivasharanas* involved in the movement, asserting the principle equality on the basis of soul, contributed to the women’s movement to transcend material demands and aim at spiritual attainments. It was a movement against the exploitation of women in the name of religion. Basaveshvara, who spearheaded the movement, was determined to abolish all obstacles and social disabilities inherent in the traditional order. Sharing the experiences and thoughts of all the activists of the movement, Basaveshvara asked: “What is the sex of the soul?” He attached importance to the principle of *Kayaka*, in which, every man and woman are engaged and active participated in spiritual discourses and deliberations at Anubhava Mantapa. On this basis he undertook the mission of elevating the womanhood by the introduction of the ceremony of *Linga Deeksha*, thereby giving them equal opportunity in religious and spiritual activities along with men.

³⁶Emmegondu chinte, samgArnigondu chinte; dharmigondu chinte, karmigondu chinte, enge enna chinte, tanage tanna kamada chinte, olle hogu, serge biwu mrule.

If one looks at the fundamental principles accepted by Basaveshvara and other Sharana of Anubhava Mantapa, following principles clearly indicate the concern they had for the emancipation of women:

1. No one is high or low either by birth, sex or occupation.
2. There is no discrimination between man and man and between man and woman.
3. Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution.
4. Woman can also take up any *Kayaka*.
5. Inter-group marriages and free dining should be encouraged.

These principles indicate that discrimination against women only on the basis of sex is challenged in the twelfth century itself. Women were provided equal rights along with men for the purpose of developing their personalities. Women were permitted to take up any kind of work of their choice and have economic independence. Women were free to marry even from other castes. Many of these principles have found their way into the Indian Constitution even after 800 years, which shows how worthy these principles are.

Basaveshwara has given out a few *Vachanas* where he makes a reference to how woman is to be looked upon. In all these *Vachanas* the main point, which he drives home to his followers, is that to desire another man's wife is a sin. All *Vachanas* express the spiritual view that the male devotee regards himself as the wife of Lord *Shiva*, his relationship with *Linga* is a marriage in which he is the female having subordinate position. Basaveshwara himself has expressed this view in very clear terms in the following *Vachana*: "Listen to me dear fellows; I wear these men's clothes, only for you... Some times I am a man, Some times I am a woman, O Lord Kudala Sangama."

Another important idea put forward by Basaveshvara is that both husband and wife should be clean, like inside and outside of a pot. Otherwise, their married life would be like a washing of the arrack pot only from outside. He has stated this "Husband a devotee of *Shivalinga*, Wife, a devotee of Mari, Masani, Husband takes offerings, made to God, Wife takes arrack and flesh., The devotion of those whose

containers, And the food are not clean,. It is like washing the arrack pot, from the outside, Kudala Sangamadeva.”³⁷

Basaveshwara asserts that in material relations the caste or the clan should not become an obstacle. Both husband and wife should become the consorts of the *Linga*, in that the *Sharana* is the wife and the *Linga* is the husband. Basaveshvara was comparing the spiritual seeker to the wife and the Divine Being to the husband. Further, there must be similar spiritual relationship between the husband and the wife. A chaste lady remains ever dutiful to her husband and will not resort to any immoral life even if her husband turns out to be indifferent or shows no love for her. In the same way, a true devotee cherishes firm faith only in one God, the supreme, as a faithful wife has only one husband. This is how he spiritually rationalizes the wifehood in his *Vachana*: “Behold a faithful wife has but one husband. Behold a devotee, the true believer, has but one God, Look, the fellowship of other gods in base, Look, to speak of other gods in harlotry, should Lord Kudalasangama see it, Look you, he will cut off your nose.”³⁸ This *Vachana* makes it clear that belief in many Gods and husbands is nothing but a religious infidelity. Faith in only one God is the way for attainment of spiritual progress in life. For this reason Basaveshvara emphasizes the importance monotheism.

One cannot collect a good number of *Vachanas* and say that this collection is as good as a treatise of Basaveshvara in the cause of women’s emancipation. Such a theoretical treatise is unthinkable of Basaveshvara. He was mystic with unrivalled practical knowledge of the world. He thought that practice was better than either pleading or preaching. We got evidence of his broad view of women in his treatment of his wife, Neelambike, his sister Nagalambike and a good number of women-saints who participated in the religious discussions at the Anubhavamantapa. Both married and unmarried women were there among the women saints. Basaveshvara never laid down that a wife could be an obstacle to high spiritual attainments. His wife enjoyed a

³⁷ Ganda shivalingadevara bhakta, hendati marimasaneyya bhakte, gandakombudu padodaka Prasada, hendati kombudu sur-mamsa, bhanda-bhajana shuddavilladavara bhakti, hendada mawikeya horge tolednate, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/ 104

³⁸ Nambida hendatige gandnobbane kaniro, nababalla bhaktange devnobbne kaniro, beda beda, annya daivada sang holla! Beda beda, paradaivada sanga holla! Beda beda, anya daivavembudu hadar kaniro, kudalasangamadeva kandade muga koyva kaniro.SVS1/ 617

good deal of freedom and was close followers of him and helped him in his discharge of political and religious duties.

But at the same time considerable importance is given for the character of women. In some of his *Vachanas*, Basaveshvara insisted that women should be faithful to their husbands and disapproved of adultery³⁹.

The harshness verdict of Basaveshvara towards adulterous women is metaphorical. The unfaithful wife is an image of the devotee who is not faithful to Lord *Shiva* but worships other deities as well. In another *Vachana* the theme of unfaithful woman is worked out in a very beautiful manner:

I went out for an adulterous play,
But all I got was counterfeit.
Behind a dilapidated wall I hid,
But there the scorpions stung me.
The watchman heard my cries
And he tore off my sari.
I went home in utter shame
And my husband slashed my back.
So the Lord Kudalasangama took his fine.

The meaning of this simile is that adversity and trouble are not accidental, but they can be seen, as a punishment from God, for adulterous behavior, whether in the realm of morality or in that of worship, will have such inevitable consequences. Hence, alongside the liberation of women from all kinds of exploitations, Basaveshvara has balanced his movement by insisting upon the good character of women.

If character is so vehemently insisted upon by Basaveshvara, at the same time his attempts to uplift the low-caste women by absorbing them into the mainstream of life and describing them as “*Punyastris*” or “meritorious women” is noteworthy. The

³⁹ What a surprise! The ruin of you, you bitch! Making eyes at your lover! Whilst you have a husband! Who gives you food and clothes! The Lord Kudalasangama! Will chop off your pretty nose! So that your teeth stick out.

Veerashaiva sources indicate that the spiritual community attracted many wandering ascetics from various schools. It is not hard to imagine that *Tantra* mendicants or so-called sensual *Jangamas* too found their way to Basaveshwara's Center. Even a number of temple girls or the girls who are put as prostitutes in temples according to some religious practices also followed the new devotional movement of Basaveshvara. An example of Sankavve and her *Vachana* is significant in this regard: "I took a pledge; I shall not take another one. If I would do so, they would strip me naked, and kill me. If I would deliberately associate myself with one, who breaks the vow, they would chop off my hands, ears and nose, with a glowing knife. I will certainly not do so knowingly, O Lord of No Shame.

This *Vachana* stands as a good example of the spirituality of the women who left her sensual life. The theme of this *Vachana* is monotheism. Sankavve uses similes from her professional background to explain the theme. In her ardent style, she not only stresses the loyalty to *Shiva*; she also reveals the morality of her professional life.

The life stories of some of the female saints give a good impression of the position of women in the movement. Men and women on an equal footing made discourses in the *Anubhavamantapa*. Highly unconventional women-saints like Akkamahadevi not only found prominent place in the movement but also its most accomplished female mystic and poet. Another profound philosopher who could develop her talents in the company of devotees is Muktayakka. However, the female ascetics were not the most remarkable characters among the women of Basaveshwara's fold; because their way of life was modeled on the classical pattern of world-renunciation. A completely new phenomenon was the participation of married women in the movement. Among them Neelamma was the most brilliant and independent thinker. Mahadeviyamma was also a very influential teacher and poet. Both had the advantage of a privileged position in the community; but there were also women devotees of lower castes. The working in the community constitute a convincing proof that the revolutionary ideas of the *Vachanakaras* about the equality of men and women led to new opportunities for women, even from traditionally unlearned circles. Low-caste women like spinners, rice pounders and sweepers were allowed to participate in the discussion and share their experiences in the spiritual path. Ayadakki Marayya's wife Lakkamma is one such example. She not only participated in the discourses at the *Anubhavamantapa*, but also guided her husband

when he neglected his duty. Her concern is that no one should neglect his duty. She tells him almost scoldingly to get on to his work first, or else it amounts to his-service to God. When her husband awakes to the vital importance of *Kayaka* and *Dashooha* and in his hurry collects double the usual quantity, she gets offended and says as follows in a *Vachana*: “This greed is good for kings; what has a *Shiva* devotee, my Lord, to do with such?”

She directs the husband to drop back the surplus rice grains and invite all the Sharanas, including Basaveshvara, for food. When all of them were mysteriously fed to the full satisfaction, all of them were wonderstruck. This is the greatest example of sustainable use of the natural resources and safeguarding them from depletion. This philosophy of Lakkamma also speaks volumes in terms of intergenerational trust and responsibility of which we talk so loudly in the modern context.

Another example is that of Mahadeviyamma wife of Moligeya Marayya. When Marayya exhibits his yearning for union with the Divine impatiently, she was surprised. She wakes up her husband to the essentials of the *Sharana* way. All the movements of a *Sharana* are rooted in non-duality. When this has been attained, there is no need to hanker after further union. She gives the analogy of conjugal union, which demands the stripping of all robes, ornaments and so on, which come in the way. Delusion of body is like robes. When these delusions are removed, the idea of the heaven and the Union vanishes. She says: “Why, sir, this sense of twain, within your wisdom, that you should want, to join the other? When a grove of camphor burns in fire, Can you detect charcoal and ash? Do realize your heart unto yourself; do realize how you dispelled, my shyness when we came together.”

Marayya acknowledges the wisdom of his wife and becomes one with his own self, and then Mahadeviyamma also attains salvation after helping her husband to attain the eternity.

Thus, it is not surprising that women were sometimes portrayed as no less than the Divine itself.

Sidharameshwara describes the exalted position of woman with reference to mythological accounts in the *Vachana*. *Ganga* seated in *Shiva*’s head and *Parvati* on his lap, *Saraswati* on *Brahma*’s tongue and *Lakshmi* leaning against *Vishnu*’s chest. If the Gods appreciate female company that much, woman cannot be sexual object or

demonic power; but they must be divine.⁴⁰. Though this exaltation is historically unrealistic, the disregard for women which was so deeply rooted in Hindu culture was certainly removed in the *Lingayath movement* led by Basaveshvara. There are a good number of reformers who worked for securing social, economic and political rights for women. But none worked to secure equal rights in the field of religion. Basaveshvara is the only one who declared that woman is entitled to religious initiation and salvation same as man.

Lingayath faith is altogether independent of the Hindu religion. Hinduism is primarily based on the authoritativeness of the Vedas and the Varnashramadharma. As the Lingayathism repudiates the distinctions of caste, it is said to be non-Hindu

Features of Lingayathism such as *Shaktivishishtadvaita*, *Astavarana*, *Panchachara*, *Shatasthala*, Universal fraternity, worship of only formless God, Gender equality, Equality, Denial of untouchability and Idol worship, *Kayaka* and *Dashooha*, provide abundant confidence to consider Lingayathism as progressive, scientific, and world humanitarian religion.

⁴⁰*Ta madida hennu tanna taleyanerittu, ta madia hennu tann todeyanerittu, ta madida hennu Brahmana naligeyanerittu, ta madida hennu narayana edeyanerittu, adu karana, hennu hennalla, hennu rakshashiyalla; hennu pratyaksha kapilasiddamallikarjuna SVS4/618.*

BUDDHISM

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a truly Indian religion for it belongs to the tradition of Indus valley Civilization. It is essentially non-Vedic and possibly pre-Aryan world-view of India. In it the doctrine of *Karma-Samsara-Jnana-Mukti* was clearly defined and adopted. It appears to have been mentioned in *Brahmajala-Sutta*. However, non-Aryan Yoga along with the *tapas* (austerities) of *samnyasa* (renunciation) has been fully assimilated. These heretical views of Brahmajala Sutta do not have any kinship with the then prevailing Brahmanism. Besides, Samkhya is considered non-Vedic and Lord Buddha at first was instructed by Alara Kalama, and this Alara is identified with Alada who was an exponent of early Samkhya. Even the word 'Buddha' is said to have been derived from the Samkhyan 'Buddhi'. Further, 'Kapil' of 'Kapilvastu' is said to have hailed from this place, who is said to be the founder of Samkhya philosophy.

Lord Buddha and Lord *Mahvira* were both *kshatriyas*, like the many teachers of the Upanishadas. These *kshatriyas* were regarded as inferior *kshatriyas* (Manu X.22). they were related to tribes that have not been mentioned amongst the Aryan tribes. Hence Buddhism and Jainism cannot be called 'offshoots' of Vedic religion. They are independent and parallel development of thought. Of course, in due course, they came in clash with Vedic religion. For this reason a good deal of struggle arose between Buddhism and Brahmanism. Which led to sharpness in the tool of thinking and deepening of philosophical speculation. Even when Buddhism disappeared from India, its many contributions have been used and fully assimilated in Hinduism of today.

Even when Buddhism has been assimilated by Hinduism. Its distinctiveness cannot be denied. It has developed its own scripture. Instead of appealing to the scripture as an authority) as in *Advaitism* and Ramanuja), the Buddha encouraged independent thinking without appealing to any authority. It never held the doctrine of caste and theoreticall it held first to atheism (*nirishvaravada*) and salvation through one's efforts alone with out taking recourse to any supernatural agency. Buddhism, unlike Hinduism has centered round the life and teaching of its founder, Goutma. The Buddha. Further, it has interventional ramification and is a missionary religion. it adopted the vernacular of the people for the propagation of its faith. This also shows that it is quite different from Vedism which is based on Sanskrit.

LORD BUDDHA (C.560B.C.-C.480 B.C.)

Lord Buddha was born of Shuddodana and Maya. Shuddhodana was a chiefpin and ruler of Shaky clan, which in turn was related to *Iksvaku* of *Kosala*. Lord Buddha was known as Gotama or Siddharatha before he was called the enlightened one (Buddha). He was married to Yashodhara and to them a son named Rahula was born.

Meantime Goutama going out of his palace on three different occasions saw a sick man, an old man and a dead man. These sights convinced him that life is misery and a way out of this life of suffering should be found out. At the moment he saw a scene recluse and then he thought of himself becoming one. One day Goutama after having the last look a Yeshodhara and the baby Rahula sleeping. Left them, and became a wandering monk, put on the garment of renunciate. In his search for a way out of suffering, he placed himself under the two teachers of Alare Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. Alara Kalama gave him the doctrine and necessity foe enlightenment, according to Samkhyan philosophy. However, mere intellectual doctrine of enlightenment did not make him enlightened. So he went to another teacher Uddaka Ramaputta who taught him the necessity of Tapas and bodily

mortification, till he became too weak even to walk. At last when he was meditating under the banyan tree at Buddh Gaya, he gradually found the riddle of suffering opening before him. He remained dazed by what he had found out. He became enlightened. A struggle remained within him: should he or should he not proclaim this gospel to the whole world. This gospel is now known as Buddhism, whose distinctive features can be thus outlined:

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF BUDDHISM

1. The four pillars of *Karma-Samsara-Jnana-Mukti* are most clearly defined and accepted by Buddhism. The doctrine of Yoga was not only adopted, but was perfected by Buddhism; the practice of *tantra* is largely Buddhist.
2. In the oldest *Hinayana* school, silence is maintained about the existence of God. The whole subject-matter was treated as metaphysical heresy (*avyakrta*). Towards the end, it was felt in Mahayana Buddhism, that some sort of theistic worship is desirable for the masses. Hence, the doctrine of *tarikaya* Buddha was introduced, namely, *Rupakaya* (historical), *Sambhogakaya* (heavenly God) and *Dharmakaya* (an embodiment of Dharma). THE WORSHIP OF *Bhodhisattavas* also became prevalent. However, theoretically Buddhism remains atheistic. The last words of the Master were *appo dipo bhava* (Be light unto yourself: and seek your salvation with diligence). A follower of Buddha, himself becomes a Buddha and does not worship Buddha or any supernatural power.
3. The distinctive feature of Buddhism is that everything is momentary, life is painful (*sarvam dukham dukham*) and there is soullessness (*anatmavada*).
4. it has three vows to be taken for being initiated into Buddhism

i I seek refuge in the Buddha (*Buddham Sharanam Gacchami*).

ii I seek refuge in Dharam (*Dharmam Sharanam Gacchami*).

iii I seek refuge in Sangha (*Sangham Sharan Gacchami*).

5. Reason is accepted as the sole guide in matter of religion, and not in any authority of any scripture.

Buddha is reported to have said that this teaching has to be carefully weighed and reasoned out, and then and then alone has to be accepted,

“not because it is a report, not because it is a tradition, not because it is said in the past – nor because it is suitable, nor because your preceptor is recluse, but if you yourself understand that this is so meritorious and blameless, and when accepted, it is for benefit and happiness, then you may accept it”.

6. Buddhism never had any caste distinction. Lord Buddha was totally opposed to caste and has given very sound reason for its rejection.
7. The four noble truths (*catvari arya satyani*) most systematically sum up the whole teaching of Buddhism.
8. The highest end of life is the attainment of Nirvana, which has been interpreted both affirmatively and negatively.
9. Buddhism is termed middle path, for it avoids the extremes of both ascetism and worldliness.
10. Without becoming a *bhikshu* (a renunciate in monastery), one cannot attain one's nirvana. There is no *moksha* possible for a house holder.
11. The three steps of *Shila*, *Samadhi* and *Prajna* epitomize the religious striving of a Buddhist.
12. Lord Buddha taught in the language Pali, which was the language of his country. This distinguishes Buddhism from Brahminism. Later on when many important Brahmins were converted into Buddhism. Sanskrit was adopted as the language of Buddhism.

13. Buddhism is the most successful missionary religion of India. It is now an international religion.

BUDDHIST SACRED BOOKS

Buddhism in due course established Universities at *Nalanda*, *Vikramashila* and *Taxila*, many monks and chieftains studied in them. As a result of these universities a large number of Buddhist literatures has cropped up. Many of these Buddhist writings are found in *Tibetan* texts, Chinese translations and even in distant North West countries, however only few can be mentioned here.

Shortly after the death of Lord Buddha a Council was set up about 477 B.C. at *Rajagriha*. A second Council was held at *Vaishali* about 377 B.C. to canonize the Buddhist sacred books. In the third Council about 241 B.C. held at *Pataliputra* the books were canonized. The early canonized books are known as *Tripitaks* i.e., three baskets. They form the canonized books of *Hinayana* or *Theravadi* schools.

- 1 The *Vinayapitaka* contains the teaching of the Buddha regarding the rules of conduct of monks.
- 2 *Suttapitaka* contains the doctrine of Buddha and number of his dialogues. It is divided into *nikayas* or collection.
 - a. *Dirghanikaya* (Long Discourses)
 - b. *Majjhimanikaya* (Medium sized Discourses)
 - c. *Samyutta-nikaya* (Mixed Discourses)
 - d. *Anguttara-nikaya* (Graduated discourses)
 - e. *Khuddaka-nikaya* (Miscellaneous Discourses).
- 3 *Abhidharam-nikaya* which contains philosophical matter and creed. For the Mahayanists *Vaipulya* Sutras and *Prajnaparamita* Sutras are most important. *Visuddha-magga* of *Buddhaghosa* and *Milindapantha* are also important works.

THE BUDDHIST TEACHING

Buddhism evolved in doctrine and practice for about 1500 years in India. It was also the most significant movement from the time of the Buddha up to 1200 A.D. naturally it has become a vast and complex religious system. One can study it for himself to convince oneself about its vastness.

Buddhism is based on three philosophical tenets:

1. Momentariness, 2. Universal suffering and 3. Soullessness.

Perhaps, the doctrine of commentaries in the world and *jiva* can be regarded as substantial. Nothing has any permanent nature of its own (*nis-svabhava*). As such everything is in flux. From this it follows that every pleasant moment is bound to die out. No reliance can be made on things in constant change. Hence, pain is inevitable in relation to evanescent things if we set our heart on things. Soul too has no permanent self, but is a stream of ever-flowing mental events.

From the viewpoint of practice, leading to nirvana (cessation of suffering). There are the three jewels (*triratna*) of *Shila* Samadhi and *Prajna*. Through *Shila* or moral discipline one has to prepare oneself for attaining nirvana. Then there is the next step where *Shila* is carried further into Samadhi. However, Samadhi can yield only temporary relief. The seeker, even when Samadhi is complete has to miserable world. As such *Shila* and Samadhi are perfected into *Prajna*, in which there is sorrow but not of the *jivann-mukta*, but of the world.

The whole teaching of Buddhism is included in the doctrine of four noble Truths (*chatvari arya satyani*)

- 1 There is suffering.
- 2 There is cause of suffering
- 3 There is the cessation of suffering.
- 4 There is the path leading to suffering.

- I. There is suffering: Indian religious systems are stereological. Naturally they are interested in the practical result of the riddance of suffering. No Indian religious thought has denied the existence of suffering, and, the consequent need for release from this suffering. Buddhism gives reason for this suffering in terms of its doctrine of momentariness and non-substantiality of things. But Buddhism is concerned with the task of getting away from it. Hence, it does not encourage people to think about the first origin of evil or suffering. Any attempt at knowing the first cause of suffering, is a metaphysical heresy for Buddhism. This advice has been tacitly followed by other Indian religious systems. This doctrine of suffering has been epitomized as '*jara-marana*' (old age and death).
- II. Twelve links of Dependent Origination (*Dvadasa-Nidana*): there is suffering because there is the cause of suffering, for nothing can take place without cause. This doctrine is known as *Pratitya-Samutpada*, which means this exists, therefore that exists. The miserable life of earthly existence has been explained in terms of chain of twelve links.

From past lives	1 Ignorance (<i>avidya</i>)
	2 the Gestalt (<i>Samghata</i>) of body, speech and thought. Transmitted to us through our former lives. This is known as <i>Samskara</i>
Relating to the present existence	3 Consciousness (<i>Vijnana</i>)
	4 Name and form(<i>nama rupa</i>)

	5 Six doors of sense-organs (<i>sadayatana</i>)(Five traditional sense organs and mind)
	6 Contacts (<i>Indriya-Vastu- Sampark</i>).
	7 Sensation as a result of this contact. It also includes feeling to <i>trsna</i> .
	8 Carvings for pleasures of sense (<i>Trasn</i>).
	9 Grasping or clinging to <i>trsna</i> .
	10 Desire to be born (<i>bhava</i>) on account of (<i>trsna</i>).
Pertaining to future birth	11 Birth (<i>jati</i>)
	12 old age and death (<i>Jara- marana</i>).

It is said that *bhava* i.e., the desire to be born is the father and *trsna* is the mother of our present existence. If there were no *trsna*. Then there will be no *bhava*. Hence, both the Upanishads and Buddhism aimed at realising a state of desirelessness. That life is suffering is also the theme of the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes:

I envy those who are dead and gone; they are better off than those who are still alive. But better off than either are those who have never been born (4:2-3)

This is also in the Greek Myth of King Midas who wanted to know what is best for man. God mercury unwillingly had to blur out:

O children of misfortune and chance! Why should I tell you what is best for you, that is, not to be not to exist and not to be born.

Goethe has also remarked,

“Why live a life so twisted; Better if it had not existed”.

Fortunately, Lord Buddha emphatically holds that this life of suffering can be overcome, for there is a state of the cessation of suffering.

III there is nirvana: nirvana literally means 'blown out' as a flame is blown out. This is the final aim of human striving. It can be said to be a state without pain, without desire and without any prospect of rebirth. Perhaps it can be described as permanent state which is wholly indescribable, because it is completely transcendental. The nature of nirvana is the most controversial. Issue in Buddhism, and we shall discuss it again under the heading 'Final destiny or *moksha*'.

IV Path to the cessation of suffering (*Dukha Nirodha Marga*): as there is nirvana which was attained by Lord Buddha himself, so there must be a path which leads one to one's final destiny of nirvana. Before embarking on the path. The seeker must fully understand the doctrine of momentariness, dependent chain of causation, (*pratitya-samutpada*) and *anatmanavada* (Soullessness). After being fully intellectually convinced of these principles, the seeker has to undergo the eightfold path:

1.Right views,	2.Right resolve,	3. Right speech
4.Right conduct,	5. Right livelihood	6. Right effort,
7. Right mindfulness.	8. Right concentration,	

These steps when analyzed fall into three inter-related stages of path:

Morality (<i>Shila</i>)	1Right speech(<i>Samyagvak</i>)
	2 Right conduct (<i>Samyak- Karmanta</i>)
	3 right living (<i>Samyagajiva</i>)

Samadhi	4 Right effort(<i>Samyagvyayama</i>)
	5 Right mindfulness(<i>Samyak-smriti</i>)
	6 Right concentration (<i>Samyak-Samdhi</i>)
Wisdom(<i>Prajna</i>)	7 Right resolve (<i>Samyak-Samkalpa</i>)
	8 Right view (<i>Samyagdristi</i>).

We have already described *avidya* (nescience) as the state in which the mind is distorted, intellect is befogged and the inmost being of man is soiled. Hence the will of man has to be purified, and, man has to be oriented in the right direction (Samadhi) and finally *ahamkara* (egoity) has to be destroyed by reaching the state of *Prajna*.

Samadhi means training the whole mind and developing deep insight into the essential of *Buddhist* teaching, concerning *Prattya-Samutpada*, *Sila* and *Prajna*. It is said to have been analyzed into *Sam-a-dhi* which means synthesis of body-mind-will. The very aim of Samadhi is to have egoity dissolved. This is possible in stages.

1. In the first stage of Samadhi, the mind is withdrawn from impurities of passion, emotion, attachment and there is withdrawal from all tempting objects of the world. Here there is a good deal of thinking and reasoning concerning the teaching of Buddhism.
2. In the second stage reasoning ends and a deep conviction into Buddhist teachings arises. Here gross bodily sensations tend to become subtle.
3. In the third trace there is happiness and tranquility of mind.
4. Lastly, there is neither pleasure nor pain. There is the *Upeksha-Bhava* i.e., the complete indifference and serenity.

In the later development of Buddhism eight stages have been mentioned. In *Tantra*, the eightfold *rddhis-siddis* (attainments) have been described.

PRAJNA

One finds that in the state of Samadhi, towards the final stage, egoity is lost. The centre of pleasure-pain is lost in *upeksha-bhava*. But this complete indifference lasts as long as Samadhi. On returning to the ordinary world, the seeker finds himself in the world again, even when his attitude to the world gets detached. But to reach the state of feelinglessness, the seeker has to practice *Prajna*. In this state, pain in the toe or in any part of the body is felt, but is not owned.

God in Buddhism

In the early phase of Buddhism. Still represented in the Hinayana school of Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, there is no place for God. God does not come in any way of the Four Noble Truths, neither in the causation of suffering nor in the path of winning nirvana. Nay, Lord Buddha remained silent about God. For him it was useless to speculate about God. Any venture in this direction was called a metaphysical heresy. From this silence of Lord Buddha, it has been inferred that the Buddha did not deny the existence of God. But in the long history of Buddhism, the Buddhists have tried to refute every proof in favour of the existence of God. Hence, Buddhism may be regarded as an atheistic system of religious thought.

If there is any entity which may be called supernatural, then it is nirvana. Many thinkers regard nirvana as a positive entity, corresponding to the nirguna Brahma or even Brahma of the Upanishad. In the Milinda Panha, Sage Nagasena thus describes Nirvana to king Milinda.

O king, Nirvana is not born, neither does it grow old, it dies not, it passes not away, it has no rebirth.

Again,

Nirvana is not past, nor future, nor present, nor produced nor producible.

One can easily compare the passages quoted here with the one passage in *Kathopanishad*:

The wise one (*Brahman*) is not been born nor dies.

This one has not come from anywhere, has not become anyone.

Unborn, constant, eternal, primeval. this one is not slain when the body is slain". (Kath.II-18)

But this is too slender a thread to support theism.

True, at one time Lord Buddha was credited with omniscience. But Lord Buddha has so defined it that from this omniscience one cannot conclude his Divinity. Lord Buddha claimed Omniscience in a very limited sense i.e.,

- 1 He remembered his past lives.
- 2 He could see beings born into new births, according to their Karmas i.e., the law of transmigration.
- 3 He got release and had knowledge of this i.e., the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

But certainly in Mahayana School, the doctrine of *Bhodhsatvas* arose. Is *Bhodhisatva* a God?

By *Bhodhistva* is meant one who has *Bodhi*(enlightenment) as one's *Sattava* of essence. *Bhodhistava* have to be distinguished from *Arhats* or *pratyekabuddha* of *Hinayanism*. A *Bhodhisattva*, having attained *Bodhi* refrains from entering into nirvana, for working out the nirvana for the whole world and working also for his *Parinirvana*. After living a great many lives of compassion, friendless, helpfulness and equanimity, he attains omniscience. In the long run *Manjushri* (personifying *Karuna*, mercy) and *Maitreya* (personification of friendliness) became objects bhakti. But they are at best helpers of men. They are not the creator or sustainer of the worlds. Hence, they cannot be called 'God', besides, in Buddhism, nirvana has to be attained by oneself and it cannot be a gift which can be given by the grace of any

supernatural power. Therefore, we once again repeat that Buddhism does not admit the existence of God.

However, towards the final phase of Buddhism, the doctrine of *Tariky Buddha* came into being. The truth is that man can live without God. Hence even atheistic Yoga in the beginning had to introduce the doctrine of *Ishvara-parinidhana*. Similarly Buddhists, finding it difficult to work out their salvation evolved the doctrine of *tarikya Buddha*.

The Buddha is pictured in three rooms, namely, *rupa-kaya* or *nirmana-kaya* or historical Buddha who lived from c.580B.C. to c.460B.C. Sambhoga-kaya Buddha corresponding to the Hindu conception of *Ishvara* in His heavenly abode; and Dharma-kaya Buddha. It is the notion of Dharma and Dharma-kaya which is important for philosophical theology. 'Dharma' is a loaded word in Indian philosophy. It means:

1. The ultimate truth.
2. Scripture, doctrine and religion.
3. Righteousness of virtue i.e., ethically toned thought and conduct.
4. Moral law (e.g. Dharmashastras).
5. Attribute of substances.

But in Buddhist sense. *Dharmakya* means the ultimate reality which is the support or substratum of the world. As an abstract entity *dharmakaya* means the undesirable, immanent and cosmic entity of the world. As a concrete and personalized being Dharmakaya stands both for the Vedantic nirguna and saguna Brahama. Then the first vow 'Buddham sharanam gacchami took the form of bhakti i.e., refuge in the Buddha.

If there is any place of Ishwara. Then it is in the doctrine of Dharmakaya Buddha. However, philosophically Buddhism remained atheistic but practice belies the theory.

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO BUDDHISM

We have seen that Buddhism does not accept the existence of a creator God. Consequently, the world cannot be treated as 'creation'. It is then eternal, as the Mimamsakas and Jains think? No. nothing is permanent. Everything is in constant Heraclitean flux. Then why do we talk of the same mountain or river of the things of everyday life? It is due to the continuity of change without abruptness, as David Hume said. It is like one candle that lights another and unthinking people seem to think that it is the same light. A little reflection will show that one volume of water flows down the river and another volume immediately takes its place. Similarly, the cells of the body keep on dying and taking birth. But we say it is the same river 'Ganges, and the same person Rama. Why? Because of Sanghata or Skandha (Gestalt) of the momentary events. Each moment dies the moment it is born as A.N. Whitehead had described 'events'. But the momentary events are synthesized, according to the doctrine of dependent causation. But even here the events are momentary, and, no event continues for more than a moment (Sarvam Kshanikam Kshanikam). But the momentary events form more or less recognizable aggregate, characterized by name and form (Nama rupa). We call that it is the same table, because the aggregate of passing events continues to have the same recognizable shape which we can conveniently call 'table'. When the shape undergoes a good deal of change, then perhaps it would cease to be called 'table'. It might be called 'fuel of wood.

Though the Buddhist takes the help of causation, they do not subscribe to the satkaryavada of samkhya. Their theory of causation is called asatkaryavada of samkhya. Their theory of causation is called astkaryavada i.e., the effect is not implicitly contained in its cause. Hence, the Buddhist totally denies the existence of eternal atoms. Is the world then totally unreal?

In this context we are reminded of George Berkeley who has advised us to talk in the language of the vulgar and think with the learned. Here Lord Buddha advises us that there is the conventional language of everyday life and the world disclosed

by it is practically true (*samvartī*). But as against this there is the higher language of Buddha's teaching which discloses the real nature of things. This *samrat* world is illusory and is based on *avidyā*. However, this world is based on the principle of *pratītya-samutpada*. Is the principle of causation itself then eternal?

Perhaps, Buddhism would not admit that. Here Buddhism faces the same predicament in which the *advaitin* and later on Wittgenstein find themselves. The four noble Truths and the detailed teaching and discourses of Buddha are tools and convenient devices for generating insight in the seeker. Once *bodhi* is attained, the ladder is left behind and the convenient spiritual language is seen to be illusory.

Hence, the world, as long as no *nirvana* has been attained has to be taken real in the *Vyavaharika* sense.

The Buddhist were divided into monks-nuns and laity. Monks nuns had to renounce the world, but they had to resort to a monastery and its Order. Here also the monks had to undergo strict discipline of the monastery. The laity had to support the monastery. Thus, here too the tenuous existence of the monastic life and its world has to be accepted. By living in the world one cannot live out of the world.

MAN AND SOUL-LESS-NESS (*ANATTAVADA*)

Everything is momentary. Therefore, there is no substantial man or his soul. When Buddha was asked, 'Is there any permanent soul', he kept silent. Is there no soul? Again, the Buddha kept silent. Why did he keep silent? For he did not accept the doctrine of the annihilation of man after death, as the materialist in his day maintained. He believed that man does transmigrate from one birth to another. Therefore, he did not accept the doctrine of annihilation (*ucchadvada*). Nor did he believe in *Shasvata-veda*, according to which soul is eternal. The Buddha believed that man as the mind-body complex is not eternal. One day this complex is bound to be dissolved by following the theory and practice involved in the Four Noble Truths.

Hence, man for the Buddha was *Namarupa* complex or psycho-physical complex of *Rupa* (matter), *Vedna* (sensation, emotion), *Samjna* (perception), *Samskara* (predisposition due to past accumulation of karmas) and *Vijnana*(consciousness). Each of the five *Skandas*, is itself complex. However, man has an illusion about himself.

1. He thinks that he (man) is his body, calling it as 'me' or 'mine'.
2. He also thinks that he owns his own sensation.
3. Man may think of this mind-body complex as 'me' or 'mine'.

How to explain this illusion of 'me' or 'mine'? What is this 'I' or aham (ego)? When it is analyzed then it (i.e., I or ego) disappears. Man is found to be a stream of passing events, as Hume has shown in the west much after or G. Ryle even much later (1950, the Concept of mind). Explaining the non-existence of a permanent man, Nagasena asks King Milinda

Is it the outward form (*rupa*) that is Nagasena, or the sensations (*vedana*), or perception (*samjna*) or predisposition (*Samskara*), or the consciousness (*Vijnana*), which is Nagasena?

Hence, an individual man is only an aggregate with a pattern of psycho-physical stream. If there is no permanent self, then what passes from birth to transmigration?

The changes in man are insensible and continuous from moment to moment. For example, we say that it is the same candle which is burning, even though changes keep on going in it every moment. What counts is the pattern. The stocking is said to be the same even replaced. The same is true of the jiva in transmigration. The continuity of the pattern remains.

One comes into being, another passes away; and the rebirth is, as it were, simultaneous.

Hence, any permanent Soul for Buddhism can be called in the language of David Hume 'an idle figment of imagination' or 'a category-mistake due to the bewitchment of language.'

Thus, the doctrine of man as an aggregate of rupa (corporeal passing events) and nama (physical event), follows from the doctrine of momentariness. And, that which is transitory is painful. Naturally, Buddhism does not accept that this illusory notion of man as a permanent self can be maintained. This illusion will land him into a state of painfulness, for analysis reveals that man is but a stream of psycho-physical events.

What is transitory, is painful, what is painful, is anatta, what is anatta, is not mine, this am I not, this is not myself.

Naturally for Buddhism this ego-consciousness has to be destroyed, or. What is the same thing, this aggregates has to be dissolved. Then is it only a negative way? Is there nothing that remains after this aggregate has been dissolved?

Whether Lord Buddha denied the existence of permanent individual Self, or, he denied only the empirical Self? These are tall questions. The term 'nirvana' simply means a flame blown out. Does it remain in any other shape or form perhaps it is an idle metaphysical question for Lord Buddha. His negative way is perhaps final!

You teach me Atta, but I teach what Atta is not.

You know the Atta, but I only know what the Atta is not.

Therefore, you are always talking about the Atta, but I only speak of Anatta

It is still a more difficult question to decide whether Lord Buddha meant to retain the notion of an absolute Self.

EVIL AND SUFFERING OR BONDAGE

The whole human life is an unmixed evil and suffering: according to Buddhism.

This, O Monks, is the scared truth of suffering: Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the involved is suffering, to be separated from the loved is suffering, not to obtain what one desires is suffering.

The whole train of human suffering is due to his avidya, caused by the jives themselves in their past lives. They alone are responsible for the evil and are advised to remove suffering by their own efforts. Buddhism is essentially atheistic and does not recommended to seek divine power for removing either avidya or suffering.

A little glance at the enumeration of human suffering will show that it will be called natural evil for us. In jarmanana, man will not be said to be responsible for his birth of sickness and death. Suffering, therefore, is not due to social exploitation so much or natural calamities. Of course, lord Buddha was fully conversant with the social evil of wars greed, exploitation of man by his rulers. But Lord Buddha did not think of improving society or conquering nature. The serious thinker can work out his salvation by withdrawing from society, and, by means of self-conquest. Though avidya is the main cause, because it completely orients man in the wrong direction, yet trsna (the desire for pleasure) is the cause which keeps the chain of suffering (twelve links of dependent causation) live. It also keeps man rooted in the world and shows the seed of future birth by producing the tendency to take fresh births.

No matter how many births a man may take, his trsna cannot be satisfied. On the contrary, his desire for many more lives will be greatly strengthened. Naturally, this trnsa should be overcome by minimizing the opportunities for pleasure. This is possible if one withdraws from the world and gets initiated into the life of a monk or nun. It is useless to call Buddhism or any Indian system as pessimistic. Self-conquest which lies in each individual life's own self-effort was regarded as the panacea of all evil. Here Buddhism and other Indian systems of Advaita, Bhakti and Yoga were eminently successful. Will any body call Buddha, Shankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Kabir, Ramkrishna, Vivekananda, Aurobindo and so on, to be unsuccessful? It is only when we think now, due to science technology, banking, commercial and industrial enterprises, and so on, that we consider self-conquest or the culture of the soul by

withdrawing from the world as pessimism. Life-and-World-negation was as much the accepted creed and world-view of the ancient Indian thinkers, as world-and life-affirmation is the accepted postulate of the Western and West-oriented Indian politicians today. These two stands should not be mixed up when we turn to the ancient Indian philosophy like Buddhism. Why did Buddhism. And. As a matter of fact Indian religious philosophy accepts life-and-world negation and the culture of the Soul is important?

Buddhism accepted the doctrine of karma-samsara-Jnana- Mukti as its weltanschauung. The wheel of transmigration will continue as long as one does not attain nirvana. Besides, this world and the jiva as psycho-physical complex are infected through and through with momentariness. How can any thing transitory be taken as real or pleasant? The whole world appears continuous with the wheel of dependent causation, without any thing which has a permanent nature of its own (nis-svabhava). Hence, the worldly life is painful. Not even suicide will release a man from his chain of suffering. For death is always followed by another birth. One candle before being extinguished lights another. Nothing and not even Gods are exempt from impermanence and consequent suffering.

The three and thirty Gods, and the Yama-gods, the happy deities, the gods who joy in creation, and the ruling gods, bound by the chains of desire, return within the power of Mara. The whole universe is consumed with flames, the whole universe is enveloped in smoke, and the whole universe is on fire, the whole universe trembles.

Is suffering totally useless?

Suffering has its own use. It shocks man into his pitiful existence. Man is kicked into his awareness for realising his own authentic existence. Once awakened, and he not only works out of his salvation, but out of compassion for others, who are unmindful of their pitiful lives, he lights the lamp for them. The working out of the usefulness of suffering has been thus outlined by Mrs. Rhys Davids:

1 The realization of the fact of suffering gives rise to a quest and faith

- 2 Faith gives rise to joy.
- 3 Joy ripens into rapture.
- 4 Rapture in due course gives way to serenity.
- 5 Serenity paves the way for happiness.
- 6 Happiness gives way to concentration
- 7 Concentration yields knowledge and insight leading to nirvana.

FINAL HUMAN DESTINY OR NIRVANA OR RELEASE OR LIBERATION

What is the cause of human suffering or human bondage? Of course, the cause has been explained through the twelve chains of dependent causation. But there are three main elements in this dvadasha nidana i.e., avidya, trsana and ahamkara (egoity).

First, ignorance means nescience concerning the four noble truths.

And what, monks, is ignorance?

Whatever is not knowing concerning ill, its arising, its stopping, the course leading to its stopping- this, monks, is called ignorance.

This avidya is very akin to the later doctrine of Maya Lord Buddha asks his disciple Subhuti.

What thinkest thou now, Subhati, is illusion one thing and material from another? Is illusion one thing and sensation another? Perception another? conformations (samskaras) another?

....Subhuti answered: nay, Master, nay: illusion is not one thing and material form another. Material from itself is illusion and the illusion itself is material form, sensations, perception.

And Lord Buddha continues:

It is in the nature of illusion that lies which beings what they are. It is, O Subhuti, as if a clever magician, or the pupil of a clever magician, caused a vast concourse of men to appear at a cross, where four great thoroughfares meet, and, having caused them to appear, caused them again to vanish.

The avidya allows man to remain in trsna and this is the real cause of human suffering.

This, O monks, is the sacred truth of the origin of suffering: it is the thirst (for being), which leads from birth to birth, together with lust and desire, which find gratification here and there: the thirst for pleasures, the thirst for being, the thirst for power.

This keeps the flame of desire burning and this desire has its focus in the ego. On account of thirst, desire located in the ego, keeps on from birth to birth. The individual suffers not only in this life, but through countless rebirths. In this chain there is some continuity of the individual which is not the same (as the eternalist maintain) nor quite different (avoiding the thesis of the annihilist). There is the crisis-crossing of skandhas through the cycle of endless rebirths. The lamp neither remains the same nor different from hour to hour. Suppose a first hut is burnt by some one in the row, then other huts too are burnt by succeeding fires. Is not the man who caused the first fire responsible for the rest?

Just so.... It is one name-and –form which has its death and another –name-and-form which is reborn. But the second is the result of the first, and is therefore not set free from its evil deeds.

And again,

Just so great king, this (one) name –and-form, commits deeds, either pure and impure, and by that Karma another name-and-form is reborn. And therefore is it not set free from its evil deed.

The cessation of suffering is known as nirvana. It is the cessation of all those states in the skandha which constitutes individuality. Hence, any talk of individuality after attaining nirvana is not possible. This nirvana is attainable even in this life and is called jivanmukti. This jivanmukti means, equipoise, wisdom and virtue unruffled by outward happenings. Any further metaphysical speculation cannot disturb this peace. Hence Lord Buddha regarded metaphysical speculation about the self as heresy. Then what is nirvana?

As a flame, blown out by the wind, disappears and cannot be named, even so the recluse when released from name and body disappears and cannot be named.

Again,

A monk whose mind is thus released cannot be followed and tracked out even by the gods.

Nirvana is really a state of mind in this life in which state a jivanmukta enjoys perfect equipoise. But is also spoken of as an entity and this description fits as much into what is called Brahman.

O king, Nirvana is not born, neither does it grow old, it dies not, it passes not away, it has no rebirth.

Nirvana is not past, nor future, nor present, nor produced, nor not produced, nor producible.

Hence, it is maintained by Mrs. Rhys Davids, A.K., Coomaraswamy, I. B. Horner. George Grimm and others that Nirvana is the denial of the persistence of the empirical self, but not of the immanent man in men.

Nothing in the world any longer applies. The perfected one in his purity, rid of the dross of his personality, thus beyond death, is something unrecognizable; but he exists, he still is, namely, something inscrutable.

The denial of nihilism gives some support of the view that in some sense there is a non-empirical Self which remains, of course without egoity. Again, the life of a jivanmukta supports the view that nirvana need not mean annihilation of the self. But the truth is that Lord Buddha was genuinely not interested in any metaphysical enquiry. The important thing for Lord Buddha was purely therapeutic. He only wanted an end to the chain of endless rebirths, by reaching nirvana which is a state of painlessness. This nirvana, for Lord Buddha, was real to him. Beyond this for him was no-man-land of useless disputation and profitless controversy. Any metaphysical pre-occupation for Lord Buddha, meant restlessness, doubt and uncertainty. And this would mean the denial of peace and equipoise. Why should we not maintain that Lord Buddha maintained silence about metaphysical question as a genuine conquest over idle curiosity. Hence, nirvana means extinction of any and every vestige of name-and-form (nama-rupa) even of the idle curiosity for metaphysical knowledge.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Those who overcome all desires and get their ego dissolved by withdrawing from the world and by obtaining knowledge through Samdhi may enter nirvana, but a vast majority of people remain outside the pale of nirvana. What happens to them after their death?

Lord Buddha followed a middle path between the nihilist and externalist. The nihilist, largely materialists, believe there is total extinction (ucchedvada) of the man after his death. The externalists believe that there is a permanent soul which survives death. But Lord Buddha rejected both the views. There is no proof of the

immortality of the soul. Further, this view unsupported by any sound piece of knowledge is likely to lead to laxity in morals, possibly antinomianism of Buddha's days. The nihilist view is equally devoid of sound knowledge, and, most certainly it is likewise fraught with moral depravity. But Lord Buddha was fully convinced of transmigration. The question naturally would arise, what is that which transmigrates when there is no permanent Self?

Of course, there is individuality, a psycho-physical complex (nama-rupa) which continues from birth to birth. Is it the same individuality? No. the individuality keeps on changing. However, this changing individually is not the same as the previous one at the time of death. But it is not quite different from the earlier one before death. The pattern involved in the psycho-physical complex continues. So there is the endless chain of continuity in the interminable chain of rebirths. This transmigration of the continuous chain has been called by Wittgenstein as crises-crossing of changing events constitutive of the empirical self or psycho-physical complex. Some elements of the previous moments may resemble the later ones and yet other events may change considerably from the previous moments. But as long as it is the same continuous chain, the responsibility of any individuality at any moment remains. For example, one candle lights another. Here the light of one is responsible for the next succeeding light of the next candle. Again, an individual may set one hut fire, and, this fire of the first hut lights up the next and in this way the fire continues from huts to huts. Will not the man or the individual who put the first hut on fire, responsible for all fires? Again, are not the gains and doings of the father visited on the succeeding generations? Hence, in spite of the momentary events constitutive of psycho-physical complex (rupa and nam consisting of vedana samja, samskara and vijna) there is the continuity of the series, and the series keeps on transmigrating in the endless chain of countless rebirths.

But no matter whatever be the different individuality in this series, there cannot be any unalloyed happiness. Even gods are infected with momentaries, for the adage is, 'whatever is transitory is painful'.

In the whole account of transmigrating individuality, no permanent self is maintained, and yet every kind of persisting individuality is endowed with moral responsibility. As man in this life of his individuality is nothing but a bundle of material and psychical events, so he continues likewise in all succeeding series of rebirths. If a man suffers because of his deeds in this life, so he is said to suffer through the whole cycle of endless rebirths. The difference between the eternalist and Buddhist middle path lies in the difference in the accounting of individuality. There might be differences indeed with regard to the concept of individuality. But no Indian system regards the psycho-physical complex as eternal and real the Vedantist may call this psychophysical complex as Upadhis (mere name-and-form), and Buddhists also call this individuality as only empirically real. However, in many systems (Samkhya, Vedanta, Jainism) over and above the empirical Self, there is an eternal, unborn soul. Buddhism maintains complete silence about the eternity of the soul. Whether individual or Brahman. This silence is a matter of very great discipline and later or after the dawning of nirvana, this idle curiosity also falls away like all other events of the empirical self. Keeping of silence is a part and parcel of peace and equipoise of a jivanmukta. The lesson is hard, but has to be learnt.

SECTS IN BUDDHISM

At the second council at Vaishali in B.C. 377, the Vajjins differed from other Buddhist elders (Theras). The Vajjins called themselves Mahasanghika and the rest were known as theravadins. The aim of the Theravadins was to attain arhatahood with the help of Shila, Samadhi and Prajan. Later on, the Mahasangika called themselves Mahayana and called the rest through the nickname of Hinayana (smaller vehicle).

On the whole the Hinayana represents the conservative group and interprets the Buddhist scripture literally. In contrast, the Mahayanist were progressive, liberal and in due course spread all over North India, north-west regions of Asia and China.

In due course, they developed esoteric circle and tantra. In certain essentials Hinayana and Mahayana did not differ. They both accepted the following.

1. Nirvana is inexpressible, has no origin and is unchangeable.
2. Nirvana has to be realized by oneself alone, without making reference to any supernatural agency.
3. Personal self is lost in nirvana.
4. Nirvana means tranquility
5. It means the barring out of any more Samsarika birth.

However, they differ in the following points:

Hinayana	Mahayana
1. Nirvana is a state of bliss, and, is a matter of acquisition.	1. Nirvana is ajati (unborn) and cannot be acquired. It is a state as a result of attaining bodhi It cannot be described at all, not even as bliss. It is Shunyata.
2. Arhatva or one's own salvation has to be won. Hence, it is also known as the theory of Pratyekabuddha	2. Here one has to attain not arhatva of the individual selves, but of all beings. Hence, bodhisattava is the ideal and not nirvana but parinirvana has to be won. Not Buddhatva has to be acquired after many more efforts as Bhodhisattva.
3. Hinyayana emphasizes the dissolution of ego-consciousness by the removal of Klesavarana i.e., the veil of passions, trsna. It is firmly based on Samadhi.	3. Mahayana in addition to Klesavarana emphasizes the removal of jnanavarana i.e., the veil over true knowledge. Hence, it takes the help of Dialectic (Prasangikavada). Hence, even pratitya-samutvada has to be shown as only an

	initial stand, for the dialectic shows that ultimately it is also self-contradictory, leading finally to the acceptance of Shunyata.
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HAS BUDDHISM CEASED TO EXIST IN INDIA?

From the viewpoint of direct followers and their number, Buddhism has not much vitality in India in spite of neo-Buddhism of Dr. R. Ambedkar. But from the standpoint of its teaching and thought, it is still very much alive on the Indian scene. Without Buddhism. It is doubtful whether Gudapada and Shankara could have developed Advaitism. This is admitted even by Brahman thinkers who call Shankara Crypto-Buddhist or a Buddhist –in-disguise. But apart from this very close influence the whole saint movement in India was initiated by Buddha Tantrikas, and, Gorakhanath and his guru Matsyendranath have been said to be Buddhist before they become Shaivaete. Further, there is a direct influence of Naths on Kabir, Dadu, Ravidas and through them on Guru Nanak. Even Balus of Bengal and Shajiyas were greatly indebted to Buddhist tantra. Hence, really Buddhism has been absorbed both within and without the ranks of Hinduism. In this sense Buddhism is still alive in India.

Essentialities of Jainism

INTRODUCTION

Jainism is a very old non-Vedic religion and some of its features go back to the times of Indus valley Civilization. Like the Upanishadas and Buddhism. Jainism was a kshatriya movement. It had its locus in a region which was not yet touched by Brahmin cult. These regions East of Sadanira (modern Gandaka) were inhabited by non-Aryan tribes. Jainism was formerly allied to Ajivikism. It is said to have been held by number of 24 Tirthankaras and Lord Mahavira (B.C. 599-527) the last and the most important Tirthankara belonged to the clan of Licchavis of Vaishali. This Vaishali was a Janapada or oligarchy and was later on destroyed by Ajatashatru.

Jainism is not an offshoot of Vedic Brahminism. It belonged to the people who were essentially agriculturist, who valued bulls and cows. They therefore had simple living and could practice ahimsa and austerities. In contrast, the Vedic Aryans were essentially pastoral people and they were used to animal-sacrifice. Naturally the Aryan and non-Aryan people of India were always in conflict, and so in their religious beliefs too they held opposite views. In the long run, the Vedic Aryans accepted all that was of importance in Jainism Buddhism. The present Hinduism is a commingled stream of Aryan and non-Aryan cults. Keeping in mind the independent and parallel development of Jainism, we can proceed further.

Jainism is essentially a religion of Tirthankaras. Jainism has come from the word 'Jin' which means one who has conquered his passion. It essentially means the conquest of one's own self in bondage. Again, a Tirthankara is one who has built a ford which takes one across the ocean of bondage and suffering. A Tirthankara has not only conquered himself, but has taught people, the way out of this ocean of suffering. These 24 Tirthankaras have been mentioned, namely, 1. Rishabha, 2. Ajita, 3. Smabhava, 4. Abhinandana, 5. Sumati, 6. Padmaprabha, 7. Syaparshva, 8. Chandraprabha, 9. Pushpadaanta or Suvidhi, 10. Shitala, 11. Shreyamsa, 12.

Vasupujya, 13. Vimala, 14. Ananta , 15. Dharma, 16. Shanti, 17. Kunthu, 18. Ara, 19. Mali, 20. Munisuvrata, 21. Nami. 22. Nemi or Arishtanemi, 23. Parshanath, 24. Vardhamana or Mahivra.

Rishabha muni has been identified with the image of an ascetic God on a seal amulet of Indus valley Civilization. How ever, this cannot be Rishabha Muni as this God is linked with linga-worship. Excepting Parshanatha and Lord Mahavir, other tirthankaras are more legendary figures than historical persons.

BASICS OR SPECIAL FEATURES OF JAINISM

1. Jainism having its close association with Ajivikism is the oldest non-Aryan religion of India.
2. It is non-Vedic in the sense that it does not recognize the Veda as its religious scripture, -does not admit caste distinction, and, is opposed to the Rgvedaic religion. It accepts moksa and not heavenly adobe as the highest human end. It also accepts non-Vedic Yoga and austerities as important means for securing liberation.
3. Unlike the Rgvedic principle, it accepts the four pillars of religion.
4. It is wholly atheistic, but intensely spiritual form of religion.
5. As there is no place for God in its system, so Jainism regards the world as eternal in its on-goings.
6. Though Buddhism too accepts ahimsa as an important moral creed, yet ahimsa is the central teaching of Jainism (Ahimsa paramo dharmah) and, accounts for the moral conduct of Jaina seekers and Sadhus.
7. From the viewpoint of essence, Jainism is dualistic, for it admits the distinction between the two entities of Jiva and Ajiva. But from the viewpoint of number it accepts the plurality of spirits and of atoms.

8. In order to give a system to its plural ontology it takes resort to Anekantavada and syadvada.
9. Jaina doctrine of soul is very distinctive, for it admits spatial dimension to it. Again, Jainism also admits that karmas are like subtle material objects that cling to the soul. This shows that Jainism has very primitive concept of soul
10. Jainism, however, has a great deal of modern tone in the form of its rationalism. A Jaina thinker Ratna Shehkara in his book Sambadha Sattari states that each man can realize his own self-sameness of the soul by his own efforts without reference to any supernatural agency.
11. Unlike Hinduism and very much like Buddhism, Jainism is associated with the historical figure (of Lord Mahavira), who might not have originated Jainism, but has given an authoritative seal to its principal tenets.
12. Not only Jainism has no place for caste, it has no place for either Buddhist Scripture or the Rgveda as its religious scriptures. It has its own religious books.

JAINA RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURE

Originally there were 14 Purvas and 11 Angas. Purvas were transmigrated orally and in due course have been lost. Hence, 11 angas from the main Jaina religious literature. Besides, there are 22 Upangas, 10 Pakinnakas, 6 Chedas, 4 Mula-sutras and 2 other Sutras. Out of 11 angas the Acharanga formulates the rules of conduct for the monks, and, Sutrakrtanaga describes the Jain rites and points out its distinctive features.

Uvasagadasao is the 7th Anga and was translated into English by A.F.R. hornle in 1888. English translation of Jiana Sutras in sacred Books of the east, Vol 22 and 45 is also important.

Formerly the Jaina scripture was written in Ardha Maghadhi. Later it was written rather more systematically in Prakrit and Sanskrit.

Jains are essentially traders from the time of Makkhali Gosala, for they desist from agriculture. They fear that in digging the soil, they are likely to kill insects and this killing would mean himsa. They own a good deal of wealth of India. The Jains have survived all these years, but Buddhism has almost disappeared from the land of its own origin. The main reason is that Jains have nothing to oppose Brahminism. They do not admit caste, but accept Brahmin priesthood at many of their functions. Secondly, they have adopted great many popular gods from popular Hinduism. Besides, their own four pillars of Karma-samsara-jnana-mukti have been assimilated into Hinduism. The Pancamahavrata of Jainism (Satya, asteya, brahmcharya, ahimsa and a-parigraha), has been fully adopted by Hinduism though not with the same rigor. Yoga and austerities now are as much Jaina as Hindu for the many years. Jains have become so much Hinduistic that they also adopt Vaishnavism as a matter of fact even inter-marriage is permitted between some vegetarian Hindus and Jains.

JAINA PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

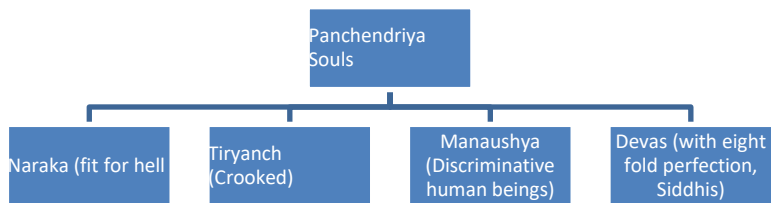
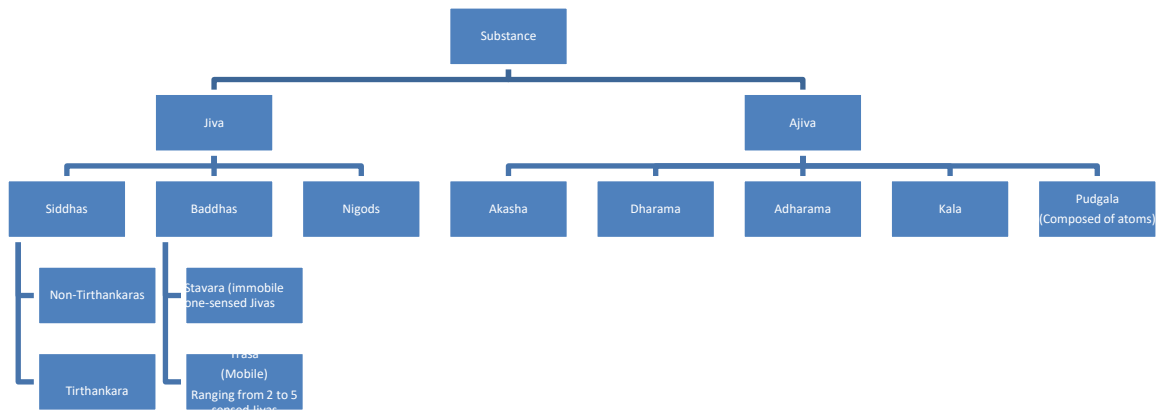
Jaina philosophy and religion are intimately inter-mixed hence, in a very brief outline its philosophy too has to be presented.

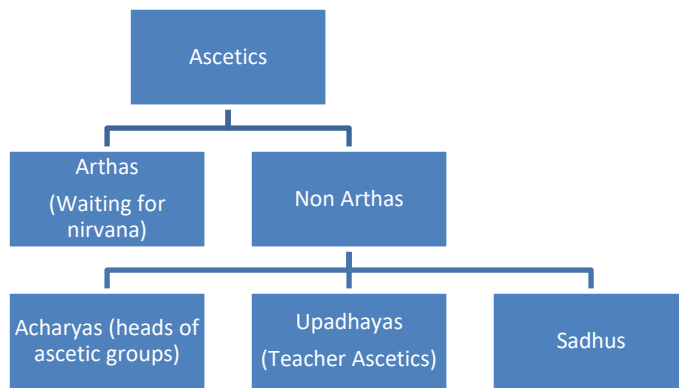
According to Jainism, ontologically there are two kinds of substances, namely, Jiva and ajiva. A jiva is nity-Siddha, siddha or Baddha. A Jiva in his pristine nature has infinite jnana (knowledge), anatana darshana (infinite perception), ananata charitra (pur conduct) and ananata virya (infinite power). Through karmas of beginningsless rebirths, the soul is soiled, for these karmas stick to the soul, make its vision and action limited, obscured and obstructed in every way. Of course, the original soul in its pristine nature is pure spirit and karmas are like material particles.ordinarily no material particles can stick to the pure spirit. Along with this materialized view of the spirit in its embodied body remains either small or big. For example, in ananat, the

jiva is small size, but in an elephant it is big in size. Hence a jiva has also spatial features. For this reason. Critics tend to think that Jainism is more primitive than Buddhism. Of course, Jainism has a much older history.

Again, the karmic matter may hinder the perception of a jiva by restricting its sense-organs. According to the development of Buddha jives there is an ascending order of one-sensed, two-sensed, three sensed, four-sensed, and five sensed jives. One sensed jiva remains immobile like plants and man is said to be five sensed jiva because he has the traditionally five sense-organs of eye, nose, ear, tongue and skin, but a jiva might win his own salvation by shedding off all the karmic matter. He becomes a siddha (perfected).and a perfected siddha who has laid down scriptural teaching and preaching is called a Tirthankara, and, they are 24 in number, and, Lord Mahavir is the last and the most illustrious of all of them. But a nitya-siddha is one who is eternally free and has not been a baddha at all.

Apart from an infinite number of jives there are five a-jivas of dharma, adharma, akasha, kala (time) and pudgala (matter). Dharma and adharma are used in peculiar meanings. Dharma is an all-pervasive subtle material substance in which motion is made possible e.g., water for fish and air for birds. It is only a medium for motion. As against dharma, adharma is that subtle material substance which accounts for rest. Pudgala is that matter which consists of atoms and molecules. We can put the jives and ajivas in a tabular form for easy comprehension.





Siddhas, Arthas, Acharyas, Upadhayas and Sadhus form as panchaparamesthini i.e., the supreme judge and advisory council.

For all practical purposes Jainism is concerned with the soul in bondage, and, this bondage is due to karmic matter which envelops the soul and keeps the bondage throughout its countless rebirths, hence some account of the karman will be given under the heading of 'Bondage'. First of all will have to consider the views of Jainism with regard to God.

THE VIEW OF GOD IN JAINISM

Jainism regards the world eternal. Naturally there is no room for any supernatural entity who can be the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Hence, there is no God in Jainism. Further, for Jainism each soul in his pristine nature is alone and solitary. He does not need any help from other souls, and does not give any help to others. As a matter of fact all souls, freed and nityasiddhas have the same status. Thus, there is no room for worship. Consequently each soul in bondage is said to be an architect of his own soul. Either he can work out his own destiny for liberation or sink further into deeper bondage. Hence, J.L. Jain observes:

"Alone he accumulates merit; alone he enjoys the various happiness of heaven; alone he destroys Karma; alone also he attains to moksha"(Anupreksha 76).

'He alone is doer and experiencer of his status'

Again C. R. Jain writes,

None can help the jiva in his troubles' he alone has to bear his pain and suffering; friends, relatives, wife and children are powerless to combat suffering.

In like manner Mrs. S. Stevenson writes:

The soul is the maker and non-maker, and itself makes happiness and misery, is its own friends and its own foe, decides its own condition good or evil, is its own river Vaitarani.

Not only Jainism has no place for God in its system, but has advanced very powerful arguments against the existence of God. But in spite of its atheistic thinking Jaina temples are full of idols, specially of Lord Mahavira. How to account for this, specially when any Tirthankara is not there to grant any grace for the release of his devotee?

Yet the Jainas do great deal of bhakti towards the idol of Lord Mahavira, for according to them the mere sight of the Tirthankara serves as reminder for them to lead a life in such a way as to win one's own release. Of course, the desire for release lies in dormant form in each man and the sight of the idol makes this desire for release awakened in the believers. Hence, an idol is support in meditation and its sustaining aid. H. Zimmer states this with a great insight in the following way:

If one holds a red flower before a glass, the glass will be red; if one holds up a dark blue flower the glass will be dark blue. Just so, the mind is changed by the presence of the image. Contemplating the form of the passionless Lord in a Jain temple, the mind becomes filled automatically with a sentiment of renunciation. The mind straightway becomes purified. But given purity of mind, one is already on the way to final bliss.

For this purpose a statue of Lord Bahubali at Shravanabelgola in Karnataka has been erected. It is 70 feet high and the Mahabhisheka (coronation) of this occurs every 12 years. This ceremony is attended by lakh of Jain devotees.

Thus, the Jaina view about God is most consistent with its beliefs and tenets. Guru and religious scripture are only guides towards winning its nirvana. But this is not pure humanism, for the goal to be achieved is wholly spiritual. Further, this goal is not to be attained by improving human society and by undertaking ameliorative measures for secular benefits. Hence, Jainism may be called spiritual humanism, as different from the naturalism of John Dewey and the materialistic humanism of communism.

MAN IN JAINISM

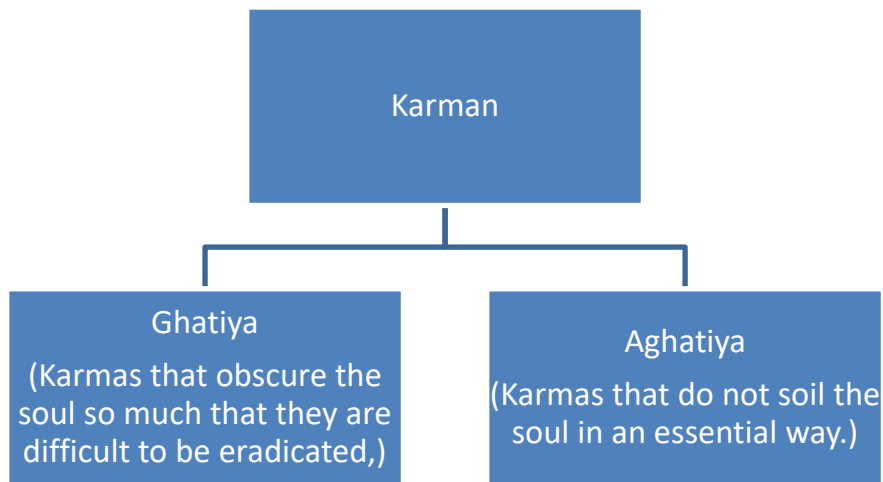
That which is eternal in man is his spirit or soul. Keeping to the philosophical principle of identity-cum-difference according to Jainism, the soul is both eternal and non-eternal. It is eternal with regard to its substance, but not-eternal with regard to its modes. Again, the soul is without any pain or sorrow in its eternal state of pristine glory, but suffers on account of its identification with body of its karmic matter. Hence, man is essentially a pure spirit, but is now in bondage due to his karman in countless past lives. As pure spirit, he is infinite knowledge, has unhindered intuition of all things, infinite power and faultless ethical conduct. But karman is a sticker and has covered his knowledge, perception, and ethical conduct. The worst thing is that the karmic matter and soul get so much mixed up that the embodied soul behaves like a material thing. This soul gets big or small according to the size of the body in which the spirit indwells. As such the Jiva gets restricted on all sides. Hence by 'man' is understood an embodied spirit, an amalgam of karmic matter and soul. This man is caught up in the endless cycle of births and deaths, which really means that he is condemned to a life of suffering evil and bondage.

This bondage is beginningless and karma is said to be the cause of this bondage. It is karma alone which darkens the soul, distorts his intellect and will and hurtles him down towards his destruction.

Thus, in the doctrine of man i.e., the embodied spirit two things have to be noted. Jainism, the most ancient non-Vedic religion, accepts the doctrine of karman and transmigration. Karmavada is so deeply accepted by Jainism that its doctrine of liberation and enslavement is rooted in it. karma enslave a man and by working them out from the embodied spirit. Man can become his former pure spirit of infinite knowledge and unfettered pure consciousness. Besides, man by his own effort by listening to the still small voice for his own imprisoned spirit, can remove every vestige of karmas. Thus bondage is through karma, and liberation from bondage is through nirvana and other special spiritual exercises like dhyanas.

The important thing to realize is that even a good karma called Punya (virtuous act) is also binding force. All karmas forming Samskaras have to be eradicated for winning one's nirvana from bondage. Naturally nirvana can be attained only by the moks. Laity (Shravakas) by following the anuvrata (milder way of observing pancha-Mahavrata) can hope to get the opportunity of becoming monks in succeeding births. Shravakas, however, can follow trade or any skilful work without committing himsa as far as possible. Utilizing plants for food is less harmful-than animal-slaughter. The greater and lesser himsa depends on the kind of organisms. A goat is five-sensed organism but a plant is one-sensed organism. Hence, taking away a plant's life is lesser crime than killing a goat.

Karmas which conceal and distort the nature of soul may be classified into two, and, each of them can be further subscribed. This may be made clear through a table of Karman.



GHATIYA KARMAS AND THEIR KINDS

- I Jnanavaraniya which obscures five kinds of knowledge.
 - a) Mati which is sense knowledge of things present.
 - b) Shruti or scriptural knowledge.
 - c) Avadhi knowledge concerning distant things, ordinarily known as clairvoyance.
 - d) Manah-prayaya i.e., knowledge of the thought and feeling in other minds.
 - e) Kevala-jnana which is omniscience inherent in each individual
- II Darsanavaraniya which distorts right attitude, conviction and faith.
- III Mohaniya which befogs right belief.
- IV Antaray which obstructs charity, enjoyment and effective power.

Ghatiya Karmas are also of four kinds

1. Namavarniya which is related to having bodies and their organs.
2. Ayuh which determines one's life-span.
3. Gotra which determines the family of one's birth.
4. Vedaniya which determines one's pleasure and pain.

Hence man under the influence of karma is in bondage and suffers from all kinds of disabilities. As long as karmas are not eradicated men will continue to suffer. Hence, karmas have to be totally and completely destroyed.

THE ULTIMATE DESTINY OR LIBERATION

The inflow of karmas soils the soul. Naturally these karmas have to be eradicated. In general it means that fresh inflow of karmas (ashramas) has to be stopped, known as Samvara. Lastly, the past karmas have to be burnt out or eradicated through the process known as nirjana. For achieving the stoppage of fresh karmas and eradication of past karmas psycho-physical discipline has to be adopted. Again, moral austerities have to be enforced. For stopping the inflow of fresh karmas, taps has to be adopted and it also is supposed to consume the accumulation of past karmas. In like manner, pancha-mahavratam known as Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, aparigraha and ahimsa has to be enforced strictly for the monks and with less rigor for the laity. For achieving mental control three ratnas (jewels) of right conduct and right (firm) faith and right (proper) knowledge have to be assiduously cultivated. But above all eight dhyanas and fourteen steps of ganasthana have to be resorted for final deliverance, or, what may be called the attainment of the pristine state of a Kevali, characterized by Omniscience. In other words, present inflow of karmas can be stopped, and, past karmas can be eradicated by a rigid discipline of mind, body and speech.

Ratna-traya: right faith means trust in the Tirthankaras, one's Guru and the knowledge imparted by the Guru. It also means conviction of and a proper attitude to Jainism in general.

Right knowledge at the preparatory stage means the understanding of six dravyas, five astikayas, seven tattvas and nine padarthas (categories). Right conduct (samyak charita) is the natural outcome of right faith and right knowledge. This also means strict observance of five vows (panch-mahavrata). Let us elaborate a little on taps and pancha-mahavrata for reaching one's ultimate destiny, according to Jainism.

The inflow of fresh karma can be stopped and past karmas can be eradicated by tapas. This tapas (austerities) is wholly non-Vedic. This largely means 'the mortification of the body'. It may be external or internal. By bahya (external) tapas is meant observing of fast, restricted begging of food and eating tasteless food. It also means standing in summer under mid-day sun, residing by the river side in winter and under a tree during rains. By internal tapas is meant doing penances for all acts of commission and omission. It also includes faith in elders, saints and scripture. By tapas has to be followed up in observing the five vows involved in pancha-mahavrata.

Ahims: (non-injury) is the most distinctive moral view in Jainism. Even in Buddhism it is not as strictly carried out as in Jainism. Killing (himsa) means separating the body from the subtle body. It means also the inflicting of pain to any organism whatsoever. As the Jainism believes that all particles of matter are inhabited by souls, so they take great precautionary measures against destroying life in water, air and earth. They do not take food after sun-set for abstaining the killing of insects attracted by the lamp light. It is not only a negative precept, for it also means 'respect for life' whether in your person or in living beings'.

However, kings and rulers do no wrong if they have to fight their battles in defending their countries and their welfare. Gandhiji maintained that ahimsa is a weapon which can be wielded only by the strong and not by the coward.

Satya does not require much elaboration. Here it means moral excellence. It has to be observed in thought, word and deed. One should speak out the truth, should speak to create pleasantness, but should refrain from talking unpleasant truth, as far as possible.

Asteya (non-sealing) means not appropriating a thing which does not belong to one e.g., a monk is not permitted to use an umbrella or a begging bowl of Sangha without the permission of the appropriate authority of the monastery. In other words, it means respecting the ownership of things not belonging to own self.

Aparigraha (non-possession). A monk or nun renounces the world and possesses nothing which one call as ones own. It also means non-attachment of worldly objects and things. Of course, a laity has to acquire means for his existence. Here it simply means honest living and avoidance of avarice. Gandhiji and before him Kabir have developed the idea of trusteeship. In other words, the people have to regard their wealth as Trust, and they have to be mere custodians of wealth in this life.

Brahmacharya(celebrity). It means abstinence from sexual pleasure. Hence, a monk or nun has not to marry and has not to commit adultery. It also means avoidance of fornication i.e., sexual life without marriage and without adultery i.e., prohibited sex life with a married person. For example, Makkahali Gosala lied with a rich potter woman without marriage. Lord Mahavir considered at his life of fornication as the violation of the vow of Brahmacharya.

GUNASTHANA AND DHYANAS

Though the fourteen steps of gunasthanas and eight stages of Dhayana a monk or a nun makes progress from this worldly life towards liberation and in the

direction of right knowledge, faith and conduct. Ultimately the seeker ends in the realization of his pristine glory and omniscience.

The fourteen steps of gunasthanas are:

1. Mithyadrasti; 2. Sasvadana Samyagdrasti (slight foretaste of right belief); 3. Samyag Mithyadrasti (mixed right and false beliefs); 4. Avirata-Samyagdrasti (sufficient insight into spiritual truth dawns); 5. Desavirata Samyagdrsti; 6. Pramatta-samyata much abstinence is achieved, but negligence has to be avoided; 7. Apramatta samyata (here one gets into the foretaste of moksa); 8. Apurvakarana (here sufficient discipline and right vision dawns; 9. Anivriti-badara-Smamparaya (gross passions are subdued, but subtle ones remain to be further controlled; 10. Suksma- Samparaya. Here unconscious attachment for rebirth continues to be operative; 11. Upasanta-Kasaya. Here all passions are subdued; 12. Ksina-Kasaya, here even subtle passions are annihilated, but omniscience not attained; 13. Sayoga Kevali-Gunasthana(Omniscience achieved and the stage correspond to that of Jivanmukta; 14. Ayoga–Kevali-Gunasthana. Here all vibrations cease and the monk passes into omniscience, immediately on attaining this stage. Eight steps of dhyanas are complementary of Gunasthanas. Dhyanas are really the form of Yogic practices of the Jains. Here the orderly development of knowledge leading to omniscience has six stages:

- 1 Mati i.e., the acquisition of empirical knowledge.
- 2 Shruti i.e., Scriptural knowledge.
- 3 Avadhi i.e., knowledge of things beyond the range of sensed-perception.
- 4 Manaparyaaya is the knowledge of what is in the mind of others i.e., telepathy.
- 5 Kevalijnana is the knowledge of things past, present and future.
- 6 Nirvana i.e., the stage of complete omniscience.

These dhyanas have to start after some progress has already been made in gunasthanas. Naturally without faith in a guru and his guidance, the gunasthanas and dhyanas cannot be undertaken. These dhyanas have been subdivided into four Dharma Dhyanas and four Shukla Dhyanas. As a result gunasthanas and dhyanas, the Jaina monk attains nirvana. It is a positive state of painless perfection. It is an eternal state, but difficult to approach. Those who reach this stage are free from sorrows and who have put an end to the endless cycle of rebirths.

THE WORLD

According to Jainism, the world is eternal and real. Following the Jain principle of identity-cum-difference, the world is finite in its spatial dimension, but infinite in time and its modes. The world consists of akasha, Dharma, Adharma, Kala and Pudgala, Akasha, Dharma Adharma have no parts. Thus Pudgala is real matter which consists of atoms and molecules. Thus it is found both in atomic form and aggregate.

Even an atom is a substance and a substance is always found with attributes. Hence, atomic substances are those that persist through their changes. A substance has the three changes of Utpada (origination), Vyaya (going out of existence) and, Dhrauvya (continuing in being). Utpada and Vyaya in a thing refer to the difference (or changes), but dhruvya refers to the aspect of identity by virtue of which a thing persists its changes.

Jainsim is not interested in the improvement of this world order. It is surprising that Lord Mahavira's uncle was the head of republic of Vaishali, and, yet Lord Mahavira does not think of improving either the public or social life of the people. The point is that he himself had renounced the world and naturally he could not be anymore occupied with it. It was the period of self-conquest. One lives in

one's intellectual climate and weather, and one can no more shake off one's intellectual atmosphere than one can live without one's shadow. After all it is neither a small achievement nor an unworthy end 'to have conquered one's passion and emotion. A Jin is as much valuable as a scientist or a social reformer, or, many other valuable lives whom mankind adores.

However, as far as the world was thought of, according to Jainism, it was fully scientific. It maintained atomism which was the earliest theory of its kind in the world. Dharma has been used in the peculiar sense, i.e., that which makes motion possible, and, Adharma is that which accounts for rest. Time is that in which changes take place, and, Akasa is that which serves as the receptacle of things.

Jainism, keeping to its doctrine of self-conquest and self-culture, does not advise its adherents to get involved in worldly pleasures. It taught respect for life, and, the greatest respect for man, the highest of organisms.

From the viewpoint of biology, the order of organisms in terms of the number of senses is thoroughly scientific. Most probably from the viewpoint of the evolution of sense in the organic world, the Jaina view is scientific. Before J.C. Bose showed the world that plants have life, Jainism held this belief some twenty five hundred years ago.

Not only the view of Jainism, with regard to the world is scientific, it also keeps to the doctrine of compromise and in one sense goes even beyond Buddhism. According to Buddhism, everything is momentary and nothing is substantial. But the Jains, in their doctrines of anekantavada and sayadvada maintain that things are both momentary and substantial. With regard to man, Jainism holds that the soul of man is eternal and substantial, but its body of karmic matter is non-eternal. Similarly, atoms constituting a thing are eternal, but their groupings are non-eternal.

But in spite of the fact that Jainism regards the world eternal and real, its advice is that one should not lose oneself in it.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

The soul apart from the body in which it is encased is characterized by anananta jnana (infinite knowledge), anananta darshana (infinite faith or intuition), anananta charita (pure conduct) and anananta virya (infinite energy). But man is an embodied spirit. Hence, it is fettered and restricted in its knowledge, perception, action and power. What more can be the evil for the infinite, omniscient and self-existent spirit? What could be the cause of this evil? Jainism offers no answer. Its purpose as that of Buddhism is purely therapeutic. It lays down way and means for winning release from the state of unmixed evil. One thing is certain of Jainism. Karmas have befogged the intellect and darkened the soul. Karmas are sticking substance and they have completely concerned soul. These karmas keep on accumulating through the endless cycle of rebirth. If one ponders over the problem of evil posed by Jainism. Then the release of the soul appears to be almost insoluble. However, the practical solution is possible.

From a realistic stand karmas are the real cause of one's bondage, suffering and evil. Man is restricted in his knowledge. Therefore, he makes mistakes. Because he lacks faith in the Tirthankaras, scripture and his Guru, so he does not undertake the task of winning his own release. He does not see that even a life of pleasure is simply his snare a trap. Even a life of a deva in heaven is no way out of the tangle. The most important thing is that Karmic matter has to be eradicated. In explaining bondage or evil, Jainism refers to karmas as the real cause. Karmas dwarf the intellect and produce avidya. Hence, it will be a mistake to suppose that avidya is the fundamental reason of one's evil or suffering. Only Ramanuja, apart from Jainism, regards karmas as the cause of evil for man. But he also adds that karmas in association with avidya lead to bondage of the jiva.

Jives are many. So it means that there is a continuous influx of pure spirits into this world, leading to their bondage or suffering or evil. No pure spirit as nitya-

siddhas can be the cause, nor of the siddhas or perfected soul can cause karmas. And there is no God. Hence, the jives alone are the creators of the evil of bondage which they have brought about upon themselves. In like manner, there is no God to help the jives out of their misfortune. Hence, man alone is the architect of his final destiny. He can either work up for his deliverance, or, remain in his sorry state of affairs. Man is his greatest friend and at the same time his great enemy. Thus alone is responsible for his evil.

Hence, the existence of man in the world, in any walk of life is evil for Jainism, Buddhism and even for Shankaarite Advaitism. Perhaps Buddhism and Advaitis, especially in neo-Vedantism, there is some room for amelioration. Jainism is wholly negative with regard to the world. But by encouraging the Jaina laity for undertaking trade and industry, Jains are the richest people of India. Here actual life lived belies the theory.

Though the doctrine of evil in Jainism is most devastating yet the path to put and end to evil is quite clear. The influx of karmas has to be stopped and the accumulated Karmas of the past lives have to be totally eradicated. The stoppage of Karmas is known as samvara and its eradication is known as nirjara. These two go together. First step is to adopt the three jewels of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct(samyag-darshan-jnana-charitiani-mokshamarga).for the cultivation of right conduct pancha-mahavrata has to be strictly followed Lastly, for the removal of Jnanavaraniya and mohaniya (i.e., covering the Jnana and passions)one has to gunasthana and dhyanas.

The removal of all karmas is a difficult thing. But the greatest achievement requires our utmost effort.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Two things may happen to a man after death. If a person has practiced tapas (austerities), pacnha-majavratas (five vows), dhaynas and gunasthanas under Guru, then he may attain the pristine glory of omniscience. He becomes immortal and no more enters into the cycle of rebirths. But a vast majority of Jivas have to transmigrate from one birth into another, in an endless chain. The Jains were the first to have maintained the doctrine of karma-sansar-jnana mukti. They have made a detailed classification of karmas, leading to the rebirths of a Jiva either in higher or lower rebirths. There are karmas that determine specific body and their organs, age, family and pleasure pain in next lives. There is no way out of the rigour of Karmavada, except by the path of liberation. We have already made reference to this path of liberation. We have already made reference to the path, the important thing to repeat and emphasize efforts. There is no possibility of making prayers to any supernatural agency for one's release.

ANEKANTAVADA AND SAPTABHANGI NAYA

Buddhism might have adopted a middle path in its theory and practice. but Jainism has worked out a world-view of compromise in relation to the conflicting views. At least there were at least 62 views regarding the world, soul and God at the time of Lord Mahavira and he resorted to anekantavada and sayadvada with a view to striking out a compromise between them.

According to Jainism. Reality is multifaceted (anekantavada, many ends or adages, aneka antas) and naya means many view from many perspectives. What is true from one perspective need not be true from another. Syat simply means 'from a certain point of view and in a certain sense'. Keeping this meaning of 'sayat' seven-fold prediction is said to be exhaustively possible.

1. In a certain sense, and view, the jar is (sadasti ghatah).
2. In a certain sense, the jar is not (Syannasti ghatah).
3. In a certain sense, the jar is and is not.

4. In a certain sense, the jar is indescribable.
5. In a certain sense, the jar is and is indescribable.
6. In a certain sense, the jar is and is not indescribable.
7. In a certain sense, the jar is and is not and is indescribable.

For example, a jar is in the room on a table at 9.30 A.M., and yet may not be there at 10. A.M./ Again it is and is not between 9-10 A.M. if a man is forced to say whether it was between 9-10 A.M. then he would keep silent. In this way the Jainism maintain seven-fold prediction going beyond the catus koti of the ajivikas.

By combining the anekantavada with the principle of identity-cum-difference, Lord Mahavira could wriggle out of his time. For example,

1. The soul aspect of a jiva is eternal.
2. Its modes in terms of its karmaic material are non-eternal.
3. A *jiva* is both eternal and non-eternal, if we take an embodied *jiva*.
4. If it is asked to declare it either eternal or non-eternal, then like Lord Buddha one has to say it indescribable or call it is *avyakta*.
5. Thus the soul is and is not is indescribable, if a *Mukta* is in view.
6. The Soul is and is not and is indescribable by combining (4), (5) and (6).

THE MONK AND THE LAITY

Buddhism did not take care of instructing the laity, with the result that a large number of Buddhists till now have remained at a very low level of religious beliefs. However, unlike Buddhism, Jainism has kept close to their laity and laid certain religious vows for them to observe. Both the monk and the laity have to maintain the three jewels of right faith, right beliefs and right conduct. Both of them have to observe *pancha mahavrata of satya, asteya* (non-stealing), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha* (non-attachment). The difference between the monk and the laity is that a monk has to observe these vows with far greater rigor than a

laity. For example, a monk has to abstain from sex in words, deed and speech. A laity can become a house-holder by marrying. He has only to desist from adultery and fornication. The observance of a vow in a lesser degree is also known as *anuvrata* in relation to *mahavrata* of a monk.

But certain other restrictions have to be maintained even by the laity. For example, a laity is discouraged from farming his land for fear of destroying many lives in the soil. In modern times he can hardly help in destroying the pests if he has to introduce green revolution in his farm, similarly, a house-holder has to observe certain vows for his self-discipline e.g., setting certain periods per day for meditation on the teachings of Jainism, Guru and Tirthankaras. He may induce himself to maintain silence for himself on certain days in the week or month. Everyday, a laity has to meditate every morning.

A monk is a renunciate and he has to practice tapas, accept three jewels of his faith observe mahavratas with rigor and at last has to enter dhyanas and progress along the fourteen steps of Gurusthanas.

SECTS

There are two sects called Digambara and Svetambaras. Digambaras live naked as Lord Mahavira was. They appear to be older of the two. Svetambaras put on cloths and cover their mouth with a piece of cloth for fear of injuring insects. Both of them do not differ essentially in their beliefs and practices. For practical reasons, the Digambaras do not admit women as nuns. But Svetambaras have no objection against women in accepting them as nuns.

The two sects differ with regard to their beliefs relating to their religious Scripture. The Svetambaras accept the extant Angas Upangas and other canonical works as genuine whilst the Digambaras hold that original works have been lost. The Digambaras have a number of collections in their custody, but they are reluctant to

make them public. On the whole, the Jains have preserved a good deal of literary works on India.

It seems almost unbelievable that Jainism without holding beliefs in supernatural agencies should have indulged in having idols. In about the sixteenth century, Lonkashaha protested against Jaina religion. He established a sect called Sthanakvasi in Western India. In about 1817 Acharya Bhikanji Maharaja organized Terapantha which is really a sub-sect of Stanakavasi sampradaya.

VII: SIKHISM

INTRODUCTION

Sikhism took its rise in the Punjab in the 15th Century and at present it has assumed great importance on the Indian scene. Sikhism is Hinduistic in the sense that it accepts the four-fold principles of Karma-Samsara-jnana-mukti. It also adopts a general Hindu view of life, poetry and music.

Sikhism was born at a time when India was a state of political upheaval, social instability and religious ritualism externalism without much inner illumination and spiritual experience in depth. Sikhism at the hands of the first Guru, named Nanak was not primarily a political movement. From the social point of view it was founded on the rejection of caste and it promoted egalitarianism. Naturally it did not support untouchability. Sikhism of Guru Nanak was essentially a religious reformist movement in the direction of Saint Poets of India. Guru Granth Sahib the sacred book of the Sikhs contains four poems of Trilochan, 62 of Namdeva and 240 Sakhis and 227 Padas of Kabir. Most of the characteristic teachings of Sikhism like monotheism, crusade against idolatry and caste, externalism (bahyachara), ritualism could be easily traced to these saint poets, specially Kabir. Kabir appears to be a contemporary of Guru Nanak.

Again, in the beginning, terms like Sikh, Saint, Sadhu, Bhakta and Sevak were used in the same sense. However, now, the term 'Guru' is to be used for the first ten Gurus and for Adi Granth Sahib. All poets whose lines have been included in Adi Granth Sahib are called 'Saint'. But 'Guru' is not to be called "Saint". However, one can note that Guru Nanak was greatly influenced by Saint Kabir.

‘Sikh’ is really derived from the word ‘Sisya’. Hence, Sikhism is the religion of ten Gurus and their followers Sisyas. A Sikh is one who is willing to lay down his life for the sake of his Guru.

TEN GURUS

Guru Nanak was the real founder of Sikhism. He was born in 1469 in a village called Talwandi, some fifty miles south-west of Lahor. It is now in Pakistan and has been named Nanakan Sahib. True, Sikhism of Guru Nanak was largely a religious and spiritual movement, but even Guru Nanak advised his followers to resist evil ‘even to the point of sacrifice and martyrdom’. Later on Guru Hargobind Singh girded on two swords ‘miri’ (to defend and presume political end) and ‘piri’ (for safeguarding spiritual pursuit). But it was the last Guru Gobind Singh who infused martial spirit into his Sikh followers called ‘Khalsa’ and who were to be called ‘Singh’ (lion). The new order of Khalsa had to fight in defence of their faith, home and hearth and their honour.

1. Guru Nanak (1469-1539).
2. Guru Angad (1504-1552). He introduced Gurumukhi script.
3. Guru Amar Das (1479-1574).
4. Guru Ram Das (1534-1581).
5. Guru Arjun Dev (1563-1606). He built a temple ‘Hari Mandir’ which developed into Golden Temple in the 19th Century through the munificence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He also prepared what ultimately took the form of Adi Granth Sahib in 1604.

6. Guru Hargobind (1595-1644). He assumed two swords Piri and Miri and sat on a seat and called it Akal-takht. 'Miri' stands for earthly power, and 'Piri' stands for spiritual power. Thus a Guru is a soldier and a saint.
7. Guru Hari Rai (1630-1661)
8. Guru Hari Krishan (1656-1664).
9. Guru Teg Bahadur (1621-1674).
10. Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708).

A short reference to Guru Gobind Singh is necessary, for, he changed the whole tenor of life of the Sikhs. He was born at Patna, and, was only nine years old when he was called to assume the sacred trust of being a Guru. Sikhs always had to struggle against the Muslim rulers and there is little doubt that Sikhs were turned into incomparable soldiers as a result of that struggle. However, it was the cruel assassination of the bold but highly virtuous Guru Teg Bahadur that created a sense of revolt against the Muslim rulers in the mind of the Sikhs. After all Guru Teg Bahadur died to safeguard the honour of Sikhism.

Guru Gobind Singh thought and meditated over the matter deeply. His sons too were all killed by Wazir Khan. Naturally the question was 'Do or Die'. On Baisakhi day in 1699 Sikhs had assembled, as usual in a large number. He announced in the assembly that he need five heads as offering to the Guru. Sword in hand, with unflinching courage he waited for the response. First one and then other four also offered themselves for the supreme sacrifice. Kabir writes,

Sir rakhe sir jat hai, sir kate sir hoe

(He who would cling to his life would lose it, and he who would sacrifice it would gain)

A new code was announced with emphasis on moral excellence, heroism and strict discipline. In a bowl sweet drink was prepared and from that one bowl all of them were made to drink symbolism brotherhood within the rank and castelessness and absolute equality. They all were to bear the name of 'Singh' (lion) and they were given five vows to observe. These five vows known as panch-kakara i.e., Kesh (keeping of long hair), Kara (iron bracelet), Kachh (under drawers), Kangha (comb) and Kirpan (Sword). The five heads offered to the Guru were known as panj-pyare. They are remembered even now in the daily prayers of Sikhs. These Sikhs with five K's are now known as Khalsa (the pure).

These vows of strict discipline and panch-Kakara have infused new militancy and a close-knit brotherhood. In addition to this, Guru Gobind Singh abolished succession of personal Guruship. Adi Granth Sahib was to serve as Guru. Its Bani would serve as the guide of the holy assembly. Further, he gave this injunction that wherever five Sikhs with pure heart would gather together, he would be present in their midst for their guidance in spirit. Thus, Guru Gobind Singh invested Guru Granth Sahib with spiritual power and Panth with temporal sovereignty.

GURU GRANTH SAHIB

What the Bible is to the Christian, the Quoran to the Muslims, the Veda to the Brahmins, Guru Granth Sahib is for the Sikhs. It contains Bani which stands on the level of 'the Word' of the Christian and of the followers of Shabda Brhama and of the Saivates. Guru Nanak himself had composed a number of songs; the best of them may be named Japji, Asa-di-var, Rahi-rasa Patti, Dakani Omkara, Siddha Gosthi and Bara Mah. Other Gurus after Guru Nanak have also added their compositions. Guru Granth Sahib was composed in 1604 by Guru Arjan Dev who was assisted by the great devotee Bhai Gurudas. It was written in Gurumukhi script so that the Sikhs may remain Guru-centered. Guru Granth Sahib includes not only the composition of Gurus but also of many Saint Poets. It includes verses of Ramanand, Jaideva,

Namdeva, Trilochan, Veni, Dhanna, Pipa Sain. Kabir, Rai Das, Shaikh Bhikhaji, Sadhan, Sudras, Poona Nane and of Muslim Sufis. However, the compositions of Kabir are far more numerous than of any other non-Sikh composers. 243-245 Sakhis and 227 Padas of Kabir have been included in Guru Granth Sahib. This shows the great esteem in which Kabir was held by Sikh Gurus. Kabir was a non-Vedic Hindu influenced by Gorakhnath and some Buddhist poets. Hence, much of Sikhism has to be understood in interpreted in terms of Saints' religious philosophy. However, Sikhism in course of historical development has to be understood as an independent religion like Jainism and Buddhism. But it is an Indian religion and wholly embedded in the culture and tradition of India, more non-Vedic than Vedic.

BASIC FEATURES OF SIKHISM

Sikhism is wholly an Indian religion in the sense that its founders were all of Indian origin. Secondly, its religious scripture and teachings are wholly Hindu and hardly Muslim. With these stand points we can submit the following points as the outstanding features of Sikhism which distinguish it from any prophetic religion.

1. Sikhism fully subscribes to the fourfold principles of Karma-Samsara-Jnana-Mukti (Japuji XX, XXV). These principles are the differentiating features of any form of Hinduism, at the present time.
2. Sikhism is marked out as guru-centered religion much more than any other Indian traditions. True, Guru is given a place of great importance in Nyaya, Advaitism, Nathism and Kabir Panth, but the Guru is held in the highest esteem in Sikhism. Even God is called Wahe Guru. The script of guru Granth Sahib is called Gurumukhi because it is calculated to make the Sikhs Godward instead of becoming self or ego-centered (manmukh). In the last resort Adi Granth Sahib is now known as 'Guru' i.e., a spiritual guide of the whole community (Sangat).

3. There is the vow of five K's i.e., keeping of long hair (of head and face), iron-bracelets (Kara), Kacch (under drawers), comb (Kangha) and Kirpan (Sword). In one sense, they are merely external observances, but in another respect they are merely external observances, but in another respect they are the vows of self-discipline, martial spirit, brotherhood and submission to the Guru. These five K's not only mark out the Sikhs from the Hindus but from all other people of the earth.
4. Unlike any other form of Hinduism, it enjoins upon the Sikhs to fight against social injustice and in defence of one's faith. Though it appears to have some resemblance with the Muslim doctrine of Jihad, yet it appears to have arisen among the Sikhs as a result of religious persecution and social injustice in the form of jizya. Even the first Guru, Guru Nanak had advised his followers to fight against social evils. Guru Hargobind wielded the two swords of miri and piri. But it was Guru Gobind Singh who infused the martial spirit into the Sikhs in defence of one's faith. Hence, one of the salient features of Sikhism is that there is a fusion of Bhakti and Shakti, and Khalsa is a symbol of a saint soldier.
5. Sikhism teaches strict monotheism. The highest entity is both non-personal and attributeless and personal. In the non-attributed form it is called one-omkara of nirakashara, and , in the attributed form he is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. For His devotees he is dayalu (kind) and Kirpalu (compassionate).

God as both manifest and unmanifest is in accordance with Indian tradition, but is most marked in Dadu and Rai Das, the Saint poets of medieval India. To some extent even Namadeva admits the worship of Puranic deities, though his deity is essentially without attributes.

6. In consonance with strict monotheism, Sikhism does not admit avataravada (the doctrine of incarnation) and does not believe that there can be any first and last or special prophet of God. But an earnest seeker can obtain the light divine and can be said to be realized soul. Such a person can be a Guru, but he is not an object of worship, but only of veneration.

The refutation of avataravada is found most pronounced in Kabir by whom Guru Nanak was certainly influenced. By the way this rejection of avataravada shows that it could have no relationship with Christianity, and the rejection of any special emissary of God differentiates Sikhism from Islam.

7. But Sikhism admits that there is only one God ek-omkara (unmanifest) and also Omkara (in manifest form) with an infinite number of attributes. He can be variously named as WaheGur, Kratar(creator). Akal (eternal), satt-nam (the holynome). He is also known as Allh, khuda, karim (benevolent), rahim (merciful), Sahib (Lord). The same Lord may be variously named as worshipped in different languages.

This is also a strongly marked feature of Kabir's teachings. On the basis of this Kabir has tried to unify the Muslim and Hindu differences.

8. Sikhism is against caste, idolatry, ritualism, and external observances.

These features are found in most Saint Poets, but specially in Kabir.

9. Sikhism teaches that Maya is the creative manifestation of God, but is also the source of five traditional evils in man, namely, Kama(passion), Kerodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (infatuation) and Ahamkara (egoity). These can be removed through prayer, meditation and social service.

Kabir also teaches that Maya is the power of God, called Raghunath, and, that it is a great enchanting power which leads to man's spiritual fall.

10. Nam-Sumirana (constant muttering) of God's name with complete surrender to him has been emphasized by Guru Nanak. This is a powerful means of winning the Grace of God.

Kabir too takes record recourse to nama-sumirana, but it was Namdeva who dwelt upon this method of meditation. We must not ignore that fact that Sikhism is also known as Saint-mat. Hence, it is but natural that it should have been influenced by saint poet.

- 11 Sikhism prescribes bhakti for gaining release and this is also a strong feature of saint poets like Dadu, Rai Das and Kabir.

- 12 Guru Nanak does not recommended sanyasa as a means of Mukti. He himself was a house holder and considers the life of a house-holder as very important in society.
- 13 Like Kabir (Sakhi 31.7-9; Pada 103 of KLabira Granthavali), Sikhism is beyond both Hinduism (Vedic) and Islam. Sikhism is no doubt an Indian religion and embedded in Hindu culture and world-view but is an independent religion.
- 14 But Sikhism does not teach that either Hinduism or Islam is wrong. It teaches both Hindus and Muslims to practice their own faiths with a view to strict moral life and social service, without caring much for rituals and external observances. In this sense it was a reformist religion.
- 15 Sikhism favours local language and its script is Gurumukhi, which is also its distinctive feature.

GOD IN SIKHISM

Sikhism has arisen from the devout hearts of ten gurus. They were not philosophers. They have set down what they could experience about the Supreme Reality. Their language has been shaped by the Saint Poets and mystics of the medieval times.

Sikhism teaches strict monotheism. There is only one God. But he can be conceived both as unattributed and attributed. In the unattributed form, He is called Ek-Omkara, and, in the attributed form, He is called Omkara. It is useless to seek any philosophical concept to explain the two aspects of God.

Nirguna our saguna ek

Saguna nirguna thapi nao,

Duha mili ekai tino thao-(Guru Granth Sahib)

In reality nirguna and saguna (attributed) Brahman are one and the same. In order to escape from idolatry, Guru Nanak talks of God as niranjana, nirakshara,

beyond human understating. The famous lines from the mula mantra with which the Granth Sahib begins:

There is one God, eternal truth in his Name;

Maker of all things, fearing nothing and enmity with none.

Timeless is His image; not begotten, being of His own Being,

By the grace of the Guru made to me.

This nirguna Brahma can be attained only through.

Samadhi. In the famous three jewels of advaitism Shrivana, mananan and nididhyasana, guru Nanak enjoins upon his followers saniyai (listening to the holy words), mannai (pondering over the truths heard) and dhayana (meditation over the truth).

But the Supreme reality has also been called the maker of creator; hence, he is endowed with will and intellect. There fore, Parabrahma is also Omkara, Saguna Brahama or Ishwara. Thus, the same supreme reality is both formless and with form. As Ishwara, He becomes an object of worship and devotion. In this aspect he is known as kind, benevolent (dayalu and kripalu), and as formless He is called Satt-nama, nirakshara, akala(eternal).

Lord as an object of devotion is invested with may which is the manifesting and creative power of God. This is exactly what Kabir takes maya to be. But this maya for Guru Nanak conceals the real nature of god, and , man under the influence of maya becomes a victim of the five evils known in Indian thought as Kama (lust), Krodha (anger violence), Lobha (greed), Moha (infatuation of attachment to worldly objects) and Ahamkara (egoity, pride and self seeking). This is really the enslavement of man and his bondage from which he is to be freed. Otherwise he will be in the endless chain of miserable rebirths, as will be detailed later, man can free himself only with the grace of God and for this he has to engage himself in prayer, meditation and selfless services to mankind.

Along with this doctrine of God there is also a negative side. Though God is creator, kind and benevolent, yet He does not incarnate Himself in what is known as avatara. This is a doctrine which was held by Kabir in a very special way (Bijak, Shabda 8.45). In the same way, Sikhism does not maintain that there are special or exclusive prophets of God. Hence Sikhism maintains strict monotheism by indirectly criticizing Islam and almost directly Christianity and Pauranic Hinduism.

Guru Nank calls Saguan Brahma, the object of worship and devotion by various names of Kartar (creator), Akal (eternal) Satt-nam (holy name). Wahe Guru also was used in post-Nanak literature. Guru Nanak has also used the name Allah, Khuda, Parwardigar (the Cherisher) and Sahib (Lord). He has also used the various names of God, used in Pauranic bhakti like Rama, Gopala, Muraari, Narayana, Madhava. Why has Guru Nanak used so many appellations concerning God.

The meaning is obvious. Sikhism seeks to spread its message to all adherents of different faiths, with a new view to reconciling them and also with a view to deepening their faiths in the interest of strict moral rectitude and service to all mankind. Keshava-Karim, Allh-Ishwara, Rama-Rahim are but different names of the same entity which is both formless and with form.

The guru of Gurus is but one, though he has various forms. Hence, 'The Guru is Shiv; the Guru is Vishnu and Brahma; the Guru is Parbati, Lakshmi and Sarswati.

Thus difference is superficial and underlying reality in all religions is deeper and far more fundamental. Why quarrel and fight amongst ourselves over names?

By pointing out the underlying reality which undergirds all names and forms of religions, guru nanak makes a point against ritualism and external observances that divide one man from another. Guru Nanak appeals to the inner depth in the real seeker after God, and, here Rama and Rahim are one and the same reality.

Again, Guru Nanak does not favour Sanyasa. He commends himself to the life of house-holder who works hard for his honest living and makes sacrifices for the needy.

Thus, a Sikh house-holder is expected to observe Kirt Karna, wand chakan, nam japna (hard honest work, sharing the wealth with others and reciting the name of God). Prof. Gurucharan Singh Talib quotes the following lines from Guru Nanak:

He whose livelihood is earned through work,

And part given away in Charity-

Such one, Nanak, truly knows the way to God.

The charitable distribution of food called *langar* was introduced by Guru Nank, and every Sikh is expected now to contribute towards it. is it any wonder now that Sikhs are not only excellent soldiers, but are also excellent farmers, successful businessmen and industrialists-entrepreneur?

Lastly, as personal God, He is the Savior of His seekers. If we sincerely seek Him. Then by bestowing His Grace the Lord frees his devotees from the shackles of Maya. The highest end of man is God-realization, whether through Samadhi or through bhakti.

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN SIKHISM

Man no doubt is an embodied soul. Not the body, but the soul is immortal.

This conscious soul dieth not,

The precious jewel, for which men go on pilgrimages.

Dwelleth within the heart.

This soul, apart from the body is said to be a spark from the burning light of god. At times the embodied soul, called man has been compared to the water of the ocean in a glass. This glass is only the container, but the water is of the same nature as the ocean. This will remind one of the Vedantic metaphor of ghatakasha (i.e., either enclosed in a jar). Unless this enclosure of the body is destroyed, the water

cannot mix with the water of ocean. Unfortunately man does everything for the continuance of this body, and, keeps on transmigrating in endless rebirths of countless suffering, and unless liberation is won, man will keep on transmigrating in endless rebirths, attended with suffering. But the question is why does man fall into this countless rebirths?

In one sense, it is the Lila of God. Because of His spontaneous creative power called Maya, the world has come into being. This Maya, however, conceals the real nature of God. Through this concealment man falls into five evils of Kama (Lust), Krodha (anger, violence), Lobha (Avarice, greed), Moha (infatuation, attachment to worldly pleasure) and Ahamkara (pride, selfishness). As long as these five evils are not removed, man will continue to suffer in the endless circle of countless rebirths.

Man thus has twofold nature. Because of the pure spirit of God within him, there is a tendency within him to move God-ward (Gurumukh). But there is also the tendency to continue in worldly pleasure. This would remind one of the Buddhist teaching about *trsnā* and *bhava* (the desire to be born for the worldly enjoyment). This desire for the worldly pleasure has been called in Sikhism *manamukh* i.e., turning one's mind towards his selfish interest and pleasure. What is the remedy? Remedy lies in the selfish interest and pleasure. What is the remedy? Remedy lies in the surrender of one's will to the will of God. But who is responsible for human *Haumai* i.e., the state of bondage of the soul by the five evils of lust, greed, attachment, anger and egoity.

True, there is the enthralling *mayā* that conceals the true nature of God and the real duty of man towards God. But man has been endowed with reason, and, also a tendency within him to move Godward. If man does not use his reason for knowing his ultimate end of realizing God, then he is responsible for his further continuance of misery in endless rebirths. Thus *Haumai* is the state of rebellion against God, and, separation from His being. This means turning away from divine presence for the greater allowance of beastly pleasure. But human existence is a very precious opportunity of turning towards God and winning one's release from endless sufferings in countless rebirths. Only in this life can one win his *Mukti*. This

human birth is a rare good fortune in the wheel of transmigration and is not likely to happen again in this casteless turning of the wheel.

True, this body is the source of enhancement, but then it has not to be neglected or looked upon with contempt. The body has to be used in the service of man and god. This body is a temple of god and only by having a sanctified live can one have knowledge of god and his duty to mankind.

In the body God is present,

The body is His temple,

In the body is the place of pilgrimage,

Of which I am the pilgrim.

This will remind one of the biblical teaching which requires man to offer himself to God as 'his holy temple'. This insistence of Sikhism to treat one's body as the temple of God is a new departure in Indian religious thought, as also his insistence to serve humanity will also be regarded as very healthy religious tradition. It is keeping with the doctrine of Sarvamukti of Vedantins and of the Bodhisattvas. This has been taken up further by Ramkrishna Ashrama. To keep one's body as the temple of god, a Sikh has to restore to prayer, meditation and concentration on God in both aspects as attribute and ultimately as unattributed.

Sikhism further maintains the equality of all men, brotherhood of the Sikhs and the rejection of caste.

THE WORLD

M.A. Macauliff has presented the views of Guru Nanak which strongly has the flavour of the Rgvedic (X.90.121.129) hymns. The story of creation given by Guru Nanak has also a touch of the Quoranic doctrine of creation of the world.

He fixed the heavens without pillars by the utterance of a word,

Having created the sun and moon, He infused His light into them.

Thou has no father or mother; who begot thee?

Thou art devoid of all form, outline, or caste.

According to this account at the beginning there was utter darkness. There was neither the earth nor the sky, neither the day nor night. God remained in His own being. Then he created the world and entered into it, as is also given in the Upanishada. God sustains the world. Mere command of God has brought the world into being.

If we emphasize 'God said and there was the world', then the mere word of god may be understood to have created the world out of nothing. But at another place Guru Nanak has mentioned that God has created the world, not out of four, but five elements. The whole world is a wonderful creation of god and shows His power and glory. This will strongly remained one of Psalm 19 singing the glory of creation.

How clearly the sky reveals God's glory!

How plainly it shows what he has done

... ..

No speech or words are used,

No sound is heard,

Yet their voice goes out to all the world.

Now Guru Nanak says that the ignorant or foolish people do not heed the voice of God, revealed in His creation. But Sat Guru teaches that God is omnipresent

and He indwells in everybody and in everything. Those who turn to God, find the world to be the wonderful creation of the Lord and His Lila (Sports). This knowledge of the dependence of the world on God and His Lila fills the devotee with admiration and praise for the Lord and helps his devotion to Him.

True, the world has no reality of its own. But knowing this world as dependent on and the creation of God, the world has to be taken seriously. This is the field of his duties and by performing them a devotee can please God and win his release by His grace from endless transmigration. Hence, every Sikh has to fulfill his duty, largely as a house-holder. Out of 10 Gurus were house-holders. Thus the world is real and is the creation of God so that man in bondage may win his release. One should notice that according to Sikhism only in the human existence on earth can one win his release. Hence the world is real and the human existence is also very precious.

This view in Sikhism distinguishes it from Advaitism where the world is said to be illusory. The world is real because God has created the world and He indwells in it. How can it be unreal or in any slighted? If one is Godward, then he takes the world as real and takes his opportunity to work out his release by doing his duties in this real world very seriously.

True, service to God and devotion to Him are means of release, but knowing the world and society as real, Guru Gobind Singh has emphasized *purusakara* (self-effort) and social service, known as (*Mukhtnam*).

O Sikhs, borrow not, but if you are compelled to borrow, faithfully restore the debt. Speak not falsely and associate not with the untruthful. Associating with holy men practice truth, love truth, and clasp it to your hearts. Live by honest labor and deceive no one... covet not money offered for religious purposes. He who distributed sacred food should do so in equal quantities whether the recipients be high or low, old or young... abandon at once the company of Brahmans and Mullas who cheat men out of their wealth.

Again, 'Let him contribute a tenth part of his earning for religious purpose'.

THE PROBLEM SUFFERING

Sikhism admits that the world is a creation of God is Kartar (creator). He has created the world because of the creative power of maya. This maya conceals the real nature God, and as a result of this ignorance man becomes manmuki and falls into the five evils of lust, anger, infatuation, greed and egoity. Is God, then responsible for the evil or suffering of man in endless transmigration. No doubt a creator God is best with this difficulty. Whether god creates out of nothing, or with the five elements, because of His lila in the form of His maya He becomes responsible at least in part for the evil and suffering of man. In Zoroastrianism, it has been pointed out that God can create only finite things because it is the very meaning of things created. And, finitude cannot but be invested with imperfection which in the domain of creatures with powers of discrimination can be interpreted as maya, ignorance, limitations (as in Jainism) and suffering (moral and philosophical). But God has also given reason to man and his capacity for knowing his ultimate end of divine purpose. That purpose is that man should surrender his will to the will of God.

Our will are ours, but they are to make them thine.

God has made man finite-infinite, manamukh (worldly) and Gurumukh (Godward). Man is also endowed with free will and reason, either to move in the direction of God-realizations or to lose himself in endless transmigration fraught with endless sufferings. Thus, man is now responsible for his moral fall and sufferings. But there is also a way out of sufferings.

If one remains immersed in the enjoyment of the world, then the bondage of ignorance continues. However, if one gains knowledge about the world and moves

Godward then there is the prospect of release. This has been illustrated by the metaphor of two birds.

Of those two, the one eats sweet fruit;

The other looks on without eating (Mandaa 3.1; svet: 4.6).

Hence, haumai i.e., living in and enjoying the world cannot be forever allowed. God sends sufferings so that man may turn Godward. Thus suffering can be also good in disguise.

This worldly existence of man is the result of his past karmas and God is not responsible for his worldly existence. But quite naturally good karmas give rise to better status and opportunity to man. But there are pathways to God-realization to which we may turn now.

PATHWAYS TO GOD-REALISATION

There is none eternal god, both attributed and unattributed. Unattributed God is the same as Nirguna Brahma. He can be realized by means of constant concentration and Samadhi. Like Shankara, Guru Nanak recommends Suniyai (Shravana, listening to the lesson given by a Guru), Mannai (Mananan, pondering over the truth given by the Guru), and dhyana (nidhyasana i.e., realization through deep meditation). But this is a difficult path attended with many risks. Guru Nanak also prefers to Hathayoga where there is the discipline of the body and the control of breath. But this path is bogged down in the marsh of riddhi-siddhi (attainment of powers) and is likely to lead to distorted path of panchamakara of the perverts; against this Guru Nanak recommended the path called Sahaj (easy and in accordance with the nature of man). This is a path of prayer, meditation or bhakti leading to the Grace of God.

Make continence thy furnace, resignation thy goldsmith

Understanding thy anvil, divine knowledge thy tools,

... ..

Divine love thy crucible, and melt God's name therein,

In such a true mint the world shall be coined,

This is the practice of those on whom God looked with an eye of favor.

Thus, the practical approach for God-realization means devotion to Ishavara or Brahmana, the guidance and instruction of a Guru is absolutely necessary. Of the Guru himself is a man who has realized God, and is called a St-Guru. This is also in keeping with *advaitism* where a Guru is said to be indispensable and this guru himself should be a *Jivanmukta* (liberated in this life) and *Brahmajnani*. According to guru Nanak, in a true guru God has installed His own spirit, and through him the ways of God are revealed to the pupil. Without a guru man will remain in the state of misery.

The heart is an elephant; the body is a forest,

The guru the Good, when the mark of the true World is made on the elephant.

In Japuji Guru has been thus described:

The word of Guru is the inner music,

The word of Guru is the highest scripture;

The word of Guru is all pervading.

The guru is Shiva, the Guru is Vishnu as well as Brahma.

The guru is Parabati, the mother goddess.

There is the teaching of guru-trinity in the sense that the highest Guru is God himself (Ware Guru).then there are ten Gurus, from Nanak to the last tenth Guru Gobind Singh. Lastly, Guru Granth Sahib is the guru for the future spiritual guidance of the Sikhs. But apart from these three, there are realized souls who also are to be counted as gurus. But no guru is likely to come across a seeker without the Grace of God. How to obtain this Grace?

First thing is the constant utterance of the name *nama-sumirana*), with complete surrender to God.

If I repeat the Name, I live; if I forget it, I die;

It is difficult to repeat the true Name.

If a man hungers after the true Name,

His pain shall depart when he satisfieth himself with it.

It is immaterial by which name the devotee is most concerned. It is the magic of mantra which has been recommended. In Indian tradition from time immemorial. The technique of *nama samiran* leads to concentration of God, purifies the mind, makes the seeker Gurumukhi (Godward). Each and every name of God is efficacious of reaching Him. The point is that name is a word and the primal word, which has led to the creation of the world, is likely to be touched, and the power of being saved may be thus invoked. Naturally *nama-samiran* has its relation with the doctrine of Shabad.

According to the Vedantic doctrine of shabad-Brahma, the whole world is the creation of Shabad. Both in Islam and Christianity, the world was created by the Word of God. God said, 'Let there be light and there was light'. In Shaivism there is the Vibration of Shiva-Shakti and this vibration takes the form of sound and the world is the manifestation of this sound. Hence, shabad of Sikhism is the creative and indwelling power of this Universe. Again, the teaching of Guru and of Guru Granth Sahib is through word.

Now through the repetition of name (nam-samiran) of the Lord, the devotee gets connected with the seeker gains higher inner illumination. Thus, Guru Nanak observes:

In the Name of Lord's spirit abides,

May the name in me be indwelling.

Without the Guru we walk in darkness,

Without the Word we understand not life.

The word of the Guru is Light,

His word's Light leads to Truth.

From the Word has emanated the Name,

Through the Word is union attained.

This point has also been made by Kabir,

Sabad ju bahya ek,

Lagat hi bhain mili gaya, parya Kaleje chhed. (1Sakhi1.7)

(The guru shot at me his word-arrow, which immediately vanquished me by piercing through my heart).

But God-realization ultimately depends on the Grace of god.

Grace of god is a free gift of God to His devotee to one with whom He is pleased. But this requires that the seeker must be a worthy recipient. In order to be a worthy recipient, the seeker must be devoted to God devotion to God is most necessary for God-realization. It is the Grace of God which induces the seeker and his Guru to come together. It is the Grace which enables a seeker to have a right name for repetition. It is the grace of god which ultimately prepares the soul to have real devotion to Him. Hence, Guru Nanak recommends unswerving devotion to God.

On the unending, immeasurable path of death,

Devotion to God is man's sure provision;
On that frightening path, obscured by smoke and dust,
Devotion to god is the source of light,
On the path where friend thou has none,
Devotion to God is thy true helper
On that way where terrible heat will oppress thee,
Devotion to God will give thee cooling shade,
There where unbearable thirst will suffocate thee, Saith Nanak, God's
Name showers joyful amrita.

FINAL DESTINY

In Guru Granth Sahib, a few lines of Kabir have been included according to which there are four states of the liberated soul, namely, gaining of heavenly abode, nearness with God. Similarly with God and fellowship with God. These four kinds of final destiny have really been maintained by Ramanuja. Again, in these very lines it is said that one reality appears to be many, but finally manyness is absorbed in the non-dual reality. This metaphor of reflection is really Advaitic which supports the theory of mergence into nirguna Brahma, as the final destiny of the liberated soul. Hence, the Sikh writing supports both the doctrine of the conservation of individual souls, and, also at times the doctrine of absorption into nirguna Brahma.

Like the Buddhist theory of nirvana what matters most is the view that in the final stage, there is an end of suffering. Hence for the Sikh the final destiny of God-realization is freedom from suffering due to the endless transmigration of the soul.

As water blends with water, when
Two streams their waves unite,
The light of human life both blend
With God's celestial light.
No transmigration then awaits
The weary human soul;
It hath attained the resting place,
Its peaceful crowning goal.

In this state there is no misery or pain. The theory of mergence really is indicative of mystic trance. We have already seen that the ultimate reality for a Sikh is both Omkara and One-Omkara (nirguna Brahma). This unattributed Brahma is realised through Samadhi (meditation). Hence, mergence is the real outcome of Samadhi, for in this state the outer word ceases to be felt, and again, in the last stage even the ego appears to be lost. Again, even when attributed Brahma becomes an object of devotion, then here too the individual gets so much absorbed in the object of his contemplation, that he no longer is aware of his own existence. Hence, mergence is really a reflected state of Samadhi or even intense devotion.

In the last resort Guru Nanak dwells upon the presence of God in one's own heart and conscience. This was also emphasized by Kabir who talked of Atmarama. Nanak also says:

Ap pachane Har mile (Guru Granth Sahib 1410-11)

(The Lord is within man).

Again,

Gurumukh bujhaya ek livalay, nij ghar basaya sach samya (G.G.S 222)

But is the seeker really lost? This is more of a feeling of unattached living, rather than the state of final destiny of an individual.

Brhma jnanai sada nirlepa, jaise jal mahi Kamala alepa (G. G. S. 272.)

One has to remain as detached, as a lotus remains unwetted by water. If service to humanity be stressed than disinterestedness of the devotee had been emphasized as it is the Gita (II.47). Though both the theories of mergence and conservation have been stated, really the theory of conservation in heavenly abode (Sach Khand) is more in keeping with the energetic life of a hard working, honest, social worker Sikh. Here in Sach Khand, friends and relatives recognize one another and enjoy everlasting beatitude. But Sikh tradition gives weightage to mergence as the supreme end of Sikh devotion and aspiration.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Sikhism accepts the theory of karma and transmigration. Even if a man does not work in this life, but without devotion, then he has to take birth in the next life. He will not get Sach Khand, but must undergo purgation after death. Such a person has to work again for either mergence of Sach khand. But as long as he does not have God-realization he will have to undergo countless rebirths.

If a man does evil, his punishment will be severe. After the punishment, he will take birth into lower animals. Then again going through the windmill of countless transmigration, he will be reborn as a man. After having the priceless birth as a man, he has to work out his salvation by prayers, meditation and self-surrender to god.

Comfort pervadeth the hearts of those whose minds are attached to
God's feet.

They whose minds are so attached are saved,

O Lord, and obtain happiness by thy favour.

One thing is clear that man is responsible for his transmigration.

‘The recording angels’ take with them a record of man’s acts.

It is he himself soweth, and he himself eateth.

This karmavada has been ordained by God.

Rebirth and deliverance depend on Thy will:

Nobody can interfere with it.

SIKHISM AND HINDUISM

At present all kinds of sects are called Hindus, irrespective of their beliefs and practices. Negatively Hinduism means non-Christian, non-Muslim and non-Parsi faiths and practices. This cannot but procedure confusion. We have divided Hinduism into Vedic, non-Vedic. Vedic Hinduism, excepting Arya Samaj, simply means the acceptance of the Vedas as the only religious scriptures and the acceptance of caste. Non-Vedic Hinduism is largely of Jain and Buddhist tradition in which atheism, anti-avataravad, anti-casteism etc., are maintained. Kabirpanth, Gorakhnath Panth and Sikhism are really non-Vedic Hinduism. But like all other forms of Hinduism, Sikhism has family resemblance with even the prevalent form of Sanatana Hindu Dharma.

1. All form of Hinduism at present accept the four pillars of Karma-samsara-jnana-mukti. Sikhism too accepts them. Therefore, Sikhism comes under the family name of ‘Hinduism’.
2. Besides, at the time of the origin of Sikhism, it did not differentiate itself from caste-Hinduism. Almost on all religious occasions, Brahmin priests presided

over the functions. M. A. Macauliff in 1909 writes: Notwithstanding the Sikh Gurus' powerful denunciation of Brahmans, secular Sikhs now rarely do anything without their assistance. Brahmans help their souls after death to obtain a state of bliss.

Again, Khushvant Singh observes that contrary to the instructions of the Guru, Sikhs maintain caste, go to Hindu and Sikh places of pilgrimage.

Under the circumstances how can one say that Sikhism is not Hinduism?

3. Many verses of Kabir, Tukaram, Rai Das, Trilochan and other Saints have been included in Guru Granth Sahib. On the whole these saints will come under non-Vedic Hinduism. As a matter of fact Sikhism is much nearer to Kabir panth than other forms of Hinduism.

Sikhs and Hindus have remained in a close-knit relationship. Sikhs are as much Indian as any Sanatani Hindu will claim for himself. They all are soaked in Indian culture and ways of living. But one should not ignore some differences between Sanatani Hinduism and Sikhism.

Sikhism does not accept idolatry, avataravada (incarnation) and caste,. Guru Amar Das states his anti-caste views in the following

Let none be proud of his caste.

He who knoweth God is a Brahman.

O stupid fool, be not proud of thy caste;

... ..

Everybody saith there are four castes,

But they all proceed from God's seed.

The world is all made out of any clay,

But the Potter fashioned it into vessels of many sorts.

4. Keeping the rejection of many external forms of devotion, pilgrimage, idolatry, caste, one Inderjit Singh, a Sikh has given the following statement of guru Granth Sahib to show that Sikhs are not Hindus.

a) I do not keep the Hindu fast nor those observed by Muslims during Ramzan...

b) I have broken away irrevocably from the Hindu and the Turk and it is great relief.

c) I will not go to Haj or pay obeisance to a Hindu temple.

d) I shall not worship idols or say namaz.

We (the Sikhs) are neither Hindus nor Muslims.

As a matter of fact Guru Nanak is said to have declared to the high priest of Baghdad about his sect in the following way:

I have appeared in this age to indicate the way unto men. I reject all sects, and only know one God, whom I recognize in the earth, the heavens, and in all directions.

5. But there is little doubt that the following features differentiate a Sikh from a Hindu.

a) The Adoption of five vows of long hair, iron bracelet, Kachh (under drawers), comb and Kirpan.

b) Intense loyalty to the Guru '*Sir rakhe sir jat hai*'

c) Belonging to Sikh Khalsa or Militancy.

d) The adoption of Gurumukhi Script as distinguished from Devanagari Script, Differentiates Sikhism from Hinduism which recognizes Sanskrit in Devanagari script.

Chapter III: ISLAM

INTRODUCTION

Islam is a prophetic religion, and has issued out of both Judaism and Christianity. There is a place for asceticism in both Judaism and Christianity. But in contrast Islam is a middle-roader for it does not ignore worldly pursuits along with its concern for the other-worldly values. Islam accepts the 25 prophets of the Old Testament and 3 of the New. However, Islam accepts that prophet Muhammad is the final and 1st prophet who puts a seal on all that is most genuine message of God for whole mankind.

Islam was found by Prophet Muhammad who was born in 570A.D. and who died in 632 A.D. the prophet received his first revelation through the angel Jibrail (Gabriel) at the age of 40, whilst he was mediating in a cave of Mt. Hira. In the beginning of preaching Islam, the Prophet meet much opposition and had to face threat even to his life. His unflinching faith in Allah helped him to triumph over every difficulty and in the end he died in the midst of the success of his mission.

‘Islam’ means surrendering one’s will to the will of God, throughout one’s life. It means complete obedience to the laws of God as they have been revealed in Quoran and Hadith and later on in Sharih (Sharia). As such Islam includes faith, action and the realization of the divine end for man.

Faith means belief in Allah who is One, Omniscient and Omnipotent. He is neither begotten nor does He beget. A Muslim believes that true existence is of God alone. Man and the entire creation exist only because God wills them to exist God alone is the sole creator of everything that exists, and manifests His glory, power and attributes. Man has been created as a creature with free will so that by his surrender of free will to the divine will he may become worthy of God’s fellowship (Surah

51.56). this faith in God is realized by responding to the message of Allah through His Prophet Muhammad.

Action: Mere faith, without its corresponding action is dead, as the New Testament says. This action of a Muslim has been fully exemplified in the life and teaching of the prophet and is embodied in the 'Five Pillars of Islam', which include:

- 1 Five prayers every day
- 2 Observing Ramdan fast
- 3 Hajj to Mecca
- 4 Giving of Zakat and
- 5 The utterance in Kalima: La ilaha illillahu Muhammad ur-Rasulallah (Sura 2:21-22) (there is One God who has created the heavens and earth, and Muhammad is His prophet).

Action implies that man is accountable for all he does before the judgment the one of Allah. This means the belief in life hereafter, and in the day of judgment, Heaven and Hell (Surah 6.160; 17:13-14). Man therefore is believed to be endowed with free will to choose the good of evil. Hence, Sharia provides a Muslim with detailed rules for his guidance in this earthly life.

Realization: By expressing one's faith in Kalima and acting according to the five pillars of faith, a Muslim realizes his final destiny. Realization means the development of the divine spark in man by means of surrendering one's own will into the divine will. This is possible by performing all actions with the full awareness that God is Seeing Him he is also aware of this divine presence.

Let us proceed now with the five pillars of Islam which include inward faith and outward issuing of it in action strengthened by knowledge.

FIVE PILLERS OF ISLAMIC FAITH

By mere knowledge of Quoran, Hadith and Sharia one does not become a Muslim. A Muslim must have faith in the Quoran and the prophet with all his mind,

with all his soul and with all his strength. A strong faith issues out in action. Faith is embodied in Kalima.

Adhan and prayers: 'Adhan' means 'announcement', but really it means the call to prayer by a muezzin. This may be interpreted as the following:

'God is Most High. There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger'.

This is so important that it is to be uttered into the ears of the new-born child.

A Muslim has to say his prayers five times each day. This means that a Muslim has to dedicate himself to Islamic faith from dawn to the time of his sleep. Naturally prayers strengthen a Muslim in his resolve to perform his actions enjoined on him by avoiding prohibited acts. Prayers aim at keeping the thoughts from wandering into the material world ignoring the divine rules of conduct.

Prayers are to be said by purifying one's body and mind, and, by having clean clothes. So such a Muslim has to wash the ordinarily exposed parts of the body, called wudu. Then he has to utter the name of Allah, the compassionate and merciful. He stands up as if he is standing before the throne of God begging for the forgiveness of his acts of commission and omission, and asking for the divine help for realizing the Islamic destiny of His worshipper. The prayer starts with the utterance 'bismillah' (God, the most merciful and compassionate). Each of the five prayers contains the al-Fatiha, the first Sura of Quoran in which God praised as the creator of Heaven and earth, and, strength from God is sought to walk in the straight paths of Islam.

In every prayer, a Muslim has to assume several postures known as rak'a symbolizing one's surrendering to God. These postures correspond to Yogic asana, though their purposes are quite different. There are five daily prayers. The first prayer is said at dawn before sun-rise. It consists of two kneelings, the end of which the worshipper sits to salute the Lord. The second prayer is afternoon. There is the afternoon prayer between mid-afternoon and sunset. Both these prayers have four kneelings. The

early evening prayer has three kneelings. The last evening prayer is just before sleep-time when the twilight disappears. It consists of four kneelings.

Prayers, five times a day from the key to Heaven, for the worshipper. Even if a Muslim observes other rules of piety but does not offer prayers, he will not inherit the Heavens. Hence, the saying of prayers is an essential exercise of Islamic faith.

According to Dr. Iqbal, through prayers, a worshipper enters into a wider and higher dimension of life by leaving aside the narrower concern of this mundane world. He enters into the higher existence of spiritual life by shunning the life of material pursuits. In addition to private prayers special virtue is attached to collective prayers which are said each Friday and in larger gatherings at the time of Eide al Fitr and Ei9d al-adha. This is a fact of the life that by participating in group mind in a congregation, the mental and spiritual powers of each participant are heightened. So the creative powers of the worshipper get additional impetus in the pursuit of virtuous life.

Each Muslim wether in private or in a mosque, prays with his face towards Ka'ba. This ensures unity amongst the Muslims. In the same way uniformity in words, their order and of postures ensure equality and brotherhood amongst all the faithful believers. Thus Islam does not favour caste and does not admit any priestly class (Surah2:179-183).

Observance of Ramdan Fast: Most of the living religions prescribe the keeping of fast for controlling bodily desires and mental fickleness. According to Islam keeping of fast during Ramdan helps in purifying the mind and removing one's sins (Sur 2173-183). The month of Ramdan is observed in the ninth month. According to the Muslim calendar. A Muslim has to keep fast for the whole month except children, pregnant women, sick and very old men. A Muslim in order to observe fast does not take any food or water from dawn up to sun-set every day during the moth of Ramdan. He is also desisted from smoking and having sexual intercourse during the state of fasting.

During the period of Ramdan, the doors of heaven open and those of hell are closed, and, the powers of the devil are weakened.

Keeping of fast is a very important mode of worship. He, the observer of fast, derives at least two very important kinds of satisfaction. First, he gets full satisfaction of food and drink at the end of the fasting day on account of his increased appetite. Secondly, there is the happiness of spiritual progress in his life. He gets the feeling of coming nearer to his God who strengthens him to observe the fast successfully. He also experiences self control by not indulging in food and drink and by the control of lower passions. The saying of five prayers every day gives him spiritual strength in the pursuit of this daily life.

A Muslim who keeps fast for the full month of Ramdan not only gains his physical fitness, but also gains much spirituality. It is hoped that one who can control his senses during one month can also do so for the rest of the year. During this period a believer has to give Zakat and Sadaqa.

Ramdan reminds the Muslims that their lives have to be tempered and disciplined by sacrifice and self-control. Ultimately a Muslim has to surrender his will to the divine will, so that in the end not he but God lives in him. For this reason a Muslim observes the supreme festival of Eid al-Fitr at the end of Ramdan.

Zakat: Islam permits its believers to enjoy all the good things of life, whilst yet praying to God and observing Ramdan fast. But the prosperous Muslims have to render to society what belongs to society. In prayers, a Muslim recognizes his duty to God, but in Zakat he discharges his duty to society, specially to the poor and the needy. According to the Jewish custom a Jew had to pay tenth of his wealth i.e., 10% of his wealth in cash or in kind. According to Zakat a Muslim has to pay $\frac{1}{2}$ to 5% of his income for the poor and needy. This may be termed as the religious service tax for the poor. Zakat is as important as the saying of five prayers every day. This giving is a religious obligation of the rich, and, at the same time is the claim of the poor of the rich. Most of the Arabs were shepherds, so they could pay their Zakat in terms of Sheep and cattle.

Apart from Zakat, specially during the period of Ramdan, Sadaqa was also an obligation for the Muslim. The difference between the two is that Zakat is religious obligation, but Sadaqa is voluntary.

Hajj: 'Hajj' means pilgrimage to Mecca. Whilst performing Hajj, a Muslim temporarily suspends all his worldly activities. He has to overcome all bad habits and not to decorate himself. He has to put on very simple prescribed dress. A Haji is supposed to have all his bodily desires under control and has not to think of marriage.

In prays, whether private or congregational, Muslims have to turn their face to Mecca. In the beginning the prophet Muhammad used to turn his face towards Jerusalem. But the Jews objected to his doing that as the prophet had accepted Jesus as a prophet, and, in the Quoran Jesus has been mentioned not less than twenty-five times. Hence, afterwards Mecca with Ka'ba in it became the direction in which all prayers had to be offered.

Mecca with Ka'ba is sacred to the Muslim, because this place is associated with the name of the prophet Abraham (Ibrahim, in Arabic). According to Islam, the prophet Abraham was the first recipient of pure monotheism. This monotheism was the first degraded by Judaism, because they mixed it with idolatry. Later on, the Christians added Trinity with the Sonship of Jesus. Hence, the prophet had to win this monotheism by going back to the prophet Abraham.

The life of Abraham to commemorated for his singular obedience to the will of God. Listening to the voice of God, he left his ancestors and sojourned into a strange land. He was so faithful to his God that he was most willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac (Sura 37.81). Hence, the prophet Abraham is considered for commemoration. Mecca therefore is dedicated to the memory of the prophet Abraham. By the way Mecca with Ka'ba is supposed to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. Mecca is also the birthplace of Muhammad and it contains the sacred well Zamzam. Hence, it is the psycho-spiritual centre of the Muslims all over the world, and regarded by them as the oldest shrine of the worship of one God.

The Hajj is performed during the second week of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. In commemoration of the intended sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, there is the festival of Eid al-Adha. This festival also means that in the place of human sacrifice, animal sacrifice has been instituted. It is not necessary for every Muslim to perform Hajj. But a Muslim who has fulfilled all his earthly obligations, and without incurring any injury to his health or the members of his family can afford the cost, then he should perform Hajj. Before starting for the pilgrimage the intending pilgrim should ask God the forgiveness of his sins, should say his prayers and uttering bismillah should get ready for the pilgrimage.

Hajj is a call to all Muslims of the world. By the performance of Hajj at Mecca, the universal brotherhood of the Muslims is most palpably demonstrated. This also exemplifies Islamic equality of the rich and poor, of the black and white, irrespective of any race. Hence, there can be no caste in Islam according to Islam; religion determines the nationality of the people. This conception of nationality is essentially Jewish. Islam has borrowed it from Judaism, and now the Sikhs have also adopted it. This has brought special confusion of politics and religion for the Indians.

Jihad: To the five pillars, the sixth pillar of Jihad may be added. Jihad means a striving and struggle in the path of God-realization. Hence it means readiness to give even one's life for the sake of Allah and his message. Therefore, it means readiness for a religious war. Surah 5.5 enjoins upon the Muslims to declare Jihad against the Christians and Jews. Similarly, surah 5.9 permits the Muslims to declare Jihad against all atheists who do not accept Islam. Again, surah 2.190 enjoins the Muslims to declare Jihad in self-defence. All those Muslims who die in this kind of religious wars are regarded as martyrs who immediately pass into paradise (Surah 2.154; 3:169,195).

Muslim creed: creed means a system of religious beliefs. Muslims accept the following articles of their faith, namely, 1) Belief in God, 2) Belief in his holy angels, 3) Belief in His revelations in Holy scriptures, 4) Belief in His prophets, 5) Resurrection and the day of judgment, and 6) Belief in divine dispensation of things.

God: the cardinal belief of Islam is contained in the Kalima that God is one is known as Tawahid. He is eternal, without any beginning or end, he is neither begotten nor does He beget. He has no body nor form. But he is the creator of heavens and Earth and all things in them. But He is transcendent to every thing that exists. He is above the throne and above all things and exalted by infinite degrees above everything. But he is also nearer to man than their veins and is witness to everything that happens. He is too high and too holy.

God is living, almighty, omniscient and ever sleeps. Nothing possible can escape His grasp and vigilance. He is the judge of all men and their acts. But Allah is said to be compassionate and most merciful. The mercifulness of God is one of the grandest themes of the Quoran. Every Sura, except the ninth opens with the words bismillah al-rahman, al-rahim' i.e., in the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. God is most merciful and forgiving and His love for man is more tender than that of the mother-bird (Surah III.31) His forgiveness has been mentioned in Surah 27.11 and 33.73.

God is essentially unknowable because He is without form and body. But He is known only through His grace. The possibility of seeing God in paradise of his faithful servants is also an article of faith for the Muslim.

Islam does not accept the sonship of Jesus (Sura 17) and the doctrine of Trinity of the Christians. Hence Islam is not only against idolatry but also against the doctrine of incarnation. Islam is also against pantheism. For Allah is essentially transcendent Islam looks upon the doctrine of identity of man and God as blasphemy. God no doubt is omniscient and omnipresent, but not immanent in all things and man.

Thus Islam accepts strict monotheism and the transcendence of God, but admits God's omnipresence.

Angels: As God is transcendent, too high and too holy for human beings, so some intermediaries are necessary to mediate between men and God. Not even the prophet Muhammad could have direct contact with God, though the prophet has a

vision of the Heaven in his state of Miraj (620 A.D.). Islam accepts the existence of angels who serve as intermediaries between God and man. Angels have been created out of light. They have no sex; they do not eat or drink. They have no free will. Their sole function is to sing praises of God and to carry out His command, day and night. They always do the right and so they have not to stand before the judgment bar of God on the day of judgment. Some important angels are as follows: Jibrail (Gabriel) is the angel of revelations in relation to prophet Muhammad; Mikail (Michel) is the champion of faith and a protector of the Jews; Azrael the angel of death who separates the soul from the body of the dead; Israfil who will sound the trumpet on the day of judgment.

Apart from the existence of angels, Islam also accepts the reality of *Iblis*, the devil who refused to carry out the command of God to bow down before Adam. As a result of this disobedience he was hurled down from the Heavens.

Islam also believes in the reality of Jinns. They are said to have been created from fire. They can be both good and evil.

It is clear that the doctrine of angels and Iblis has been taken from the Jewish and Christian belief.

The Quoran and Revelations: the Quoran contains the spoken words of Allah. The Arabic language in which the Quoran has been revealed is noted for its inimitably excellent language. It has only 14 chapters (Suras) and has not been chronologically arranged. The different pronouncements by the prophet at different intervals were recorded and were arranged in their present form by the orders of Caliph Uthman (645-656). It is worthy of note that the prophet was an unlettered man. Therefore, the utterances in the Quoran are considered to be the genuine speech of God Himself.

The Quoran is the most sacred book of the Muslims, which they strive to learn by heart and refer to it for all teachings about God, Angels, the prophets, Resurrection and the day of reckoning and the doctrine of Heaven and Hell. The

Quoran contains the final and definitive revelation of God's will for the guidance of man. It is the foundation of the whole Islamic structure.

Though Islam admits that there were many prophets in the past, but the people have corrupted the true message of pure monotheism. Therefore, the Quoran contains the pure and the final message of Allah to all people and the Prophet Muhammad is the final seal of all the past prophetic utterances. The Jew no doubt received Taurait and Torah, but they are said to have corrupted the true monotheism given by Abraham by mixing it with idolatry, Christians too received God's revelation in *Injil*, but they have corrupted the message of pure monotheism by their doctrine of the Sonship of Jesus and Trinity.

Apart from the Quoran, the Muslims accept Hadith too which contains the sayings and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. As the Muslims think Islam to contain a complete way of life, so Muslim Law is also accepted as sacred. This is known as *Sharia*.

Sharia-means the path that leads to God's commandments. It is based on divine revelation and has been derived from four sources:

1. The Quoran is the most important source of divine commandments. It is also believed to externally exist in heaven in Arabic.
2. The Sunna (Hadith) comes next in this regard and it contains the speech, dialogue and practice of the prophet. It is really a sacred Muslim tradition which is believed to contain what the Prophet said, did or permitted.
3. Ijma simply means a consensus of the Muslim community, or, of its leading scholars.
4. Qiyas simply means analogical deductions.

Sharia has been classified under five heads:

1. What God has commanded.
2. What God has recommended, but has not ordered or made obligatory.
3. What God has left legally undecided or kept indifferently.

4. What God has depreciated, but not prohibited.
5. What God has prohibited of forbidden.

Sharia does not imply Governmental or ecclesiastical institutions. Rules and laws laid down hold individuals responsible for their deeds, before God.

The Muslim divines differ much about the Muslim personal law and in modern times western code of conduct has also been adopted.

Revelatiuon: As human reason cannot know God, so revelation is necessary to serve as guide for the human beings. God has been revealing Himself from the very beginning to all nations, according to the Quoran:

Unto each nation have We given sacred rites which they are to perform; so let them not dispute with thee of the matter, but summon thou unto the Lord. (Surah 22:67).

Again,

‘Allah will judge between you and the day on the day of resurrection concerning that wherein you used to differ’ (Surah 22.69).

But the Quoran is said to have received the Word of God in the most complete form. The chief modes of God’s revelation were in the following manner:

- 1 Through the mediation of an angel, often Gabriel, who communicated the message with a peculiar tinkling sound of a bell.
- 2 Through the mediation of an angel in human form
- 3 By putting the message directly in the heart of the Prophet.
- 4 By the vision of an angel when the Prophet was asleep.
- 5 BY direct communication by God to the Prophet either during waking or sleeping state.

The Quoran is said to be an eternal book which has been revealed to the Prophet part by part, during a course of twenty three years. As God is too high, too holy and too transcendent, so He can be known to mankind only through revelations, specially given to the prophets.

Belief in Prophets: Since God is taken to be a transcendent Being, He could commune with His chosen people only through the intermediaries. The Prophet Muhammad declared that there are 124000 prophets who have been sent to the various people at different times. In the Quoran itself 25 Prophets have been named who were sent to the Jews (Surah 6:83-86) and later on three prophets were added from the New Testament. Abraham and Moses are most prominently mentioned and Jesus has been mentioned at least twenty five times in the Quoran. But the Prophet Muhammad has been called the last and final prophet of the God to all mankind.

The Prophet is a messenger of God to teach people about pure monotheism and law to guide the people (Surah 10:48; Surah 14:4). Prophets served the divine purpose of correcting the people and warning them against disobedience of His message and social law. Usually the Prophets were God-intoxicated men who spoke things in their emotional outbursts and at times in poetic utterances, as in the use of prophet David and prophet Muhammad. The utterances were about God and warning against social injustice. They certainly were inspired men who were committed to God with a great deal of self-involvement.

The day of judgment: Islam holds that man has been given free will which he can choose rightly or wrongly. Each man is accountable for all his acts of commission and omission. On the day of judgment, each person will stand before God without hiding anything from him (Sura 34 and 39:67-73). A person who has disciplined himself by having Islamic faith and action will be rewarded by being sent to Heavens, or , otherwise he would be sent to Hell with its eternally burning flames. This concept of Heavens and Hell is also found in Judaism and Christianity.

But Islamic concept differs in many details.

Again, Islam like the Jews accepts bodily existence of persons on the day of judgment. This is quite different from the concept of pure spirits without the body in Platonic tradition and in the teachings of Samkhya, Jainism and Gita.

Islam believes that on the day of judgment, trumpet will be sounded by the angel Israfil and the dead will rise from their grave to stand before the judgment

throne of God. Further, it is held that Moses and Jesus would advocate for mercy for their followers, but God will hear the petition for mercy of Prophet Muhammad alone for the Muslims.

Pre-destination (Taqdir): Most of the Muslims believe in the absolute decree of God and pre-destination of the good and evil. Surah 3.145 observes, 'No one dies unless Allah permits. The term of every life is fixed'. But the same Surah holds that God is omnipotent to reserve His own decree and that He has endowed man with free will. Hence man can freely choose to obey the commands of God. Thereby he will be accepted for the paradise of Allah.

Many people object to the doctrine of pre-destination. According to them this is the denial of the free will to man. However, the doctrine of pre-destination is an expression of gratitude to God that He saves man out of His mercy and supreme compassion. Hence, as an expression of the mercy of God, Surah 3 observes:

It is no concern of yours whether He will forgive or punish them. They are wrong doers. His is all that the heavens and earth contain. He pardons whom he will and punishes whom He pleases. Allah is forgiving and merciful. (3:128-129).

Again,

Say: O Allah! Owner of sovereignty! Thou givest sovereignty unto whom thou wilt, and thou withdrawest sovereignty from whom Thou wilt. Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt, and thou abasest whom thou wilt. (Surah II. 26).

St. Paul and later on Calvin too support this doctrine of predestination. The Kathopanishad and Mundaka repeat the same doctrine of pre-destination and God's Grace.

This Soul is not to be obtained by instruction,

Nor by intellect, nor by much learning,

He is to be obtained only by the one whom he chooses;

To such a one that Soul reveals his own person. (Kath 2.23; Manduka 3.2, 3).

It will be shown later on that the grant of free will to man is a special gift of God to man. And man is different from the angels, according to the Quoran, for the simple reason that man can freely choose either the good or bad. In contrast, the angels have no free will and they always carry out the will of God. As such the doctrine of pre-destination is an expression of faith, trust and absolute surrender to the will of God. The surrender to the will of God is the meaning of Islam and one has to be faithful to Him when a Muslim is pushed even to the gate of hell.

“To be the slave of God is the proudest boast of the Muslim.” A Christian too sings,

Our wills are ours to make them thine

A Ramanuji will also say,

The absolute surrender to the will of God is the attainment of one's most perfect freedom.

Hence, the doctrine of pre-destination is not a philosophical concept for the religious devotees, but is an expression of piety. No one can miss the note if he goes through the whole Surah3.

MAN IN ISLAM

Man has been created out of dust, according to the Quoran. There are many references to this view of the creation of man:

“Allah created you from dust, then from a little fluid, then He made you pairs (the male and female)”. (Surah XXX.11).

Again,

Verily, we created man from a product of wet earth; then placed him as a drop a clot, then fashioned We the clot a little lump, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it as another creation. (Surah XXIII12-14).

God has created man even above the angels, for he commanded the angels to bow down before Adam.

And we created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And the fell prostrate, all save Iblis, who was not of those who make prostration. (Surah VII.II).

The same account of the superiority of man over angels has been given in Surah 38: 73-74; 20.116. why is the superiority, even when man has been made of dust and angels have been created out of the fire? First, because Adam was given knowledge of things with memory and thinking.

And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform me the names of these. If ye are truthful.

They said: Be glorified! We have no knowledge saving that which thou hast taught us....he (God) said: O Adam! Inform them of their names, and when he had informed them of their names, He said: Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth? (Surah II. 32-33)

The second thing is that angels have no free will, but man has.

And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? How said: surely I know that which ye know not. (Surah II 30).

The thing is that man has been given freedom of will. If he obeys the commandments of the Lord, he will enter Paradise, which is the greatest good for man His creation. But man is free either to do good or evil.

“If ye do good, ye do good for your own, and if ye do evil, it is for them (in like manner)”. (Surah XVII.7).

Again,

“Lo! This is an admonishment, that whatsoever will may choose, a way unto his Lord”. (Surah 76.29).

God has given His commandments to mankind and man is free either to believe or not believe.

Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve. Lo! We have prepared for disbelievers Fire.....

Lo! As for those who believe and do good works-Lo!

We suffer not the reward of one whose work is goodly to be lost. As for such, their will be Gardens of Eden (Surah XVIII. 30-32).

Man alone of all the creatures of the Universe has been credited with the task of carrying the trust of God.

Lo! We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the hills, but they shrank from hearing it and were afraid of it. And man assumed it. (Surah XXXIII. 72).

Man has been held in high esteem in the Quoran and three important statements have been made about him. ‘Surely we created man of the best stature’ (Surah 95.4). First, God has chosen him for Himself and keeps on guiding him.

And God did this because of His mercy and compassion for Adam who had disobeyed God.

Another great thing has been said about man. God has made man his vice-regent on earth.

He is who hath placed you as viceroys of the earth and hath exalted some of you in rank above others, that He may try you by (the rest of) that which He hath given you, (Surah VI.166)

Dr. S.M. Iqbal in ‘The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam; has repeatedly mentioned XXXIII.72 in which it has been mentioned that God has endowed man with the trust of God. Thus, according to Dr. Iqbal, man has been

endowed with creative will and as such man is a co-sharer and co-worker with the creation of the world. The most memorable lines of Dr. Iqbal are:

Khudi ko kar buland itna ki har taqdir se pahale,

Khuda bande se khud puche, bata teri raaz kya hai?

(Develop your individuality so high that before being endowed with God's ordination, God will ask, 'what do you want to be?')

Hence, there is no limit to human spiritual progress. But angels are what they are, and, they have no creative freedom of will to be either more or less than what they are. But is there no doctrine of pre-destination against the freedom of will? Yes. Many Surahs support the doctrine of taqdir or pre-destination.

'No soul can ever die except by Allah's leave and at a term appointed',
(SurahII.145).

But these lines are not meant to teach so much the doctrine of fatalism, as the doctrine of obedience to the sovereign will of Allah. Under all happenings of the world, the faithful Muslim will have to bow down before divine decree.

Well, one question may crop up. Has not God limited Himself by creating man free, even to do evil? Dr. Iqbal accepts this self-limitation of God. But why does God permit man to do evil? Free will is necessary in order that at least some men may rise above the angels in goodness by submitting themselves to divine commandments. But by its very nature free will is not possible without the possibility of disobedience leading to hell-fire. Hence God has permitted evil, but has not willed it. Even Iblis has been permitted by God to do his mischief till the day of judgment.

Last thing about man is that God has given His own spirit to man and at the time of death this spirit returns to God. At the time of resurrection man shall rise from his grave and he will be given the same spirit so that he may be judged for his acts,. Thus man remains ultimately free, for he remains accountable before His creator on the day of judgment for his acts of commission and omission.

Three things might be noted about man. He did not exist before his creation. Secondly, he was created at some point of time. Third, he is not immortal. We can also say that man will not be sent this world again before the day of judgment.

THE WORLD

The world has been created by God. As such the world has been so created that man may know things for himself for his guidance, and, then again, man may know the glory and power of God. By the orderly movement of the Sun and Moon man will know about the laws planted in the world. Besides. God has created the clouds and rain for nourishing the corn plants and fruit trees for the benefit of man. Certainly this world has not been created for mere sports of God.

And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, in play. (Surah 44.38).

The Sun and Moon have been created so that man by knowing their movements may guide his steps.

He is who appointed the Sun a splendour and the Moon a light, and measured for her stages, that ye might know the number of the years, and the reckoning.....Lo! In the difference of day and night and all that Allah hath created in the heavens and the earth are portents, verily, for folk who ward off (evil). (Surah X 6, 7).

The same thought is contained I Surahs II.22 and XII.2, 3. Besides, creations have the purpose of showing God's glory and might, God's commandments for man and lessons for man for his guidance on this earth.

And of His signs is this: he created for your help-meets from himself that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. Lo. Herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect.

And of His signs in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Lo! Herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge. (Surah XXX. 21-22).

Again,

Allah causeth the revolution of the day and night. Lo! Herein is indeed a lesson for those who see. Allah hath created every animal of water. Of them is (a kind) that goeth upon its belly and (a kind) that goeth upon four. Allah createth what He will. (Surah 24. 44-45).

Thus this world is God-centred and man-centred. God has created this world with all kinds of food for man so that he might eat them and multiply his kind. According to Dr. Iqbal God has created the world without any free will, but He made it so that it may evolve into something better and higher and he quotes the following: "he multiplieth the creation what He will", (Surah 35.1)

But everything in the world and much in man are determined by God.

No female beareth or bringeth forth save with His knowledge. And no one groweth old who groweth old, nor is aught lessened of his life, but it is recorded in a Book. (Surah 35.11)

Again,

He maketh the night to pass into the day and He maketh the day to pass into the night. He hath subdued the sun and moon to service. Each runneth unto an appointed term. Such is Allah, your Lord; Hindustan is the Sovereignty;..... (Surah XXXV.13; see also Surah 13.2).

PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

The problem of evil and suffering is brief and sketchy, in the Quoran. At first it appears that God is the doer of all things in His creation. Surah II.145 says that the human span of life is directly fixed by God. Again, Surah III.26 says that God gives

sovereignty to some and even debases some others. Even births are ordained (Surah 35.11). But does this mean that God is the source of every kind of evil? NO.

1. First, many evils are caused by man's disobedience to God by lying and cheating his fellowman.
2. Then God in His compassion and mercy for Iblis has allowed him (the Devil) to tempt men for doing evil.
3. There are evils to test men so that they may turn to God for getting their sufferings redressed.

Those who disobey God are punished in this world and then again in the next, on the day of judgment.

Turning away in pride to beguile (men) from the way of Allah. For him in this world is ignominy, and on the day of resurrection We make him taste the doom of burning (Surah II.9).

Amongst the sins of disobedience include 'the filth of Idols' and 'lying' (Surah II.30). the Quoran teaches to obey Allah. Other wise there is nothing but the garment of fire in Hell.

Lo! Those who disbelieve and hide (others) from the way of Allah, they verily have wandered far astray. Lo! those who disbelieve and deal in wrong, Allah will never forgive them. Neither will he guide them unto a road. Except the road of hell, wherein they will abide for ever (Surah IV.167-169).

Many evils are due to the machinations of the Devil (Iblis). Iblis is a disobedient and rebellious angel, but God in His mercy and compassion has allowed him to live till the day judgment. But this Iblis causes men to deflect from God as in the case of Adam (Surah II.36) and lurks in ambush for men on God's right path (Surah 7.16) and has beguiled Adam (Surah 7.22-24).

No matter whichever be the evil which befalls men, the faithful are asked and expected to remain firm in their faith. No doubt there are evils which test the loyalty of the faithful.

Job is a clear case in this regard.

And make mention (O Muhammad) of our bondman Job, when he cried unto his Lord (saying): Lo! The devil doth afflict me with distress and torment.

... ..

And we bestowed on him (agin) his household and there with the like thereof a mercy from us, and a memorial for men of understanding....

.....

We found him steadfast, how excellent a slave! Lo! he was ever turning in repentance) to his Lord). (Surah 38.42-45).

Certainly misfortune and sufferings bring men to God.

When We show favour unto man, he withdraweth and turneth aside, but when ill touched him then he abundeth in prayer. (Surah XLI. 51).

Again,

And if a wave enshroudeth them like awnings, then they cry unto Allah. (Surah XXXI.32).

Thus, suffering for Islam is a means of repentance and turning towards God.

FINAL DESTINY

Islam starts with the creation of man and this creation culminates on the day of judgments. Those who are judged as the faithful and obedient, will be rewarded by Allah with a life in Heaven with an unending happiness. The unfortunate evil-doers and disbelievers will be hurled into hell-fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

If you do good, ye do good for your own souls, and ye do evil, it is for them (in like manner). (Surah 17.7)

For the believers there are the seven heavens which God has created for them, and, for the disbelievers God has appointed hell. (Surah 17.8).

Again,

He is the mighty, the forgiving, who hath created seven heavens in harmony...

And verily We have beautified the world's heaven with lamps, and we have made missiles for the devils, and for them We have prepared the doom of flame. And for those who disbelieve in their Lord there is doom of hell, a helpless journey's end! When they are flung therein they hear its roaring as it boileth up. (Surah 67.3, 5-7).

Description of Heaven and Hell is scattered throughout the Quoran. The whole Surah 76 is practically given to the description of Heaven. But let us jot down points from Surah 37.40-50.

Save single-minded slaves of Allah;

For them there is a known provision,

Fruits. And they will be honoured

In the Gardens of delight.

On couches facing one another;

A cup from a gushing spring is brought round for them.

....

And with them are those of modest gaze, with lovely eyes, and some of them draw near unto others, mutually questioning.

In the same manner, the description of hell has been given throughout the whole Quoran. A few examples would suffice.

As for those who will be wretched (on that day) they will be in the Fire; sighing and wailing will be their portion therein. Abiding there so long as the

heavens and the earth endure save for that which the Lord wiltech. (Surqah XI.106-107).

Again,

Nay' but they deny (the conming fo) the Hour, and for those who deny (the coming of) the Hour We have prepared a flame.

When it seeth them from afar, they hear the crcking and the roar therefore. And when they are flung into a narrow place thereof, chained together, they pray for destruction there. (Surah XXV.11-13).

Finally,

Hell, where they will burn, an evil resting place. Here is a boiling and an ice-cold draught, so let them taste it. (Surah 38.57-58).

But certainly man was created an excellent being (Surah 95.4) and it was expected that he will remain faithful to his creator to the end.

Dr. S.M. Iqbal has mentioned three very important things about the final destiny of man. First, man was created at a certain point of time and before that he had no existence of his own. Hence, man's soul is not eternal, contrary to what has been taught in the Gita. Secondly, man remains in a state of suspended animation till the time of resurrection. The Quoran also states 'That We may transfigure you and make you that ye know not', (Surah 56.59).

Hence, the state of man after death has not been disclosed to man. Lastly, each man is accountable for his deeds on the day of reckoning. But Dr. Iqbal also hazards his guess: personal immortality, then, is not ours as of right; it is to be achieved by personal effort.

In like manner, Dr. Iqbal, a great supporter of individuality, regards heaven-and hell as stages of man's progress and decline.

Islamic faith means inward belief and outward confession and the way of life as the outward expression of inward conviction faith is made strong by works and knowledge. The inward experience is most palpable in Sufism. But Islam accepts both the reality of the world and the world to come. Naturally it prescribes certain social laws for the Muslims and these laws have been very carefully laid down in Sharia. These laws cover the whole life from the time of birth to the time of death and burial. When a male child is born Kalima has to be said in his ears, and, the burial too has to be attended with recitation from the Quoran. In their lives the Muslims follow the Quoran and Hadith and Sharia. Their aim is to imitate the example of the prophet.

A Muslim has to undergo wudu i.e., washing of hands, feet (up to ankle), face and part of the head. He has to say his prayers five times a day. Similarly, Muslims have to offer congregational prayer of Friday, Id al-Fitr and Id al-adha and if possible, they have to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in their life-time.

A Muslim is allowed to marry and is permitted to see his perspective wife. Man and woman, both must give their consent for their marriage. This husband has to provide maintenance for his wife and children. Divorce is permitted, but is not desired. As such several considerations have to be given, before divorce is finalized. The divorced wife cannot be remarried to her former husband as long as she has not been married to another man and that also for the required time. Polygamy is neither forbidden nor required. But under certain circumstances another wife can be had, specially for having a son, if no male issue has been born from the first wife. The wife has a right to inherit property of her husband or parents.

All kinds of drink are allowed, but intoxicating wine from grapes is strictly prohibited. About food, a Muslim is permitted to eat every kind unless explicitly forbidden. Muslims are forbidden blood pork, suffocated animals or birds, food offered as a sacrifice before idols. Similarly, frogs, crocodiles, turtles are forbidden for food. But camels, cows, sheep horses are permitted. Animals and birds which claws are forbidden e.g., tigers, lions wolves, bears, falcons, hawks and so (Surah V 3, 4).

When Allah punishes the liars and unbelievers by sending them into hell, then naturally Muslims also are strict in punishing crimes e.g., a thief caught for stealing can be punished by his hands being cut off. Similarly, eve-teasers are given lashings or whippings. Hence punishment is exemplary and preventive.

Further Muslims are responsible to society. Hence, they have to offer Zkat and Sadaqa. These are taxes for the maintenance of the poor and needy. Poverty is not a matter of humiliation.

Sufism means a departure from the ordinary Muslim code. Hence, Sufism was not acceptable for the orthodox Muslims for a long time, till al-Ghazali (died 1111). The Sufi emphasizes more the interiority of moral excellence than social ethics. He recommends of the flesh.

A last question can be raised. Is morality an autonomous body of duties and rights, or, is it so because of the commands of God? Since the time of Kant, in philosophy we accept the doctrine of the autonomy of morals. Even God has to accept the moral duties as binding. But Islam accepts that God reveals all that is moral or immoral. Hence, for a Muslim an action is good or bad, as God wills it. In other words, morality depends on the will of God, and His declaration. A thing is good because God wills it, and bad if He disapproves of it. As a matter of fact the *lila*-doctrine in Hinduism comes very near this Islamic view.

SUFISM

From the Indian standpoint, based on the Advaitic way of life, Sufism is the grandest development of Islam. Of course, Sufism as a form of mysticism draws upon the contributions of Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Advaitism. We must not ignore the contributions of Greek neo-platonism, for Islam was greatly influenced by Greek thought. But in the end Sufism has remained predominantly Islamic in character, in spite of its protest against the externalism of Islamic practices.

First, we must not forget that the Prophet himself practiced contemplation, and in his absorption in contemplation in the caves of Mt.Hira in 610 A.D. the first received God's commandments of becoming a prophet. Then again, Surah53 describes the vision of the Prophet in being in the heavens.

Verily he saw one of the greater revelations of his Lord.(Surah 53.18)

Again, the Quoran speaks of God as nearer than the hands and feet of man.

We verily created man and we know what his soul whispereth to him, and we are nearer to him than his jugular vein.(Surah 50.16)

Further,

Lo! Allah is Seer of what ye do. (Surah 2.110).

Whithersoever ye turn, there is Allah's countenance. (Surah II.115).

However, Islamic mysticism remained largely within its prescribed limits of monotheism, because of the two important elements in it. first, allah is a person and nobody can coalesce into a person to become one with allah. Secondly, Islam teaches the overall transcendence of God and no creature can dare to make himself equal to God. Hence, Sufism does not teach the identity of the mystic with God. Hence, Sufism does not teach the identity of the mystic with god, as is found in advaitism ('I am Brahma'). Of course, in their ecstasy many Sufis came very near declaring this. Al-Hallaj in 922 A.D. and Abu El Futuh in 1191A.D. were executed for declaring this identity. Mansur al-Hallaj in his ecstasy uttered anal' Haqq (I am God). He beautifully brings out this feelings of identity in the following oftquoted line:

I am the whom I love, and he whom I love is I,

We are two spirits dwelling in one body,

If thou seest me, thou seest Him,

And if you thou sees Him, thou sees us both.

This reminds one of the saying of Jesus, 'Father and I are one, He who sees me sees the Father'. But Christ upheld the superiority and the higher position of God. Many Sufis would maintain that the mystic can come very near God and enjoy communion with God. Further, a favored Sufi can participate in many powers and attributes of God (Sifat), but cannot participate, in His essence (zat). This view comes very near the view of Ramanuja who claims that Bhaktas enjoy many powers of Brahma, but they do not share His power of creating, maintaining and destroying the world.

'Sufi' has been derived from 'Suf' which means 'wool', standing both for purity and poverty. Sufis regard the life and actions under the so called five pillars of Islam, comprising five Prayers, Ramdan fast etc., as mere external observances. These are mere words and forms and not the reality behind them, according to the Sufis. Their question is; should we worship God, or, love Him? Worship is an outward form, but love alone brings us to the haqiqa (reality) behind the veils of outward observances. A whole-hearted act of devotion is higher than the submissive obedience to God's commands. The true teaching of Islam is experienced in the heart. Some of the mystics even disparaged some of the acts of worship. For example, Abu Sa'd (D. A.D. 1049) would not allow his disciples to go on pilgrimage to Mecca and would not allow the interruption in their dancing when the muezzin called to prayer. But this is another extreme. For this reason, the Sufis were not respected by a majority of the Muslims. However, Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (A.D. 1059-1111) tried to reconcile worship and love of God, and thereby reconcile Sufism with the Sharia, in accordance with the call of Qushayari (D.A.D.1072). Qushayari held that haqiqa does not free one from observing moral obligation under Sharia. Al-Ghazzali lived according to strict Muslim law. But he also held that the true meaning of the law is revealed by divine light in the heart through Sufi experience of love of God.

The Sufi is so much occupied with his beloved God that there is no place left for the world and its fleeting things. He gets intoxicated with and possessed by the vision of Allah, as was Arjuna who was awe-struck by the Virat-rupa of Lord Krishna. Love is the slow means of reaching Allah, as was held in India by Alvars and later on by Kabir and Ramkrishna.

Love means the attributes of the lover (sun) are changed into those of the beloved. Now he lives in accordance with the saying of God; 'when I love him, I will be his eye by which he sees and his ear by which he hears and his hands by which he reaches out.

Again,

Love is the rendering of the veil and the revelation of what is hidden from the eyes of men. I looked one day at the light and I did not cease looking at it until I became light.

The well-known couplet is

Lali mere lal ki, jit dekhaon tit lal.

Lali dekham main gayi. Main bhi ho gayi lal.

Indeed, brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati, (the knower of brahma himself becomes Brahma). The same is also reported of Ramakrishna.

Here the conflict of law and love (devotion) is the same which occurs in Christianity and again, between advaitic Jnana nad karma. As against Shankara's emphasis on Jnanan against Karma-kand. Ramanuja has advanced the doctrine of Karmajnana-Samuccayavada.

Sufis who observed both worship and love of God, regarded external observances as mere symbols of the real truth. For example, prayers do not constitute a mere set of words and postures, but really mean a spiritual discourse between man and his Creator. The real meaning therefore is a dialogue with God. Similarly, pilgrimage outwardly consisting as moving around Ka'ba. Kissing of the Black stone etc., really stands for movements in the heart for experiencing God within the heart. Sufis use Dhikr (representation of the many names of Allah, corresponding to Rama-Sumiran in Kabir, Ramkrishna and Sikhism) but really it means contemplation and absorption of the lover in his Beloved.

A Sufi no doubt regards God as Creator and Doer and determiner of everything in the world, but He is experienced most in His Sufi believer.

A mystic Rabi'a(d A.D. 801) spurned paradise and the fear of hell, but lived to love God for its own sake.

O God! If I worship Thee in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise. But if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting beauty.

Is this not the same what Alvars and many Bhaktas clinging to prapatti hold? They sought nothing beyond the rapturous gaze of God. However, the utterances of Muhy al-din Ibn Arabi are most significant for the Indian readers.

Ibn El-Arabi is considered to be the greatest Arabic mystics of Islam. He teaches that Allah is the only reality who is above description and qualifying attributes El-Arabi states

That God is only real being. He is above all qualifying attributes, and the world is a mere illusion.

Further he tells us, 'Glory to God who created all things, being Himself their very essence'. This means,

God is the object of worship not in the sense that he is exclusively the God of the Muslims, the Christians, or the adherents of any other religion, but in the sense that He is the Essence of everything that is worshipped.

This is the same thing which has been taught in the Gita.

As men approach me so do I accept them;

Men on all sides follow my path, O Partha (IV:11; Vide VII.21).

In other words, Allah is in every form and yet is not limited to any specified form

To confine Him to one particular form to the exclusion of all other form is infidelity, and to acknowledge Him in all forms of worship is the true spirit of religion.

In this not the spirit of Ramakrishna speaking?

Now I am called the shepherd of the desert gazelles,

Now a Christian monk,

Now a Zoroastrian

The Beloved is Three, yet One;

Just as the three are in reality one.

Then Ibn Arabi breathes a truly universal spirit of religion which is the precious pearl of the greatest worth of deep religious experience.

My heart has become a receptacle of every form,

It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,

And the Tables of the Torah and the Book of the Quran.

I follow the religion of love whichever way its camels take; for this is my religion and my faith.

One is reminded of Ramkrishna who practiced Islam, Christianity, Shaktism, Vaishnavism and so on. According to him too there is one God towards whom all are traveling.

SECTS OF ISLAM

There are many sub-sects of Islam, but we in India are concerned with two major sects, namely Sunni and Shia. There is really no difference in the articles of creed or the five pillars of Islam. The real difference lies in the status and position of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet.

Ali was wedded to the daughter of Prophet Muhammad. But setting this fact aside he had risked his life for the prophet and was a valiant man and a faithful follower of the Prophet. He was held in high esteem by every one. Even the Prophet not only loved Ali, but respected him for his qualities of head and heart. On three-four occasions the prophet had declared, 'Oh God, who is a friend of Ali, be his friend and the one who is Ali's enemy, be his enemy. Naturally, it was believed that he would be the first caliph. Unfortunately, after the death of the Prophet, not Ali, but Abu Bakr became the first caliph and he nominated Umar as his successor. After Umar, Uthman became the third Caliph. Ali was declared the fourth Caliph, but he was killed when he was praying in the mosque at Kufa. Afterwards, Ali's sons, Hassan and Hussain were slain in an unequal battle of forces. Certainly this killing of Hassan and Hussain is a matter of deep lamentation by all the followers of Ali. Who are now called Shia.

The real point of difference between the Shias and Sunnies is with regard to the institution of Imam. The Shia believes that the Prophet Muhammad has initiated a cycle for the continuing guidance of the community in the person of the imam. This Imam is invested with the qualities of inspired and infallible interpretation of the Quran. The first Imam was Ali who belonged to the family of the Prophet and inherited the spiritual abilities from the Prophet. As such he was the real leader and infallible interpreter of the Quran. This spiritual heritage continues in the descendants of Ali till now.

MODERN DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAM

Thus, as yet neither the Quaran nor the person of the Prophet Muhammad has undergone the modern test of criticism. In comparison, the textual criticism of the Bible has shown that it is full of mythologies and even the Pentateuch has not been written by Moses. No such textual criticism of the Quoran has been undertaken. Besides, the person of the prophet is regarded too sacred for critical enquiry. Perhaps 'The satanic Verses' (1988) by Saloman Rushdie has only literary value, if any, but is not a critical study of the prophet. It ha been declared irresponsible and offensive work. Yet Islam cannot remain untouched by modern developments.

The Quoran is being translated in the vernaculars of the people, the veiling of women is slowly disappearing in advanced countries, instead of bigamy, monogamy is going to be practiced, and more political rights are being allowed to women. Even the system of divorce has become more difficult. Education, industrialization and secularism are getting their foot-hold, through in Pakistan and Bangladesh there is reversal in favour of 'Islamic state'.

There are a number of things in common between Islam and Christianity. More or less, Old testaments is a common heritage of both Islam and Christianity. Besides. They share a common monotheism. The transcendence of God, revelation of God through prophets, the doctrine of heaven and hell, the day of judgment, and so on. But there are some important differences, specially concerning the person of Jesus.

1. Islam accepts Jesus Christ as a Prophet. Secondly, Islam also believes in the second coming of Jesus.
2. but Islam does not accept the Sonship of Jesus. The reason is that Islam interprets 'Sonship' in physical terms. In physical sense, however God can have no son or daughter. According to Christianity God is spirit and no one has ever seen him. Jesus is said to be the son God in a metaphorical or symbolical sense.

3. Islam does not believe that Jesus was really crucified. His substitute was crucified. But Islam believes that Jesus ascended into the heaven, where he was seen by the prophet in his vision of the Heaven.
4. There is a subtle difference between Islam and Christianity with regard to God. First. Islam rejects the doctrine of trinity. This doctrine, according to Islam, distorts the pure monotheism of the teaching of the Prophet Abraham. Secondly, Islam regards God as Judge, but also merciful and compassionate. For Christianity God is essentially love, and out there to receive and redeem the sinners of the sin.
5. Both of them are missionary religions and at times have used violence for propagating their religion.
6. In the last resort, Christians do not regard prophet Muhammad as a prophet of God, but his religious insight and vision are worthy of any world leader of any religion of the world.
7. According to Christianity the denial of the crucifixion of Jesus, denies the atonement of the sin of the sinners. This is tantamount to the denial of Christianity way of salvation.

Chapter VIII Essentialities of Christianity

Introduction

Christianity owes its name to Jesus Christ. Indeed the life, death and teaching of Jesus form the centre of Christianity. Jesus Christ was born perhaps in 4 B.C. in a small town of Bethlehem in the reign of Augustus Caesar. He was born out of holy wedlock, but his foster father Joseph came from the line of King David who was considered to be the ideal King of the Jews. Thus Jesus a Jew and he was soaked in the spiritual aspiration of the Jews which were centered round the vision of a forthcoming Messiah. This Messiah was variously conceived, but the predominant conception of a messiah. This picture was had a quite different picture of Messiah. This picture was painted by the prophet Isaiah in Chapter 53 as a 'suffering servant of God'. Jesus was not only influenced by the Old Testament, specially the Psalms, but also the Apocryphal books of Enoch and Daniel. The book supplied the key notion of 'son of man' which was very much used by Jesus in reference to himself.

Of course, the Christians derive their inspiration from the 39 books comprising the Old Testament, but much more from the 27 books comprising the new testaments. The 'Bible' itself means a collection of books. This N.T (New Testament) has four gospels which record the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. The first three gospels called Johannine have been written by St. John who gives a very intimate picture of his Master, regarded as the Messiah and the son of God. But these terms like the 'son of man' or the son of God. But these terms like 'son of man' or the son of God' have to be understood in terms of the religious language of some two thousand years ago. In simple words, the language of the Gospel and of the other books of the New testaments written in mythological expressions of the time. Many diseases were supposed to be due to the working of the evil spirits. Even the Universe was a three-storied house of heavens, the Earth and the Nether world called Sheol. In the same way the expressions like 'the Virgin birth', 'the Son of God',

and even resurrection, ascension and the Second Advent of Jesus are to be understood as mythological construction. What one has to know is to go beneath these archaic expressions in order to understand what the gospels intended to teach. These expressions were used as tools of preaching with a view to converting people.

In his disciple's presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life (St. John 20. 30-31).

Thus Christianity is a missionary religion with a view to winning converts. Last words of Jesus just above the time of his ascension are:

'Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples' (Mt. 28.19).

JUDAISM AND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

No doubt Jesus was a Jew, but he was very different from other Jews and his preaching was revolutionary for Judaism.

First, the Jews called themselves; the chosen people of God 'the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', and, called other people 'pagans' or 'heathens'. Nay, by virtue of observing the Sabbath, the rite of circumcision and other external acts, the Jews were ritualistic and narrow minded, in spite of the fact that their prophets had given them enough indications of a universal religion and a religion of heart.

"Through you I will make a covenant with all peoples: through you I will bring light to the nations" (Isaiah 42.6)

Again,

The Lord said to me,

'I have a greater task for you, my servant.

Not only will you restore to greatness

The people of Israel who have survived,

But I will also make you a light to the nations' (Isaiah 49.6)

In the same way the prophets has decried the ritual of sacrifice.

The Lord says, 'I hate your religious festivals; I cannot stand them! I will not accept the animals you have fattened to bring me as offerings', instead. Let justice flow like a stream, and righteousness like a river that never goes dry. (Amos 5.21-24).

In the same tone Micah writes that God does not want animal sacrifice.

What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God (Micah 5.8).

Jesus preached the universal brotherhood of man as sons of the same loving father called God. He preached the equality of men before God because God does not judge persons.

St. Peter and St. Paul were Jews, but both of them went beyond the pale of narrow dimensions of Judaism. For them Christianity was universal religion, open to all nations. St. Peter saw that God is the father of all nations. Peter began to speak; "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis. Whoever worships him and does what is right is acceptable to him, no matter what race he belongs to" (Acts 10:34-35).

In the same way St. Paul regards himself as the apostle for the gentiles and writes, "I have complete confidence in the gospel: it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews and also the gentiles" (Romanas1.16).

For Jesus, God is God for all people alike who worship Him in the right way. "God is spirit, and mo9nly by the power of his spirit can people worship him as really is" (St. John 4.24).

This is exactly what the medieval saints of India have stated, 'Hari belongs to him who worships Him'.

Again against hypocrisy and outwards acts, Jesus taught the interiority of religion and morality. Jesus taught a religion of one's inner depth and heart. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you' (Mt. 6.18). He taught about the kingdom which is not of this earth, for the humble and meek alone will inherit it (Mt.5.5). Jesus protested against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who forgetting their own faults tried to find faults with others.

Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but pay no attention to the log in your own eye?

You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (Luke 6. 41-42)

In the same context a woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. She was brought before the Master to be stoned to death, according to the laws of Moses, Pharisees stood by to see what Jesus would say. Jesus said,

'Whichever one of you has committed no sin may throw the first stone at her' (St. John 8.7).

And none could do it, for they were all convinced of their own sins. No doubt Jesus was a carpenter Jew and knew Judaism from its inside. However, his preaching and practices went much beyond the laws of Moses. Jesus explicitly stands that he had no mind to set aside the Law of Moses, but wanted to fulfill it. How? By going beyond it, where it will not only be transcended but retained in a truer way. Jesus was quite conscious of what he had to teach.

1. The commandment of Moses was, 'Do not commit murder'. Jesus said, 'but now I tell you; whoever is angry with his brother will be brought to trial' (Mt. 5.22). How can there be any murder, if there be no anger in the heart?

2. "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery'. But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart'" (Mt. 5.27.28)
3. "It was also said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce'. But now I tell you: If a divorces his wife, even though she has not been unfaithful, then he is guilty of making her commit adultery if she marries again; and the man who marries her commits adultery also"(Mt. 5.31-342)
4. The Jews were told in the past not to break the vow made in the name of God. "But now I tell you: do not use vow when you make a promise'. (Mt.5.34).
5. Another very remarkable preaching of Jesus which also he practiced even in the hour of his being hanged from the cross is; "you have heard that it was said. 'Love your friends, hate your enemies'. But now I tell you: 'love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'. (Mt.5.43-44).

Thus Jesus taught the conquest of passion, inner purity of heart and conscience, equality of all men before the eye of God and love which fulfills all the laws of morality. Hence, Jesus taught a life of love, service to all fellowmen with the utmost sincerity of heart, a truly universal way of life which is also the inmost meaning of the Hindu religious piety. Jesus could say what he did say as, for him God is love who makes no distinction between the sinner and pious, between the righteous and unrighteous.

For he (God) makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike and gives rain to who do good and to those who do evil. (Mt.5. 44-45).

In this teaching Jesus was doing what he had been told 'imitation Dei'. Be as perfect as your father and I are one' (Jn.10.30). Then, again, 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (Jn.14.9)

SPECIAL FEATURES OF CHRISTIANITY

1. Christianity is monotheistic, meaning that there is one God who has created the world and man. Some Christians hold that the God is both immanent and transcendent. They do not clearly explain the immanence of God, but they firmly hold to the transcendence of God. On this doctrine of transcendence of God the teaching of *analogia entis* and Paul Tilliah's theory of symbolism are based. By 'transcendence' is meant that nothing in the world can be definitive of God. Everything of creation falls short of the glory of God. In order to mediate between God man, Christianity resorts to 'prophets' and Jesus as the Mediator between man and God'.
2. the most distinctive teachings about God is that He has been revealing himself through His prophets and in the fullness of time Jesus has revealed God most clearly and finally the will and person of God (Hebrew 1. 1-3). Hence, it is said that 'God is Jesus', for Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God.

Christianity also holds that God is Father and God is essentially redeeming Love> God as love searches man much more than man searches God.

3. There is the dogma of trinity, according to which Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three persons. But they are one. This doctrine of trinity in the western grabs is not every intelligible, but as *sacchidananda* this is easier to understand. However trinity is quite different from tried of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva, where all the three deities are quite distinct and separate with their distinctive functions.
4. The most distinctive teaching of Christianity is the expiatory and redeeming death of Jesus. In other words, Jesus died for redeeming the sins of the world.
5. Hence, a Christian has to have faith that Jesus died for his sins, and, that this faith alone wins forgiveness of sins of the sinners and he

becomes at one with God. Hence, the adage is not by words, in obedience to the Law of Moses, but by faith a sinner is saved from the hell-fire. This faith again is a free gift of God and is open to all men irrespective of race and colour. At times, this doctrine of faith as the gift of God turns into the doctrine of election and predestination.

6. This doctrine of predestination means that God has chosen some persons from the very beginning of the world for being saved and some for being damned. This doctrine of grace by election is found in Ramanuja, who quotes the Upanishadas in support of his view of 'election'.

The *prajnatman* chooses whom he will:

This one truly, indeed, causes him whom he wishes to lead up from these words, to perform good action. This one, also, indeed, causes him whom he wishes to lead to downward, to perform bad action. (Kaushitaki up 3.8; also see Katha 2.23; Mundaka3.2.3).

- 7 According to Christianity, God created man in His own image. But through disobedience of Adam sin came to the world and this image of
- 8 God has been corrupted by man. Hence, man has to live again in union with God. And this can be done through faith in the expiratory death of Jesus on the Cross.
- 9 Most Christians believe in the immortality of the soul. But if this soul has been created by God, then how can it be immortal? Nothing which has been created is eternal. Jesus himself hints as it "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul: rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell" (Matt.10.28). But the doctrine of immortality is not very clear in Christianity.

- 10 Christianity accepts the doctrine of creation which means that God has created the world out of nothing by His mere creative power. This doctrine of creation has to be distinguished from the Hindu doctrine of cyclic creation and dissolution.
- 11 Along with Judaism and Islam, Christianity accepts the doctrine of amelioration. This means that the world is real and should be improved for the good of the whole world, hence, Christianity accepts the service of man for the uplift and alleviation of human suffering. Hence, Christianity accepts the world-and –life-affirmation.
- 12 In popular Christianity, the existence of angels, evil spirits and the devil is accepted. But the modern Christians do not believe in their existence.

THE DOCTRINE ABOUT GOD

God is Jesus: Christianity is a theistic religion and belief in God is its important tenet. But instead of saying that God according to Christianity is One, creator, sustainer, Judge, loving Father and so on, at present Christians say 'God is Jesus'. This means that Christians know nothing about God except through the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. According to St. John, Jesus declared, 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (Jn.14.9). Then, again, 'the father and I are one' (Jn.10.30).

St. John himself writes in his gospel

'No one has ever seen the Father's side, he has made him known'.(St. John 1.18).

St Paul also holds a similar view,

"He (Jesus) is the key that opens all the hidden treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge'.(Colossians2.3).

St Paul also maintains that Christ is the exact likeness of God (2Corinthians 4.4; also See Hebrew1.3). This is also supported by the statement which Jesus himself made, according to his beloved disciple St. John,

‘I am the way, the truth and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me’
(St. John 14. 6)

But whatever the Christians may hold about Jesus, he never said that he was God. On the other hand, Jesus clearly declared that God was greater than he (St. Jn. 14.28), and, that God alone knew about the last day of the world (Mt.24.36; Mk. 13.32) and that God alone is the judge of men at one time he also said that none but God alone is good and in that sense even Jesus is not the supreme good.

Hence when the Christians say that God is Jesus then it is only a metaphorical or honorific expression about Jesus in the same way in which we say that Jadu is a tiger or a lion. But perhaps the phrase ‘God is Jesus’ means much more than mere metaphor. It means that Jesus has shown what God as Love is, by means of his teaching, life and death. When Jesus was hanged from the cross his seven utterances are remarkable. The first utterance was,

‘Forgive them, Father! They don’t know what they are doing’(St. Luke 23.34)

It is much more than loving one’s enemies. The prayer for his persecutors is for forgiving and redeeming them with a view to winning them for a good life. And it is recorded that a Roman soldier, standing at the foot of the Cross, and watching Jesus all the time declared, ‘truly he was the son of God’(Mt.27.54; Mk. 15.39;Lk.23.47). this confession wrung out from every one who sees, the life, teaching and the death of Jesus. Hence, for the Christian God is father, forgiving redeeming and reclaiming the sinners. And this picture of God is directly derived from Jesus. Thus, in terms of the prophetic religion which Christianity is, we can say that in the past God who is, spoke through the prophets, but revealed His persons through Jesus. Certainly Jesus was not God, but he was revelatory of the Person of God. Jesus was a man, a descendent in the line of King David. By sheer obedience to

the Will of God, he could reflect the nature of God. By virtue of his life he evinced the power of God in working miracles and by forgiving the sins men and women he showed that God is forgiving and redeeming love. Thus in the words of St. Paul about Jesus.

As to humanity, he was born a descendant of David; as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death. (Roman 1.3-5).

God is Father: Of course, Jesus was a Jew and for God is one and only God. He is the Creator, sustainer and the final judge of all things. But for Jesus God was essentially a Father who is much more real than our earthly father. Jesus assures all men that God the Father gives what they ask. God is found by men to seek Him and the gate of heavens is opened if they knock at it. He taught to trust God in all things. He tells us that our earthly father would not give stone if his children ask for bread, and would not give them snakes if they ask for fish.

‘How much more, then, will your father in heaven give good things to those who ask him: (Mt.7.11; also Luke11.9-13).

Jesus had absolute trust in God and His Providence. He declared that God loves and cares for everything in the world. He declared that the very hairs of the head of each man are counted. If God provides the lilies which today is and tomorrow is cast in the oven, and, if He does not allow even a sparrow to fall, then, how much more care he would take for each man? (Matt.6.25-34; Luke 12.22-27).

Thus, God is much more than the Creator of men. He cares for them and Jesus teaches men that they should trust him for everything, provided they seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. Hence, the fatherhood of God was much more than the Jewish teaching in the abstract ‘Love God with all thy Soul’ with all thy heart and with all thy strength’. The Jewish teaching is taken up with far greater warmth of feeling and self involvement and the intimacy of spirit. But the most distinctive statement of Christians is that God is love and what does that mean?

GOD IS LOVE

First, God's love means the conquest of good over evil. Conquer hate by not resisting the evil.

'If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too. (Matt.5.39).

Again,

'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'.

A Christian has to imitate God and become as perfect as the Father in heaven is, for God sends rains and sunshine to all, good and evil alike. Certainly God hates the sins of men, but by His love He teaches men to overcome even the worst of hate.

Because God's love overcomes evil, so God's love is forgiving. Peter asked Jesus, 'should he forgive his brother seven times?'.

Jesus replied seventy times seven (Matt.18.21-22). Jesus himself forgave the woman who was caught in the very act of committing adultery and said, 'Go, but do not sin again'. (St. John 8.11).

Forgiving love of God is best illustrated in the parable of the Prodigal son. According to the parable, a rich man had two sons. One day the younger son asked for his patrimony. On receiving his share, the younger son wasted his inheritance in evil conduct, and, at last became very poor, and began to starve. Kicked at by his friends, tormented by hunger, he was reminded of his father's home, his kindness and his love. So the prodigal son repented of his folly and resolved to kneel before his father and say,

'Father I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son' (Luke 15.18).

On the other hand, the father was on the look out for the return of his prodigal. One day he saw his prodigal son from afar and ran, threw his arms round his son and kissed him, saying

‘This son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found ‘. (Luke 15.24).

Jesus said that the Father is likewise on the look out for the return of a repentant sinner. No sin is too great to be forgiven. This love of God cannot be spurned, cannot be rebuked and rebuffed. Like the shadow this love follows man wherever he goes.

God’s love is redemptive: Redemption means freedom from a bond of debt by the full payment of the promised amount. The full meaning of redemption will be explained in the context of atonement. Here it means that God annuls one’s sins and takes him back into his protection and providence. The mark of redemption is that the sinner is transformed into a saint. For example, St. Peter denied his master thrice. But Jesus forgave him and made him the leader of his followers. The result. Peter boldly witnessed the deeds, miracles and the good news about the love of God by describing the life, teaching, death and the resurrection of the Master. Finally, he died as a valiant soldier of the Cross.

The same transforming love is seen in the life of St. Paul. St. Paul persecuted the church and powerfully moved against it. But he saw the vision of Jesus, and, henceforth followed him as the valiant soldier on the Cross. The testimony of St. Paul is:

‘We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We are knocked down, but we get up again and keep going’ (II Corinthians 4. 8-9).

Again,

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the

future, neither all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God.
(Roman 8.38)

Lastly, God's love means service in humility. Jesus illustrated this by the story of a Jew who fell among thieves. Nobody would bandage his wounds, not even a priest and a Levi. But a Samaritan who is hated by the Jews. Took pity on the be labored Jew. The Samaritan poured oil on his wounds and bandaged them, and, took him on his ass to an inn and paid for his treatment there. Jesus praised this love of service to a suffering man.

Again, in the event of the last supper. Jesus washed the feet of his own disciples and said, "I have set an example for you. If a Master and your Teacher serves you because of his love for you, then you should also do likewise. The greatest amongst you is the servant of all' (Luke22.26).

God's love means a life of sacrifice. 'For God loved them so much that he gave his only Son' for being sacrificed on the Cross for the ransom of the sins of the world. Then Jesus left his last commandment to his disciples:

My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you. The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them. (Jn. 15.13).

And Jesus died on the Cross so that the people may know the love of God for them.

Thus, God for Christianity means Jesus as the full revelation of what God is, God as Father, god as that forgives, searches for the sinner, redeems him when he repents and turns to him, suffers on account of the sinful men and is willing to pay the highest sacrifice for redeeming them.

TRINITY

Most probably a devout Christian need not know beyond the statements that God is Jesus, god is Father and God is love. But there are men who want to know the

relationship between Jesus and God. Further, Jesus before his death promised that he would send them 'the Holy Spirit' who will teach them what else has to be known and talked about Jesus and God. Thus, there are three things, namely God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Christian theologians in the west have held that these are three Persons in one. They distinguish trinity from the triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. But quite obviously three persons, as persons cannot be one, no matter how much closer they may be. Hence, theologians regard Trinity a great mystery. However, philosophers do not accept any unintelligible mystery. If Jesus and God are identical, then Jesus cannot be man. Hence, the crucifixion of Jesus was fake, for God cannot die. Besides, if Jesus and God are identical, then to whom was Jesus praying all the time in his life. True, Jesus has been called the 'visible likeness of the invisible God' (Col.1.15). How can there be any comparison between 'Visible' and 'Invisible' beings? Quite obviously Jesus is just a picture that the devout men have drawn as to what God could be like. In the modern language of Paul Tillich, Jesus is the symbol of God.

But there is another difficulty. Was Jesus a human being only? In that case, the Christians will be dubbed as 'idolaters' inasmuch as a man Jesus a mere creature is worshipped in the place of God who is the creator of all men. Can we say then that he was both God and man-a perfect God and a perfect man? This will be self-contradictory inasmuch as it is tantamount to saying that a being is both finite and infinite. When Ram Mohan Roy had to face the doctrine of trinity, he denied that Holy Spirit is a person and held that God in the form of Brahman is impersonal. For him the holy spirit is the divine influence in the world guiding men towards righteousness. And 'Jesus' is a mediator who explains the will of God to men. Later on, Keshab Chandra Sen described Father (Sat), Son (Chit) and Holy Spirit (Ananda). Again, Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, a Christian thinker has written a beautiful poem describing trinity as sacchidanada in my opinion, Indian understanding of trinity as Sacchidaanada is less objectionable than the western formulation of it.

Thus, Jesus is not Brahman, nor is he God, the Absolute reality, the creator and destroyer of the world. The utterance of Jesus that 'I and my Father are one'. Or 'He who has seen me has seen the Father's can be better understood as the more

perfect revelation of god as Father and Love than was the case in the past or even after his death. He was just a revelatory event in history.

THE WORLD

The teaching about the first creation is bristled with difficulties, for there was no witness and there could be no witness as to the first act of creation. For example, the Nasadiya hymn. Rgveda X.129 expresses this.

1. Then was non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, nor sky beyond it.
2. Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation? The Gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being?

Then, again, we find that God thundered from the world-wind to Job,

Where you there when I made the world?

If you know so much, tell me about it.

Who decided how large it would be?

Who stretched the measuring-tome over it? (Job.38.4-5)

Then what can man do? He resorts to a myth. According to the first book of the Bible called the Genesis, God by the mere fiat of His will created the world in six days. But what is the meaning of day and night. In the first three days of creation, there was no Sun and no moon. Quite obviously then 'day and night', or 'evening and morning' did not mean our 'day and night', or 'Evening and Morning' did not mean our days and nights measured in terms of the movement of the Earth on its orbit. Hence, day and night' are mythical expression.

'Secondly, the story of creation begins with creation of man, and the description is in plural number.

“Then God said ‘, and now we will make human beings; they will be like us” (Genesis1.26).

Then in Chapter 2 of Genesis the creation of Adam and Eve is given. But quite obviously there were other human beings besides Adam and Eve, for Cain, after being cursed by God for killing Abel, went to a land east of Eden and married there (Gen.4.16). Abel went to land east of Eden and married there (.4.16). Thus, Adam and Eve were not the first created couple of human beings.

According to the myth creation God created the Universe and man, out of nothing. This was done to show that besides God nothing can be co-existent with God. But, according to the Bible ‘the raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the power of God was moving over the water’ (Gen. 1.2). Hence, there was something out of which God created the light, earth and all other things. According to the myth of creation, a great many questions simply become redundant. For example,

1. Why did God create at all?
2. Being Omniscient He knew well that man would disobey and would commit sin, then why did He create man with freedom of will and with the knowledge of good and bad?
3. Why did God choose a particular place and time for creating the World?

The problem (2) still racks the mind of the theologians and they will be taken up later on. However, from the myth of creation, one cannot raise philosophical questions at all. The myth of creation simply shows how sin came into the world and how could the world be explained for answering religious questions of man. After all, even ‘A creator God’ is only myth.

The myth of creation is not a philosophical doctrine to explain, ‘How can something come out of nothing?’ but the creation myth of the Bible states that the world has been created by God and God takes care of what he has created. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the father’s will (Matt.5.2; Luke 12.25). And God was happy with His creation (Gen1.31).

Nothing which had been created can be said to be eternal. Nay the world totally depends on the will of God, and, He uses flood, famine, drought to punish man if he disobeys Him. Actually it is mentioned in the Bible that excepting Noah and his family members, all other were destroyed by flood because they had disobeyed God.

It tries to answer the questions about the creation of the world, space, and time, man and his final destiny.

Apart from the prophetic religions Jains, Buddhists and early *Mimamsakas*

Have not advanced the myth of creator God. Underlying the myth of creator God or its absence, the question still remains, 'why should worship at all?

Such is also the case with famine and drought which were brought about by Elijah for punishing the rebellious Israelites who had started the worship of Baal. In the philosophical language, the world is contingent because it is depend on God and has no basis of its own for existence. But it is real as long as it lasts, as is also the case of the empirical world of *Shankara*. The *Vyavaharika* world last, as long as the seeker does not have *Brahma-janana*. According to the Bible, the alone is the necessary ground for the existence of the world.

But the world has purpose. First, the world is there for the sake of all living beings and above all for man who has dominion over all things (Gen.1.26). But it has the other function to known the world and by knowing it one may multiply and become prosperous (Gen.1.28) secondly, the world reflects the glory of God. Hence, by knowing the power and story of God, man should worship God, know His will and obey Him in all things.

Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made.(Romans1.20)

Then, again, the Psalm says, 'How clearly the sky reveals God's glory' (Ps19.1)

Because God is constant and His laws are everlasting, so man can delve deep into the secrets of nature, for knowing the secrets of nature means knowing the will and commandment of God. Hence, scientific pursuit was sanctioned by the sanctity of the statement of the Bible. Nature is God's creation, revealing the glory and nature of God for helping man to live and multiply. Thus in the European Christian world the pursuit of science was regarded sacred, nay the very purpose of the creator for man, 'be as wise, as the father in heaven is'.

Hence, the creation myth of the Bible encouraged the pursuit of science, for prediction and the future guidance of man. But for all its sacredness, the world is not the sole end for which man has to live. The world has only a secondary value. The most important thing for man is to know God and seek His righteousness and the kingdom of God. Jesus preached to his hearers:

O men of little faith! Why do you worry about food and raiment? Birds do not sow seeds, nor do they harvest. Yet God takes care of them. Why worry about raiments? Look at the lilies of the field. Even Solomon with all his riches was not depressed up like any one of these wild flowers. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things will be added to you.(Matt.6.12-21;24-34).

Then, again, the Bible teaches that the world is only a means for living in the world, but is not the final end of human striving.

Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy. (Matt 6.19).

Thus, the world is man-centric, but man himself, the crown and roof of the whole creation has God as his centre and final goal. As such we have to turn to the doctrine of man, according to Christianity.

THE TEACHING ABOUT MAN

According to the Bible God created man in his image so that he may resemble Him. He also gave him dominion over all created things. In other words, in the beginning man was essentially good and reigned over all things (Genesis 1.26) "So God created human beings making them to be like himself" (Gen. 1.27).

Now what does it mean that God created man in His own image or like Himself? Quite obviously God has no shape or form, or as Jesus said, 'God is Spirit'. Then what does 'likeness of God' mean? We find that Adam and Eve in disobedience to the command of God ate the fruit of knowledge and discovered that they were naked and that they have done evil in the sight of God, hence, the essential goodness of Adam and Eve was destroyed. By virtue of disobedience they discovered evil which they were likely to choose and do. Hence, 'likeness of God' means to have the free will to know and to have the choice either of the good or evil.

"Then the Lord God said, 'Now the man has become like one of us and has knowledge of what is good and what is evil'" (Genesis 3.22).

Therefore the image of God means participation in divine holiness and goodness. The fall of Adam simply means the corruption of this image of God within him. Now Adam and men in general have also the power of choosing the bad, knowingly. This knowledge of the bad and the deliberate choice of the bad, mean the corruption of the original goodness and innocence of man. Hence, man is born now with freedom of will either to choose the bad or good, and the choice of the bad is the original sin of man. In other words, strong and deep-seated tendency in man to disobey the commandments of God and the capacity to choose the evil, from the kernel of original sin. Even with this original sin there is also the capacity and a potentiality in man to overcome his original sin by surrendering his will to the will of God. For this reason God cares for men.

When I look at the sky, which you have made, at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places What is man, that you think of him; mere man that you (God) care for him? (Psalm 8.2-3).

Thus man is glorious in his potentialities. He can fall into sin. But he can also rise higher than the angels. An angel can do always what is right. He has no choice to be bad. He is always good. In contrast, man is free to choose the good or bad. But sanctifying his will, by surrendering it to God's will, he can reach a destiny which is higher than that of the angel. Ramanuja too was faced with the same problem and he has solved it through his doctrine of Bhakti and divine Grace. And Christian solution is also very akin to that of Ramanuja. The problem before Christianity is, 'How to become good, or how to get the original image of God which has been corrupted by man's disobedience?

Man was made in the image of God, but through the disobedience of man, sin came into the world, and , sin separated man from God. The question now is, 'How can man be once again in union or fellowship with God?' this is the problem of sin and salvation. Here comes the most important feature of Christianity which people do not notice ordinarily.

Salvation of man: According to Christianity, Jesus died as a ransom for the sins of the world. Very often in the news papers we come across the news that a sum of money has been demanded as ransom for the release of the kidnapped man. Hence , ransom sum is for the release of a person in captivity. In the same way human beings are in bondage of sin and Jesus by offering himself to be sacrificed for the sinner has released the whole world from the bondage of sin. This sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross has its linkage with Jewish custom of animal sacrifice.

A lamb or a goat or one of the cattle could be sacrificed by a Jew for the remission of his sin. The animal would be without any defect.

The man shall put his hand on its (animal's) head, and it will be accepted as a sacrifice to take away his sins (Leviticus1.3-5; also 3.5).

The animal sacrificed was deemed to carry the sins of the sacrificer. But, the Christian found that this animal-sacrifice was not enough. Even after the sacrifice was over the sacrificer found himself to be sinner again. Why/ the laws of Moses

were not easy to keep and men were found always violating them. They often found themselves in uneasy conscience.

For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what law requires; what the law does is to make man know that he has sinned. (Romans 3.20).

Hence, St. Paul and St. Peter argued that only a blameless, sinless man. Sanctified and accepted by God alone can atone for the sin of man. This blameless lamb of God was the man Jesus.

The next day John (the Baptist) SAW Jesus coming to him, and said, 'There is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (St. John 1.29).

Jesus also claimed to be sinless.

"Which one of you can prove that I am guilty of sin?" (St. John 8.46).

St. Peter too calls Jesus a blameless lamb of God.

"It was the costly sacrifice of Christ who was like a lamb without defect or flaw" (1 Peter 1.19; also see 2.22).

Second thing is that Jesus volunteered himself for being sacrificed for the remission of the sin of world (Jn.10.18).

Hence, St. Peter writes,

Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed. (1 Peter 2.24).

The words of St. Paul are:

God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ.... God offered him, so that by his death how should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. (Romans 3.22, 25).

Hence, St. Paul preached that Christ was crucified so that through his vicarious, expiatory and intercessory death all the believing Christians may be saved.

By their faith alone and not by obedience to the Law can man's sins be forgiven and his original image of God be restored to him.

Thus salvation is not by obeying the Law, because no man observes all the laws. Man is weak and he commits sins. By faith in the redeeming and expiatory death of Jesus, a sinner is forgiven his sins and he gets united with God.

Both Ramanuja and Christianity teach the doctrine of faith, called Bhakti in Ramanuja. Both think that this faith is the free gift of God (*anugraha*). But for the Christian this faith lies in vicarious and atoning death of Jesus, who served as Lamb of God for the remission of the sin of the world. This unique view of salvation by faith and not by works has its Judaic basis in vicarious and atoning animal-sacrifice.

Hence, for Christianity man was created by God so that the image of God in him may remain with him uncorrupted to the end of his life. Judaism accepts legalism as a means of salvation, and Christianity takes recourse of faith in the redeeming death of Jesus for the salvation of the sinning man.

It is difficult to anyone, outside the pale of Christianity, to accept the doctrine of vicarious and expiatory death of Jesus on the cross. His belief raises an important issue. However, for Christians even death in itself need not be regarded as an evil, for God Himself has ordained it as a means of salvation for the sin of the world. Certainly the question, pertaining to human suffering and evil is very important for any theist. So let us see how Christianity faces this question.

EVIL AND SUFFERING

The Old Testament declares that God is omnipotent and omniscient. Nothing happens in the world without Him.

'Does disaster strike a city unless the Lord sends it?' (Amos 3.6).

Hence the advise was a follow the commandments of god. Suffering is due to sinning. Evil-doers are bound to be punished, if not in this world, then certainly in next. Thus, god was to be praised for all things, weather disaster or prosperity.

However, Job was convinced that he had committed no sin, and, yet he was visited by unmerited suffering. In the final analysis Job was advised to accept the inevitable. God is good and omnipotent and yet disaster comes to the righteous man.

“Shall mortal man be more just than God” Shall a man be more pure than his maker?” (Job 4.17).

Job comforted himself with the thought,

“The Lord gave, and now he has taken away. Many his name be praised?” (Job 1.21).

Resignation to the sovereign will of God may show piety, but not justification of evil. The book of leaves one with the feeling that man could be more mortal than God who at times sends disaster to the good man for His mere sports. One thing is certain that New Testaments treats the question of suffering from the standpoint of Christian piety. Hence, the solution is not philosophical and not even theological. Certain viewpoints have been taken up with regard to suffering and they can be thus stated.

In general suffering awakens a man and serves him to think about god. This is clear from the story of the Prodigal Son. When the prodigal began to starve because of the famine in the land, then his thoughts turned towards his father. He repented his sins, and, he was finally reconciled with his father. This is also the view of Ramanuja.

Again, suffering is said to be corrective:

Happy is the person whom God corrects!

Do not resent it when he rebukes you (Job 5.17)

The Lord corrects those he loves, as a father corrects a son of whom he is proud.(Prov.3.12).

Further,

In the case of our human fathers, they punished us and we respected them. How much more, then, should we submit to our spiritual father and love? (Hebrew 12.9)

At times a pious man suffers on account of others. This was the case with Moses. The Israelites went back to idolatry and God was angry with the people. So Moses had to intercede on their behalf:

Please forgive their sin! But if you won't remove my name from the book in which you have written the names of your people. (Exodus 32.32).

Suffering at times is not only intercessory but also redemptive. This is specially true about the suffering of Jesus on the Cross. This was described more than 600 years before the birth of Christ by Isaiah.

.....he endured suffering and pain.....But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. (Isaiah 53.3-5).

We have already referred to the vicarious and redemptive sufferings of Jesus on the Cross. Hence, pain at times is for the manifestation of the glory of God. This is illustrated in the case of the man born blind, whom Jesus healed. His disciples asked Jesus. "Why was this man born blind? Did he sin or his parents that he was born blind?"

Jesus replied, 'Neither he nor his parents sinned'. But he was born blind that, the power of God be made manifest'. (St.John 9.3). This was done when Jesus restored the sight to the man born blind. The suffering of Jesus is considered to be the glory of God, for through the faith in the redemptive death of Jesus, sinner is reconciled to God.

Suffering is also considered to be purificatory, for through suffering Abraham, Joseph, Job and finally Jesus reached their perfection. Hence, a Christian must suffer to participate in the suffering of Jesus on the cross, and thus perfect himself. Through his suffering Jesus learnt to be obedient and became perfect (Hebrew 5:8).

My dear friends do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering...

You are sharing Christ's sufferings..... (1Peter:4.13-15).

In the same way, St. Paul writes,

For you have been given the privileges of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. (Philippians 1:29)

Suffering is in the very lot of a Christian. The Master himself was aware of this.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget self, carry his cross, and follow me' (Matt.16.24; Mk 8.34-35; Luke 9.23-24)

Thus, suffering is not an evil for a Christian. It is the means by which he participates in the Kingdom of God by sharing the sufferings of the Cross. Hence, the problem of suffering is not a philosophical issue for Christianity. However, it is so for theology and Christian Religious Philosophy.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMORALITY OF SOULS

The Hebrew did not think of soul as a separate and an independent entity, apart from the body. This is really an Indian and Greek idea that a soul or spirit can exist apart from any bodily existence.

In the beginning this soul was considered as breath.

Then the Lord God took same soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live. (Genesis 2.7)

On death breath was supposed to return to God. But on the whole the Hebrew always imagined a soul to be embodied. For this reason Enoch, Elijah and Christ were held to have ascend into heavens with their bodies. Even St. Paul who believed most sincerely in the resurrection of the body, hoped that the soul will not be without a body (2 Corinthians 5.3). He however held at that the dead shall rise in their incorruptible body.

“It is not the spiritual that comes first, but the physical, and then ht e spiritual” (1 Corinthisans 15.46).

The early Christians believed in the resurrection of the dead, for the Gospels hold that Jesus resurrected the dead body of Jairus (Mark 5.21-42), the only son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7.11-17) and of Lazarus (St. John 11.43-44). Jesus also believed in the existence of Paradise (Lk.23.43; Lk 16:19-31). Jesus also held that He Himself would rise from the dead on the third day of his crucifixion (Mk. 8>31; 9:31; 10:34; Math 12.40; 26:60-61: John 2:10). This was the proof and seal of his Messiahship. Hence, the most important thing for the then and subsequent Christians is that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day his crucifixion. (Acts 13:33; 17:3, 31; 23:6). St. Paul mentions it thus:

Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter and then to all twelve apostles. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers are once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, and afterwards to all the apostles.

Last of all he appeared also to me (1 Cor. 15.3-8).

If Christ did not rise from death, then he dead will not rise to life. If so, then the Christian faith and life are still a delusion (1Cor. 15:19). But for St. Paul,

The truth us that a Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised. (1 Cor. 15:20).

Anybody can see that the resurrection of Jesus is a matter of faith and the hope of immortality is only a religious belief. Two other minor points are worthy of some consideration.

As resurrection means raising of the body from death, so the Christian insist on making this body as sanctified as is possible. He has to treat his body as the temple of God. In heavens, therefore, those raised to life live like angels. Of course, resurrection is reserved only for those who have sanctified their body.

Jesus answered then, 'The men and women of this age marry, but the men and women who are worthy to rise from death and alive in the age to come will not then marry. They will be like angels and cannot die. (Luke 20:34-36).

In the same way, St. Paul teaches that only the Christian believers rise to meet the Lord.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will take back with Jesus who have died believing in him.....

Those who died believing in Christ will rise to life first; then we who are living at that time will be gathered up along with them... (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

Hence, life of value, goodness and righteousness alone will be conserved to the end.

About immortality it has to be noted that according to Luke 20:35, only worthy men and women will rise from death in the age to come. Secondly, no

produced thing can be eternal. Jesus himself tells us that the soul can be destroyed by God if men persist in their evil ways:

Do not be afraid to those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul:
rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell.
(Mathew 10.28).

THE FINAL DESTINY

According to the Bible man was made in the image of God i.e., with the knowledge of good and bad and a free will to choose either. In due course, the final destiny for man is that he should surrender his will to God. But it is a difficult thing, for man participates in dual nature. He is a man of flesh and of nature, and, also has spiritual nature. And the carnal man and the spiritual nature in man very often come in conflict.

For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies.(Gal 5:17).

The reason is that there is sin in man which he cannot overcome. How can a man get out of the impasse?

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death their human nature with all its passions and desires (Gal. 5.24)

When we were still helpless. Christ died for the wicked-while we were still sinners that Christ died for us (Romans 5.6-8).

One has to have faith that the death of Jesus has paid the price of sin for us. We are no longer sold out to sin, but being healed by faith in the redemptive death of Jesus become children of God, and, by surrendering our will to God we live in union with God.

It is through faith that all of you are God's sons in union with Christ Jesus. You are baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. (Gal 3:26-27).

Hence, the message of the Cross is a free gift of God for the whole mankind. For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. (Ephesians 2:8-9).

This is exactly the position of Ramanuja who lays emphasis of Bhakti for the deliverance of man. Of course, Christian Bhakti is in the redemptive death of Jesus. Secondly, both Christianity and Ramanuja teach that the service of God is our greatest freedom.

'Our will are ours so that we may make them thine'. Hence, the ultimate destiny of man is that he should overcome his physical passions and desires (Gal 5:24) and make his will the will of God. How do we know that we now belong to God?

We must have the fruits of spirit and not of the carnal man.

But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. (Gal 5:23).

Secondly, a saved man can make no difference between one man and other, for they are all one in Jesus Christ. (Gal 3:28); Ephesians 2:11-18). Further, faith without actions is dead (James 2:17, 26). And what kind of actions are expected of the redeemed man? The Lord will explain to the redeemed persons on the day of judgment.

I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and visited me. (Matt. 25:35-36).

How? The Lord will explain.

I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.(Matt 25:40).

Hence, faith in the redemptive death of Jesus issues forth in the alleviation of human suffering and service to fellowmen.

One more thing has to be kept in mind that like the doctrines of *Bhodisattvas*, *Sarvamukti*, Christianity also teaches the salvation for all. The whole universe has to be won for God.

This plan (of salvation) which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth with Christ as head. (Ephesians 1:10).

Again,

“Through the son, then God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself” (Colossians 1:20).

But the two terms ‘Redemption’ and ‘Salvation’ require a few more words of explanation.

Salvation means ‘saved from the impending hell-fire’, of. ‘The anger of God’, similarly, ‘redemption’ means release from the bondage of sin. But both mean that in the end a sinner is changed into a new creature-a New Being in God. He regains the Sonship of God, and, a reunion with God after the sin had separated the sinner from God.

This is the new being which God, its creator, is constantly renewing in his own image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of himself. As a result, there is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves and free men, but Christ is all in all. (Col..3:10-11).

This is how it happened in the lives of Peter, Paul and Zacchueus and a host of others. St. Peter who denied his master thrice, at the time of trial of

Jesus, was made the corner-stone of the Christian Church. The master said to Peter: "Don't worry. From now on you'll be finishing for the Souls of men" (Luke 5.10). St. Paul the persecutor of the church became the most important preacher of Christianity. Zacchaeus, the tax-collector became a new man by coming in contact with Jesus. Standing before Jesus, he said:

Sir, from now on I will give half my wealth for the poor, and if I find I have overcharged anyone of his taxes, I will penalize myself by giving him back for times as much. (Luke 19.8).

This is the real meaning of conversion, i.e., transformation into a new and good life. This is also illustrated in the case of Tulsidas and Baolmiki. Hence, salvation of redemption means that a ruined and tortured life is transformed into a New Being.

A new being in Jesus Christ means a daily struggle against the evil. A penitent heart and a sincere prayer to God in the name of Christ means victory over temptations and divine forgiveness of sins in the event of fall. Jesus himself has given the following prayer for everyday life.

The Lords prayer

Our Father who are in heaven,

Hallowed by the name.

The kingdom come

Thy be done on earth, as it is in the heaven.

Gives us this daily bread.

And forgives us our trespasses, as we forgive them against us.

And lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever.(Amen).

Here also it was pointed out that unless we forgive others the wrong they have done to us, our sins will not be forgiven by the heavenly Father (Matt, 6:1-4)

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT AND THE DOCTRINE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

There is little doubt, according to the Gospels, that Jesus believed in the day of judgment and in the existence of heaven and hell.

When judgment day comes, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord!' In your name we spoke God's message, by your name we drove out many demons and performed many miracles. (Matt.7.22).

About the non-believing city of Capernaum, Jesus said, "You can be sure that on the judgment day God will show more mercy to Sodom than to you" (Matt. 11:24). Similarly, in many places in the Gospels, Jesus is said to have expressed his belief in the blissful life in heaven and terribly painful life in Hell. This is clearly exemplified in the story of rich man and the beggar Lazarus who used to sit at the doorsteps of the rich man. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the feast in heaven. The rich man died and was buried, and in Hades, where he was in great pain; he looked up and saw Abraham, far away, with Lazarus at his side. So he called out, 'father Abraham! Take pity on me, and send Lazarrus to dip his finger in some water and cool me tongue, because I am a great pain in the fire" (Luke 16:22-24).

Jesus believed in hell-fire, where the sinner will cry and will be gnashing his teeth (Math.8.12; 5:29-30'Luke 10-14; 18:9; 23:15,33). But the following quotations will make this point clear:

So if your hand makes you lose your faith, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a hand than to keep both hands and go off to hell. And if your eye makes you lose your faith, take it out! It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to keep both eyes and be thrown into hell. There the worms that eat them never die, and the fire that burns them is never put out. (Matt. 18:8-10; Mark 9:43-48).

Jesus promises paradise to the repentant thief who was hung by his side on the cross.

“I promise you that you will be in Paradise with me” (Luke 23:43).

But by ‘Paradise’ is meant angel-like existence, where no marriages are contracted (Luke 20:34-36) and where there is an eternal life of bliss.

Jesus said to Martha, the sister of the dead man Lazarus:

I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me will live even though he dies: and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (St. John 11:25-26).

Thus heavenly life is one of unending bliss in the faith in and service of God. This is what Ramanuja also held out. The individuality of the righteous man is retained to the end. Hence, in Christianity creation is the first scene of which the day judgment with heaven and Hell is the last act.

THE APOSTLE’S CREED

Living with the Master everyday is one thing and the crystallized creed is another thing. Living with the Master is a living experience and that alone counts for the believers. In order to explain this experience creed is codified in the current language of the time. In the first five centuries, the position and nature of Jesus were hotly debated. If Jesus was just a man, the Christian worship of him is idolatrous; and, if he was God, then his crucifixion is unreal (since God cannot die). In order to tide over the difficulty the co-substantiality of Jesus and God was maintained. Hence, the creed formulated fifteen centuries before is still recited in the Christian

Churches. However, it is to be noted that in the past, Jesus was regarded God, but in modern times, his manhood is emphasized much more. Most of the Indian Christians cling to the older belief in Jesus as God. The Apostle's creed runs thus:

I believe in god the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS

Christmas is observed all over the Christian world on the 25th December every year. This is usually supposed to be the birth day of Jesus. However, no date of the birth of Jesus Christ is known. This is observed as the day of rejoicing, for it is maintained that God gave a great present to mankind in the person of Jesus. Hence it is right and proper that Christmas should also exchange presents, specially they have to remember the weak and the needy.

GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER

Perhaps Good Friday and Easter are not as well-known to the people out side the Church. Good Friday is observed on the most moony Friday after the equinox. On this Friday Christ was supposed to have been crucified for the remission of the sins of the believers. Hence, this is called 'Good'. Because it means the door of Salvation for the believer.

Good Friday is preceded by the period of Lent of 40 days in which most believers desist from meat and drink. They also donate their savings as 'Thanks-Offering'. Some devout Christians also observe fast for the whole period.

Easter is the Sunday. Following Good Friday, on which day Christ was supposed to have risen from the grave. This also means victory of goodness over evil, immortality over death.

Following the Judaic festival of Shelters, Christians in India, observe Harvest Sunday. On this Sunday, the Church goers bring the produce of their field, or, fruits of their trees. At times they bring to the Church even articles bought from the market. This is a beautiful festival, but it is not always observed all over the Christian world.

BRANCHES OF THE CHURCH

It appears that Christian church remained undivided for a little over one thousand years. Then in 1054, the Church was divided into 'The Eastern Orthodox Church' and 'the Roman Catholic Church'. The reason of this rift was the claim of the bishops of Rome for being the supreme authority. The Eastern Greek Church rejected this claim and became independent of the Roman Catholic Church. The Eastern Orthodox Churches comprise Greek and Russian Churches, Eastern European Churches and also of some other churches in the Mediterranean countries which once formed part of Byzantine Empire. The Supreme religious authority belongs to Ecumenical Council which alone is entrusted with the task of interpreting the 'holy tradition'.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

It is the largest single branch which accepts the supreme authority and primacy of the Pope. However, in 1962-1965, second Vatican Council stressed that

due recognition has to be given to the authority of the corporate body of the bishops as an Episcopal college.

PROTESTANT CHURCHES

Roman Catholic Church was further subdivided into Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches in 1517 by the great schism led by Martin Luther's reformation. There are a number of Protestant Churches, as a result of Luther's reformation.

The Anglican Church has kept close to Roman Catholicism in its belief and practices. It rejects the authority of the Pope and the Doctrine of Mass. This enjoys the fellowship of many churches with the Archbishop of Canterbury as the First amongst equals, of the heads of the churches.

Luthern Church is the Chief Protestant Church of Germany and Scandinavia. It includes liturgy in church service, but sermon (the Biblical preaching) is given the main and central place in church worship. The Lutherans are numerous in Ranchi.

The Presbyterian Churches found by John Calvin are in mid Europe and Scotland. Along with the Lutherans, they stress on the reading and studies of the Bible.

Congregational Church emphasizes the independent of the local church.

Baptist churches insists on adult baptism for including a person in church membership. Once at Patna, Monghyr and Gaya, Baptist Churches were quite strong. They believed in the evangelism of the gospel of Jesus.

The Methodist Church was found by John Wesley. At present the membership of this church is very strong in America. In India there is also a 'Methodist Church of Asia'.

Protestant Churches are going strong in America and also in India. They stress the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the church activities. In church worship, the members are noticed talking in g\foreign tongues as the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The salvation army churches reject the sacraments (the Holy Communion), but emphasize the need of preaching the Gospel and social service.

The Quakers assemble in the church but believes in Silent worship and social service.

Christian brethren hold on to primacy of the Bible and evangelism.

The World Council of Churches was established in 1948 which lays emphasis on the loyalty to Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.

In India there is the Union of Churches of North India and of South India. It functions through dioceses presided over by elected bishops. A bishop has a good deal of administrative powers, but is not necessarily a sanctified person.

IX COMPARISON OF RELIGIONS

In this chapter Lingayat religion is being compared with respect to the following key concepts of the major religion of in India

There are some fundamental differences between prophetic religions and Indian religions, the prophetic religions accept creationism, but Indian religions on the whole do not accept that the world and jives have been created at any time. Creationism accepts that the world and man have been created at one time and this creation will culminate in the Day of Judgment.

1 GOD

To understand a religion it is very significant to understand the fact of reality or creator, organizer and destroyer that is God. In this section effort is made to understand views of various religions in respect to god.

INDIAN VIEWS

Indian tradition holds different views about the world.

1. (a) Jainism and *Mimamsa* accept the eternity of the world,. so they do not accept the doctrine of creation.
- (b) *Nyaya-Vaisesika* School and the Vedanta accept the periodic creation of the world.
 - i) According to N.V. School. God the creator is only the efficient cause of the world, who creates periodically after each dissolution of the world with the help of atoms and Karmas of the *Jivas*.

ii) The atheistic *Samkhya* believes that the world consisting of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamsa* keeps on eternally changing. So its views resemble those of Jainism and *Mimamsa*.

iii) The *Vedanta* accepts the doctrine of periodic creation and dissolution, but holds that *Isvara* is both the efficient and material cause of the world.

In general Indian tradition holds that the world is composed of five constituents of earth, fire wind and *akasha* (ether).

2. An attitude to the past is an important differentiating factor amongst religions, Brahmanism (strict *Sanatani* Hinduism) holds that the past ancient time alone has the most excellent 'truth' of any religion. As Hinduism is the most ancient religion of the *Satya Yuga*, so it alone contains the whole of religious excellence. Other religions were born in other Yugas of *Dvapara* (where truth is mixed with falsity) and *Kaliyuga* (largely mixed with falsehood). So they cannot but be credited with full excellence of religion. Hence, Hinduism cannot but be conservative, for it has to conserve the full excellence of Vedic religion.

According to Islam (excepting Dr. S.M. Iqbal). The Prophet Muhammad is the final seal of revelation. Hence, according to this view, god progressively realizes Himself through the prophets, but after the prophet Muhammad. No further revelation is possible. At best the *Shia's* can accept the right of better interpretation of the *Quoran* and *Hadith*. Naturally, Islam is committed to fundamentalism of final revelation by Prophet Muhammad

Christianity and Buddhism are committed to the theory of progressive revelation. Christianity believes that god has been reveling Himself progressively through the prophets and in the fullness of time Christ finally revealed the nature of God most fully. In due course, *Soren Kierkegaard* propounded the view that the disciple at the second hand is superior to the earlier disciples of Jesus, because the modern disciple of Jesus is better intellectually equipped that the earlier disciple. In this century R. Bultmann by presenting the case of de-mythologizing the writings of

the New Testaments, tacitly accepts the theory of the superiority of the disciple at the second hand.

In the same manner, Mahayana School of Buddhism kept on harping on the superiority of Buddha's revelation at later times, because in the earlier age the disciple was not fully prepared to understand the hidden depth of Buddhist teaching.

Jainism accepts the final authority of reason in determining the excellence of religious truth, but it has been more conservative than progressive in its views with regard to the earlier teaching of Jainism.

MAKING OF SOULS INS THE FUNCTION OF RELIGION

2. There is another point which has to be kept in mind. According to Christianity all that we can say that there is God, but we cannot say what he is (Exodus 3.14). This is how St. Thomas Aquinas and Paul Tillich teach us. Again, the well-known *Vedantic* teaching (B. U 2.4.14; 3.4.2; 3.7.2) is that the absolute reality Brahman is essentially unknowable. Kabir and Guru Nanak too accept this. Then, why should we talk about god of Brahman?

The aim of religion is not so much to know God or Brahman, but to know reality in order to become that entity. Here knowing is pressed into the service of becoming. After all ideal man and God are one and the same thing, for example, Rama is considered to be God and yet an ideal man. In the same manner Jesus Christ is taken to be a perfect man and yet God. Hence, the function of religious language is to evoke a vision of an ideal self into which the worshipper seeks to transform himself. According to *Advaitism* a knower of *Brahman* himself becomes *Brahman* (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*). A Christian seeks to imitate Christ, so that finally not he, but Christ may live in him. In the same strain, a Muslim seeks to imitate the prophet Muhammad so that he may become Muhammad-like. This is also the meaning of the last utterance of Lord Buddha '*appo dipo bhava*'. Each Buddhist has to use his own light to become a Buddha,

for a follower of Buddhism does not worship, but himself becomes the Buddha (the awakened one)

This is also true of Kabir. He meditated on *nirguna* Rama in order to become himself. Ramakrishna taught this very eloquently. He practiced Christianity and he become Christ; he practiced Islam and finally the ideal Muslim figure entered into him and he become one with it.

Radhakrishnan has powerfully advocated this view.

Religion is not a movement stretching out to grasp something, external, tangible and good and to possess it..... It is a new birth into enlightenment.

Again,

The mandate of religion is that man must make a change in his own nature in order to let the divine in him manifest itself.

God or Brahman is not a being so much external to the worshipper as He is the indwelling spirit in the worshipper himself. The *Upanishadas (Brahadaranyaka)* 3.7.1-23, Ramanuja and Kabir have emphasized the importance of indwelling Rama (Kabir) and indwelling Brahman (Ramanuja). Hence, life, teaching and death of a votary of a religion alone pertain to the excellence of a religion.

In comparing religious concepts, one has to keep in mind that they do not connote or denote the same thing. There is a good deal of subtle differences in such a common concept as 'God'. Gandhiji thought that '*Isvara*' and '*Allah*' mean the same thing for they refer to the same entity whom we may call as the ground of all being, or, simply the Supreme reality. This will be clear when we take up the concept of 'God'.

GOD

First, we do not think that there cannot be any religion without the concept of God. Jainism, Buddhism and early *Mimamsa* are taken to be atheistic systems. Even in one phase of Samkhya, there is no room for God. For the world goes on changing without any mover, and the individual souls falls into bondage and also some of them win their own liberation without any reference to god. Hence, God is not needed either to explain the world or the bondage or liberation of individual souls. Even in Yoga, god is neither a creator nor the sustainer-destroyer of the world. He is only an aid for helping the success of Yoga practices. But all these atheistic systems have very great interest in promoting the supernatural or transcendental being of man. So much of pre-occupation with the transcendental entity and the destiny of man cannot be but called religious. This, we submit that there can be religion without God.

PERSONALITY OF GOD

Even when we accept God as an article of faith, the concept differs with different religions. The Hindu god is essentially a Being who creates this world out Lila (Shankara, Ramanuja, Kabir and Ramakrishna). The Muslim believes in a God of justice tempered with mercy and compassion, but demands utmost obedience. The Christiana god essentially a redeeming, forgiving and suffering God who looks out for the return of the sinner to Him. besides, the attached stories and histories make a good deal of difference to the concept of God. Lord Krishna cannot be understood without His Lila with the Gopies or the part he played in the Mahabharata. N the same manner, Judaic God has meaning in reference to the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and, exile into Babylonia and return of the Jews from Babylonia to their own country under Ezra. Similarly, Christian God cannot be understood without the life, teaching and death of Jesus on the cross, the Pentecostal events and the persecution of the early Christian converts. Hence, the concept of God is not intelligible in itself, without reference to contexts and use in the daily life of His various types of adherents.

Christianity, Judaism and to some extent even Islam would hold God not to be fully knowable. But these religions do believe in the personality of God in the sense that He is supreme Will and intellect, and, is able to respond to the prayers of His devotees. For example, Sikhism regards God to be *nirakara* (formless), but still it teaches devotion to God. How can there be any kind of devotion without crediting God with personality. Islam too takes God to be a Person who has not only created man but is benevolent and most merciful. Hence, any theistic system has to accept the personality of God.

However, some thinkers, specially *advaitic* ones seem to hold that *advaitism* does not accept either personal or impersonal God, but super-personal God. Even Shankara does not wholly deny the reality of personal God, called '*Ishvara*' in his system. But he considers the worship of a personal God as a means for having *Brahm-jnana*. In several places Shankara grants that theistic worship may lead to *Karma-mukti* (liberation by successive stages). But he thinks that *Ishvara* is invested with Maya, though this Maya is within His control. For him, the supreme reality who alone can be realized through *jnana*, transcends '*Ishvara*'. So it is regarded that the supreme reality is super-personal, in the sense that *Ishvara* is suppressed in the reality of Brahman. Does this suppression of personality mean its loss or its enrichment?

Kabir holds that God's personality is indefinitely much richer than man's personality. In this sense. Super-personality simply means the infinitely enriched personality of God and human devotees gaining *Karma-Mukti* are enriched in God. He illustrates by saying that the dirty water of the drain loses its dirtiness and becomes *Ganga-Jala* (the Gangatic water) when it falls into the river Ganges. Similarly, human personality is perfected by being suppressed in the infinite personality (super-personality) of God. Hence, the denial of human personality means enrichment in the super-personal God. Therefore, Super-personal God is infinitely enriched personality, and, does not mean the denial of personality.

One more point has to be emphasized. We also credit God with infinite love, justice, mercy and so on. What does 'infinite' mean? According to Spinoza, God has

an infinite number of attributes, each of which expresses His nature infinitely. Hence, it means that infinite love mercy etc., do not limit God. If love, mercy etc., do not limit God, then they are not attributes at all. Hence, St. Thomas Aquinas used the term infinite degree of love, mercy and other attributes found at the human level. He meant that God is transcendent and His attributes transcend human attributes. Our best exemplification of love, mercy, kindness are at most 'floor concepts' and ceiling concept. Hence in speaking about God we reach the utmost limit of human knowledge and language. In the *Upanishadic* language *turiya* is the real state in which consciousness remains, but the duality of subject-object is lost.

For where there is a duality, as it were, there one sees another; there one smells another....where, verily, everything has become just one's own self, then whereby and whom one smells, then whereby and whom would one see? (B.U. 2.4.14)

One should not ignore this analogical or symbolical nature of language when one talks about God. Strictly speaking one should keep silence, but language when used tends to be metaphorical, analogical and symbolical. The utmost function of religious language is to deepen and widen the apprehension of man of what is the source and ground of his being... a being which indwells within the heart and beckons man towards it. Religious language by means of its picture, metaphor etc., evokes in a vision of that Being by becoming which we reach our final destiny and goal. This is clearly demonstrated in the mystics of all ages, eastern and western, Muslim-Christian-Hindu.

ONENESS OF GOD

Strictly speaking Judaism and Islam alone have pure monotheism. The eloquent language of Judaism is,

‘God is one and thou shalt have no other God besides me’

Islam also proclaims,

‘God is great, there is no God but Allah’.

Christianity tends to be monotheistic, but the doctrine of Trinity seems to hold *tritheism* instead of monotheism. The humanity and divinity have never been satisfactorily reconciled in the person of Jesus Christ. But trinity should not be reduced to the triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. If these are three deities with their specific function, then the oneness of God is ;lost and, if they are three functions of one God relating to creation, sustenance and destruction of the world, then the separate divinities of Braham, Vishnu and Mahesh than Monotheism. The prevailing Hindu view is that there is one common referent of different kinds of worship.

As men approach me so do I accept them; on all sides follow my path
(Bhg IV.II).

Radhakrishnan comments:

Name and form are used to reach the Formless.

Meditation on any favorite form may be adopted.

However, Sikhism may be said to have pure monotheism. Really in Zoroastrian, monotheism is primary and dualism is secondary and not final.

CREATOR GOD

The Christian believes that God has created the world out of nothing (ex nihilo). The same point is made by saying that by the mere utterance of God, things

have come into being. God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light'. We need not emphasize 'nothing' or *asat* in Indian philosophy. Creation by god simply means that God's will and thinking are creative, productive and preventive. In contrast, human thinking is only representative and reproductive, as Berkely has pointed out. God creates the material and fashions it by the mere fiat of His will. This is also found in Indian tradition where the curse or blessing by *rsis* bears fruit by mere wish of the words of the sages. But He created man in a very special way, for a very special purpose. According to Judaism, Christianity and Islam God is said to be both the material and efficient cause of the world, in the Aristotelian sense of 'Cause'.

In the Indian tradition, Shankara holds that Ishavara is the material and efficient cause of the world. But he does not tell us about the material. Does Ishavara bring about the matter by the mere fiat of His will? At least this is so in the *Chhandogya Upanisad*:

It (Brahmana) bethought itself: 'would that I were many!

Let me procreate myself' (6.3.3).

This Brahman emitted heat. How? We do not know, but 6.3.1 says that this creation proceeds from nothing or non-Being. 6.3.2 corrects this by saying that creation proceeded from Being. Hence, it comes very near the Biblical account that creation resulted from Being alone.

However, this *Upanishadic* account is not maintained later on. First, Shanakara and Ramanuja do not hold that the world has any First beginning. There is a cycle of creation-dissolution. Secondly, Shankara's Ishwara at the end of each dissolution is sublated or reabsorbed in qualityless Brahman. The views of Ramanuja are a bit different from those of Shankara.

According to Ramanuja Brahman is personal and He is both the material and efficient cause of the worlds, in the cycle of creations. But for him, the world and the Jiva form His body. So the material world (*acit*) simply means the passing of matter from the subtle into its gross form here the doctrine of creation turns in to the

doctrine of emotion. God also turns out to be more of an efficient than the material cause, in the same sense that god creates jives with the help of their past Karmas.

The *Naya-Vaisesika* Philosophy clearly opts for God as the efficient cause of the world, who fashions the world out of atoms and past *Karmas* the *Jivas*.

Thus, we find that the *Upanishadic* account of creation and that of the prophetic religions are very much alone. Otherwise Indian theistic religions differ widely from the prophetic religions in relation to the doctrine of creation.

TRANSCENDANCE AND IMMANENCE OF GOD

The meaning of 'transcendence' has to be clarified. First, transcendence means a state in which the entity is in the thing and in continuation with it goes beyond it. For example, ether not only is in the room but also extends beyond it. This is the meaning of transcendence in the *Purusa Sukta* hymn.

A thousand heads has Purusa,

A thousand eyes, a thousand feet,

He holding earth enclosed about,

Extends beyond, then fingers length (RVX 90.1)

But we also know from *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* (3.7.1-23) that Brahman is the inner controller of everything and indwells the human heart. Hence, for Shankara, Brahman transcends the phenomenal existence, having no relation with it. In other words, Brahman remains untouched by the illusory empirical world. But the

inner core of a *jiva* is identical with Brahman goes much beyond him, according to Ramanuja.

There is another sense of 'transcendence' in the Upanishads and Kant. Brahman is the very basis of hearing, thinking and knowing, but it cannot itself be and object of knowing.

Hindu is the unseen Seer, the unheard,

Hearer, the unthought thinker, the understood Understander
(BY.3.7.23).

Again,

You could not see the seer of seeing.

You could not hear the hearer of hearing.

You could not think the thinker of thinking. (B.U. III4.2.)

Kant calls this as the synthetic unity of apperception. Its statement is;

Now it is, indeed, very evident that I cannot know as an object that which I must presuppose in order to know any object..

There is a third meaning of 'transcendence' in Judaeo-Islamic concept of god, according to which God is absolutely 'Other'. In St. Thomas and Paul Tillich, God is so much the other, that words of speech can ever describe Him. No segment of the phenomenal word can ever reach Him. He can only be approached analogically (St. Thomas) or symbolically (Paul Tillich). Then how can He be known at all, at least for mutual dialogue, communicability and teachability about God? God can be approached only through His revelation. Revelation of God takes place through dreams, vision, angels, but above all through the prophets. In this context, Christians also believe that in the last days God became incarnate in His son Jesus Christ; this sonship is used symbolically in *Tillichian* sense, then there is no harm. But if this sonship is used in literal meaning, then God's transcendence is lost, and, the concept of God ultimately becomes a form of anthropomorphism, albeit refined and highly

sublimated. But if God simply means 'wholly other', then Christ can only be a symbol, though unique and other'. Then Christ can only be a symbol, though unique and almost final as a revelatory event.

This by the way has raised the question of incarnation. According to the theory of incarnation God assumed the form of man to redeem mankind. Though in the Gita, Lord Krishna is said to incarnate himself for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness (Gita IV.8), this also means the redemption for all mankind. Thus, God assumes human form for redeeming man. Hence, the doctrine of incarnation (*avataravada*) as the special revelation of God is found in the Gita, *Pauranic* Hinduism and Ramanuja. This is also accepted in popular form of Christianity.

However, Kabir, Guru Nanak and Gorakh Nathapanthis do not accept the theory of *avataravada*. In the same way Islam and Judaism do not accept the doctrine of incarnation. Incarnation means that God Himself descends in human form to teach and redeem mankind.

As against transcendence, 'immanence' means that which pervades embraces and completely indwells the universe. For example, the tendency in the egg to transform it into a chick. Hence, by immanence is meant a controlling spirit and agency in the world. this was the sense of Aristotle according to which god is the form of forms that shapes, controls, guides and draws the whole universe towards itself,. Essentially this is the same meaning of 'the idea of the Good', according to Plato. Most probably the emergentists like Samuel Alexander regarded God as the whole universe with its nisus towards the deity, in this sense of Aristotle or Plato, however, the Upanishads and later on Kabir looked upon God, as both transcending and indwelling within man (RV.X90.1). Christians also speak of God as both 'transcendent' and 'immanent'. Christian theologians have not clarified this notion of 'immanence'. But in Islam 'immanence' simply means omnipresence. This is only one sense of Judiao-Christian and even Islamic tradition, according to which God created man in His resemblance, and further He breathed life-giving breath into the nostrils of man formed from soil. This 'breath' is God's breath in man, and, may be termed

His image or even indwelling spirit of God in man, according to Islam, this breath on the death of a man returns to God. One can see that if the divine image or His controlling breath remains external to god, then God cannot be said to be immanent in man or the earth. The important Christian theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas, Karl Barth and Paul Tillich have fully maintained the transcendence of God.

'Immanence' should be distinguished from emanation. According to the doctrine of emanation the supreme reality manifests itself in different degrees. This doctrine is found most prominently in pantheism as in neo-Platoism. In general, emanation proceeds in stages from the beginning towards its end, the perfection gets diminished. This doctrine of emanation is also found in the *Pacharatra* known as the theory of *Vyuhās*.

To summarize in prophetic religions God's transcendence is emphasized and His immanence has not been fully worked out. In Hinduism God is both transcendent and immanent, but even here His transcendent is less important than His immanence. Only in a metaphysic where it is held that the whole universe is a living organism as in Bruno, Samuel Alexander and to some extent in Plato and Aristotle, that it can be said that God is immanent in the whole universe and yet transcends each finite thing and man. For example, according to Samuel Alexander, the deity is yet to be and looms ahead of the highest emergent at the rung of the ladder. In this sense, the futuristic deity is transcendent of man; yet, it remains within the evolutionary drive of the whole universe, spinning it towards ever higher emerging beings. Most probably this might have been the sense of Plato and the Upanishads. Akin to the concept of transcendence and immanence, there is the concept of *nirakara* and *sakara* in Indian philosophy.

NIRAKARA (WITHOUT ATTRIBUTES) AND SAKARA (WITH ATTRIBUTES)

When we say that the highest object of reverence is without attributes, we mean that nothing can be predicated of said about it except that it has Being or existence. *Advaitism* is said to support the doctrine of attributless Brahman. But even Shankara accepts the validity of theistic worship with a view to attaining Brahma-Jnana. Then the question is, how is *nirguna Brhama* related to *saguna* or theistic worship of *Ishvara* credited with all auspicious qualities? Shankara says only this much that Ishvara is “in proximity to the higher one, there is nothing unreasonable in the word ‘*Brhaman*’ being applied to the former” and, that the scripture enjoins upon theistic worshipper that he can also obtain (by mere worship) liberation (Brhama-Sutra Bhasya IV.3.9) but apart from this relationship of close proximity between *saguna* and *nirguna Brahama*, *Shankara* does not further detail their inter-relationship. However, much later Ramkrishana holds that *saguna* and *nirguna Braahma* are one and the same, and like the inseparable relation of *Shiva-Shakti* in *Shaivism*. *Ramkrishna* also holds that they are inseparable

My Divine Mother is none other than the Absolute. She is at the same time the one and the Many, and beyond the One and the Many.

But some of the commentators of Bijak and also Rmakrishna hold that *saguna* is the indispensable means for realizing nirguna Brahma. This is not only supported by Kabir_ *Granthavali*, pada 180 and Bijak’s Rmaini 77, but is in line with Kabir’s meaning of *Purna* (perfect) Braham. According to Kabir, Braham has an infinite number of attributes, and each of these attributes is far fuller than any finite attributes even of an incarnate being. In modern language we can say that *saguna* is a symbol of *nirguna* which points to the *nirguna* without taking its place.

The important thing is that *nirguna* Braham can be directly realized only through worship. According to Jainism, meditation alone is the most potent means of attaining *apavarga* (liberation). But even meditation to be sustained at last in the initial stages, requires an object for fixing one’s meditation. Here Lord Mahavira can

become an object of meditation, knowing fully well the Lord Mahavira does not respond to the prayers made an object of meditation with a view purifying the intellect and the soul of a *dhyani*.

We have already seen that even in Judaeo-Christian tradition (Exodus 3.14) God is essentially unknowable and whatever attributes we ascribe to God really do not literally describe Him. This view of god held by St, Thomas Aquins, Paul Tillich and Burnner brings Judaeo-Christian concept of a transcendent God very near to that of *nirguna* Brahma.

Views of Lingayat religion respect of: God, personality of God, Creator God, Transcendence and Immanence of God and Nirakara and Sakara (V of BW 904)

O Kūḍala Saṅgama Lord,
The Māyā encompasses the world:
But look, my mind
Is able to encompass Thee!
Thou'rt mightier than the world;
But look, I'm mightier than Thou!
Even as an elephant is
Held in a mirror, so Thou
In me!⁴¹

Views of Lingayat religion respect of: Creator God (V of BW 1035)

⁴¹ *jagava suttippudu ninna māyeyayyā,*
ninna suttippudu enna mana nōḍayyā.
nīnu jagakke ballidanu, ānu ninage ballidanu, kaṇḍayyā.
kariyu kannāḍiyoḷagaḍagidantayyā,
ennoḷage nīnaḍagide kūḍala-saṅgama-dēvā.

He is not one to perish or remain;
He does not know at all
What dissolution be;
He is exempt from the nature of time;
He is exempt from the nature of Twain;
He is not one to hide
His knowledge
Pray tell me, can you win,
While labouring in this tremour of heart,
The Silent One we call
Lord Kudala Sanga?⁴²

2 MAN

Man is the special mammal having power of thinking and become accountable to happenings. Various religions framed guide how to enjoy life worthy. In this section it is studied how the religions prefer man and his contemporary ethical things.

THE CONCEPT OF MAN

⁴² *aḷivanalla, uḷivanalla, praḷayavembuda munnariyanu,
kaḷākuḷarahitanu, ubhayakuḷarahitanu,
ariva baiciṭṭu mereva kamananalla.
kūḍala-saṅgayyanemba śabdamugdhana
bhāvada baḷakeyalli gelabahude hēlā?*

The whole of Indian tradition prevailing today accepts the four pillars of Karma-Samsara-Jnana-Mukti. Each individual *Jiva* is born in the world in bondage. This bondage is due to ignorance (*ajnanana*) of his worldly existence of bondage and miseries? According to *Samakhya* this is due to infatuation of the *jiva*, lured by the *sattava* element of *Prakriti*. This infatuation is akin to the doctrine of universal ignorance of all individuals in bondage. Ramanauja would say that this bondage is due to Karma associated with ignorance. But Ramanuja does not elucidate the exact way this Karma associated with *ajnana* caused the miserable worldly existence. However, Jainism alone holds that Karma alone is the cause of bondage and in due course, this karma has transformed the omniscience (*sarvajna*) of a *jiva* into his ignorance. But Jainism too does not explain as to how the initial Karma came into being which ultimately paved the way for the worldly existence of bondage for any individual. Quite naturally this difference concerning the cause of bondage of an individual would mean also difference in finding out the way salvation.

However, this doctrine of bondage is very much akin to the Christian teaching of original sin of man. Both the in Indian tradition and the in Christianity man is born with a heavy load of the past. In the case of Christianity, this doctrine of original sin means that the sin of the primeval father of man is visited ever since on his descendents. But in Indian tradition individual is responsible for his past karma and, the individual is responsible for this, however, the world in which each individual is born, is in general sustained by the same kind of ignorance. In this sense, in spite of differences with regard to the cause of worldly existence, fraught with original sin of man, a Christian and a Hindu do not differ much in their disabilities of life. But one important difference has to be noted, Christianity holds that sin or moral evil came in to the world due to disobedience of the commandment of god. Hence, the real cause of the burden of sin is moral. Naturally the way of Christian salvation will differ from that of Indian tradition. There is a further difference between the prophetic and Indian religions with regard to the real nature of man. According to Indian religions man is essentially spirit, whose real nature is pure Consciousness. Barring Buddhism which teaches the doctrine of non-soul (*anattaavada*), it is spiritual darkness

(ignorance, *ajnana*) that sustains the worldly existence of each *jiva*. However, *Samkhya*, *Advaita Vedanta*, *Nyaya* in general would hold this view. The Vaisheshika philosophy holds that consciousness is not the essential nature of a *jiva*. According to it, consciousness is an extrinsic attribute of *Jiva*, consciousness arises. Again, the spirit of a *jiva* is held to be inactive. Ramanuja protests against this view and holds that a *jiva* in its pristine glory is both conscious and active. Shankara too regards N.V. of *Jivas* as akin to materialism.

As contrasted with Indian and Greek view about the essential nature of an individual as pure spirit, Hebraic and Christian view holds that the spirit is essentially embodied. Hence, Enoch, Elijah and Jesus Christ are said to have ascended into heaven with their bodies. St. Paul holds even after resurrection of the dead, each individual self will be provided with indestructible body (1 Cor 15. 42-45). Islamic view on the whole means that on death, the breath of spirit of the dead man will return to God. But on the day of resurrection, each individual will get back his body, in contrast, the Indian traditions hold that man is essentially spirit and his body is constituted of his Karma. Hence, his body is extraneous to the *atman*. Just as men throw the garment and out on another, so is their body in different births (Gita 2.22). However, we must not forget that even the Lord assumes *Sattvic* body to help his devotees. And, according to Ramanuja, the redeemed souls too, at the behest of their Lord and Master may assume *Sattvic* Body.

There is a further point to note that in prophetic religions including Zoroastrianism the soul or spirit is a created entity, but remains eternal, whether in heaven or hell. But in Indian tradition, the soul is eternal and does not undergo any destruction (Gita 2.20).

It is that religion is man-centered. Naturally man has been given a very high place in the scheme of things. According to Judaeo-Christianity man was created in God's image and was given dominion over all the creatures of the earth (Genesis 1. 26-28). Christian theologians also hold that man was created so that he may have a holy will, deserving the fellowship of God. According to Islam too man was created to become higher than the angels, because they alone have freedom of will and

intellect (Surah 33.72) and was deemed to be a co-worker with God in relation to the world. This view of co-working with God in the struggle of good against the evil is much more marked in Zoroastrianism.

This view of man reaches its extreme in Advaitism where man is considered to be essentially Brahman (*jivo Brahamaiva nrpah*). In Ramanuja, *jiva* is the body of Brahman whose essential nature is to depend on the Lord. Here the highest destiny of man is to surrender his own will to God, so that man may come nearest to God. In *Samkhya*, *Nyaya* and Jainism after liberation, each individual *jiva* regains his pristine glory without any finitude and miseries.

Naturally, whether in prophetic tradition or Indian tradition, man is credited with freedom of will. In Indian tradition man is born with the load of past Karmas in the form of *appurva*, but the past *Karma-Samskaras* can be overcome and destroyed by the means prescribed in different sects of Hinduism. *Yoga*, *jnana*, *Vedic* sacrifice and *Bhakti* are some of the ways in which the past Karmas can be destroyed and fresh accumulation of *Karmas* can be stopped. Working out of one's salvation by one's own efforts (*purusakara*) largely depends on the free exercise of one's will. Even in *bhakti*, according to Ramanuja, one must prove his worth and show his fitness for the Grace of God. One has to surrender one's will to God in order that the Grace of God may save the devotee. But the surrender of one's will is as much the work of free will as, withholding it from God's grace is.

So far there is no difficulty in refuting the charge of fatalism concerning Indian tradition, but there is special difficulty in accepting the doctrine of free will in Ramanuja. However, we need not dwell on this. In other atheistic systems of Jainism and Buddhism, man himself is said to be responsible for his bondage due to the abuse of his free will for working out his own salvation. Man is his own architect either for his further fall or rise.

In prophetic religions, man was created free because he was made in God's image. God himself breathed into his nostrils his breath and Spirit. Man was created free either to obey or disobey the commandments of God in Judeo-Christian concept of man. Adam in his fall is said to have abused his freedom of will by eating

the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. However, according to Christianity, Jesus remained obedient to God even in his death on the Cross. In Islam also man is free either to obey or disobey the commandments of God. However, there is no point of misunderstanding about Islam it is the proudest thing to be the slave of Allah. Hence, it is contended that Islam teaches that the highest virtue of man is to surrender his free will.

One thing to be noticed here is that to be the slave of Allah is not a small achievement. In the context one has to remember that one has to become the slave of Allah by constant remembrance of God, fasting, meditation etc, these acts of obedience purify the man and bring him closer to God. He is divinized and becomes a holy will for which man was created. The moral practice in the spirit and later of religion alone allows one to become the slave of Allah. This point has been further pursued by Ramanuja.

According to Ramanuja, a jiva is nothing but a part of the body of Brahman. And a body is that which wholly remains sub servant to God as its spirit. Does this dependence mean a blemish? According to Ramanuja, dependence on anything or anyone other than the supreme person is painful and a defect in ones spiritual growth and development. However,

The only one that ought to be served by all the self, is the highest Purusa... he alone is to be served by all. (Vedanthaagraha, pada 250)

Nay, for Ramanuja, Moksha is nothing but the privilege of service to God.

Hence, to be the slave of Allah is the perfection of man and his highest destiny. A Christian hymn is.

Our wills are Ours to make them thine,

So that in thy ocean flow they may richer and fuller be.

THE CONCEPT OF THE WORLD

According to prophetic religions, including Zoroastrianism, the world has been created by God. This is also accepted by Sikhism. According to which on the beginning there was only darkness and God had created this world by his mere command. However, Sikhism appears to be influenced by Islam in this account of creation of the world. But Chhandogya Upanishad does hold that Brahman wished to be many (6.3.3.) and that he became so in due course in an orderly manner, it appears how-ever. That Indian thought does not hold the first beginning of the world at any time. Nor does it hold the First beginning of the world at any time. Nor does it hold that there will be any final end of the world. it supports the view that the world is periodically created and in due course is also periodically destroyed. In this cycle of periodic creation and dissolution, the world undergoes four orderly stages of Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kaliyuga. In the last stage of Kaliyuga, the world becomes too much vitiated and has to be destroyed in order that the world may be Religion-created afresh. Only Jainism and Mimamsa take the world to be eternal. Buddhism does not say anything either about its periodic creation and dissolution. For Buddhism the world is simply a stream of momentary events. Hence it is essentially painful. But even Buddhism cannot deny the importance of the world for gaining Nirvana.

The world has a meaning and an end for human beings. According to Zoroastrianism creation by God means an end bringing about finite creatures and things. This finitude necessarily entails evil. The world therefore is an arena for man to side with God for conquest of good over evil.

According to Judaeo-Christian and Islamic teaching the world has been created by God by his mere wish and command, with man as the centre of world. in this tradition man has been created in the world to conquer the world by knowing the laws implanted in Nature by God. These laws are meant for the guidance and well-being of man. Hence, the world is God's world by knowing which man can know the omnipotence and infinitude of God.

Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made.(Romans1.20).

Hence the world is sacred and manifests his nature and will. Man therefore has to come to grips with it for his own guidance. This view of the world is clearly taught in the Quoran. The world has been created not as His sport (Surah 44. 38). The world with its laws has been created for man for his guidance. (SurahX 6,7; XIII.2,3; .21.22).

In Zoroastrianism the purpose of creation is that man should be a co-partner with God in defeating the vil which has been introduced by Ahriman. Hence, in general, in prophetic religions the world is a vale of soul-maiming. This world too has a soteriological purpose to serve. Man has to go fit for the heaven. In prophetic religions man can fulfill this divine purpose of creation by his obedience to God's commands and by surrendering his will to God. This soteriological purpose is also found in Indian tradition.

True, according to Brahmasutra II.1.33, this world is only a sport of ishvara. Both Shankara and Aramanuja believe in this theory of lila. However, this lila is not a playful activity for a bhakta. In this sportive activity ishvara descends into human flesh as His condescendous teleology in the part of Prakriti,with a view of helping man to win his liberation (Sankhya Karika 17, 21, 31, 56,-59,60).

In most Indian systems man comes into the world with his mission to win his salvation. The world is real which man has to know. It is real in the sense that it is not a dream of as unreal as a sky-flower. In the Nyaya-vaishesika school the world consists of eternal atoms which can be combined by an omnipotent god alone. For samkhya the world is prakriti which is constituted of sattva, rajas and tamas that are there eternally. However, in vijñānavāda of Buddhism, the world is taken to be a dream. In general for Buddhism the world is just a stream of passing events. Does Advaitism regard the world as illusory?

The mityatava of advaitism has been translated as 'illusion'. And the word 'illusion' does not convey the correct meaning of mityavada first, ishvara creates

this world out of his maya, and, this maya is within the full knowledge of Him. Hence, this maya is real for Ishavara. However, for the seeker, from the phenomenal viewpoint it is both sat and asat (sadasat). It is Sat, real from the empirical or phenomenal stand for all men. Thus, for practical purposes, the world is real, and, for the daily practical concern of life man has to know it and its laws. But this is contended that this world is not absolutely real. It is negated or transcend that Brahmajnan dawns upon the seeker. This transcendental existence of a Brahmaajnanai is in expressible in words. If, however, we have to speak about both the characteristics of Sat-asat, then according to catusthiti of Nagarjuna and Saptabhingina we have to say that the world is inexpressible. In the last resort, however, the world is real for man in his practical course of life.

For Jainism too the world is real with its padarthas and gunas. In the same way the Mimamsakas regard the world to be eternally real. Ramanuja too regards, the world to be wholly real, and, along with Nyaya offers a realistic explanation of psychological illusion like that of snake-rope or conchshell-silver illusion. However, there is one more point about Ramanuja.

Ramanuja holds that the world and jiva (acit and cit) both form the body of Brhma who remains the soul of his body. This body of Ishavara remains real for all times. Even at the time of pralaya (dissolution of the world), this body which includes the world remains in subtle (sukshama) form. For Ramanuja however, the body and soul of Ishavara are inseparable, so he tries to maintain some sort of organic unity in his system.

Finally, the Kathopanishad exhorts the seeker for winning his liberation.

Arise ye! Awake ye!

Obtain your boons and understand them! (III.14)

And swami Vivekananda interprets this clarion call as a call to service and sacrifice in this world which is the field of working out one's liberation. Hence, Hinduism at present regards the world to be real.

The dependence of the world on God in some sense accepted both in the prophetic and some important Indian systems of thought. In prophetic religions, the world has been created by God, and. It'll come to an end at the end of the age, determined by god. Hence, the world remains dependent on God.

In Jainism and Mimamsa, the world is eternal and as such the question of its dependence does not arise at all. Similarly, for Buddhism in principle, there is no substance and no God, at least in principle. Hence, the question of dependence on God cannot be asked in this system. According to Advaitism. Ishavara is the efficient and material cause of the world, and, he creates the world for His sport. Naturally, the world remains dependent on Ishwara, but in another sense, the world remains depended on nirguna Braham too, since it provides the white canvas on which the whole worlds is projected. In Ramanuja, Brahman includes the world (acit) as its body along with cit (the jives). And, the nature of the body is that it remains wholly dependent on its indwelling spirit, which in the case is Brahman.

In Seshwara Samkhy, the world remains dependent on its Creator and, this is also the case in Nyaya-Vasesika system of thought, even when here god is only an efficient cause of the world.

Thus, in theistic systems, the world remains dependent on God, and, even when created it is real with its stereological purpose to fulfill in the interest of an.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

Suffering need to be evil, for suffering has a corrective, preventive, purpose, and may even manifest the glory of God. In Christianity suffering may turn out to be

redemptive too, transforming men into their higher nature e.g., the expiratory and redemptive death of Jesus on the Cross. Besides, suffering serves the purpose of shocking him to realize his fallen nature and to help him to rise in spiritual excellence. It is not only illustrated in the parable of Prodigal Son, but is so in Hinduism too. Then, what is evil?

Evil is that which pertains to deeper fall in man. For example, fall into the nature of beasts and animals, as is taught in the Hindu tradition of transmigration. But more, Ramanuja holds that those who persist in sins are made to sink in still lower nature.

If... an individual is pursuing what is most contrary to the divine will, then the Lord gives him evil intellect and will and actuates him to proceed along evil lines". (Vedarthasamgraha pada 1224)

According to Christianity, sin is evil, and, this sin is evil in the sense that it leads the sinner towards damnation into hell. Besides, it may mean the destruction of the soul in hell-(Mathew 10.28)

Thus, evil is more moral and spiritual rather than physical. One can easily see that physical evil, specially in nature has an educative purpose to fulfill. Flood, famine, pestilence etc., are natural calamities that serve as challenge for man to overcome them. In Indian tradition, there is dukha of three kinds, namely adhyatmika (psych-physical suffering), adhibhoutika (natural) and adhidaivika (transcendental). In Buddhism, suffering is more of existential suffering is due to the momentariness of things which constitute a stream called the world. It has been termed as jara-marana (old age and death). Really, it is the moral evil which constitutes the problem of suffering.

In prophetic religions, as well as in Indian tradition, the supreme object of religious experience is untouched by any evil. In prophetic religion, moral evil with its attendant psycho-physical sufferings came into the world because of the disobedience of man in keeping God's commandments and maintaining strict monotheism. But God himself is Holy and untouched by any moral imperfection. God

is also transcendent of human failures. For example, the book of Job states; can the mortal man be more just than his creator? (Job 4.17).

Are you trying to prove that I am unjust-to put me in the wrong and yourself in the right? (Job.40.2)

Jon is silenced by the overwhelming might of God. In Islam and Judaism there is the doctrine of resignation to the inevitable decree of God. For what God does is just, this stoical resignation to all things that happens to a man is thus reflected:

After all this, there is only one thing to say: fear of God, and obey His commands, because this is all that man was created for? (ecclesiastes 12.13.)

However, there is one problem that has baffled the prophetic theists. Why did God make man with freedom of will when he fully knew that he would misuse it? This is the question which the angels asked God.

Wilt Thou place therein one (man) who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we hymn thy praise and sanctify thee? (Surah II 30).

God silenced the inopportune question by His Omnipotence and Omniscience. But this poses the dilemma.

Is deity willing to prevent evil, but not able?

Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing?

Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing?

Whence then is evil?

According to the theist, the purpose of God's creation is the emergence of holy wills. A holy will cannot be created or made in the fashion as the angels of heaven who always do the right. A holy will has to create itself, through many falls and, as Kant has suggested, through many lives. A holy will has to conquer its own evil nature, and, finally only through the grace of God. This becoming of the holy will by surrendering itself to the richer and fuller flow of Divine Ocean cannot be

achieved in a day or even in one life. But this end of the emergence of holy wills for outweighs the abuse of free will. Hence, God does not will evil (i.e., the abuse of free will), but permits it for the purpose of evolving holy wills. Hence, Bergson puts it that this universe is a machine for the making of Gods,?

Suffering in Christianity occupies an important place and the points may be thus repeated.

- a. Suffering is for the sake of awakening a man to realize his own essential nature,. This is well illustrated in the case of parable of Prodigal Son (Luke 15. 11-31)this is also true in Hinduism.
- b. Suffering is corrective.
“The Lord corrects those he loves, as a father corrects a son of whom he is proud” (Proverb 3.12; also Job 5.17; Hebrew 12.9).
- c. Suffering of the saintly persons and prophet is intercessory, vicarious and redemptive (e.g. in the cases of Moses, Jeremiah and Jesus Christ).
- d. At times suffering is for the manifestation of the Glory of God, 9St. John 9.3) e.g., in healing a man born blind.
- e. Suffering is purificatory Hebrew 5:8). This is illustrated in the example of Abraham. Joseph, Job and Jesus. This is also true for the explicatory and penitentiary suffering in Hinduism.
- f. As the follower of the Cross it is a privilege for a Christian to suffer for the sake of Jesus. (Philippians 1.29;1 peter 4.13-15).
- g. The doctrine of atonement, according to which Christ died for the sins of the whole world, is unique in all the major religions of the world.

SUFFERING IN INDIAN TRADITION

In Indian tradition there is no concept of First creation. Creation and dissolution continue endlessly. In this creation, suffering is a hard fact of life. This has to be faced and every effort has to be made for its eradication. Hence, Indian

tradition resorts to therapeutic measure for its removal. In this context, samkhya mentions three kinds of suffering; viz., adhyatmika (psycho-physical), adhibhutika (natural) and Adhidaivika (Supernatural). But the analysis of suffering in Buddhism is remarkable. It dissuades people from entering into the metaphysical origin of suffering. It is a metaphysical heresy. But it accepts suffering as a hard fact of life. Therefore the nature, the cause, the way and cessation of suffering are detailed and discussed. Buddhism, Jainism and early Mimamsa are essentially atheistic. Hence, in these systems god cannot be held responsible for human suffering. Hence, in the atheistic systems of Jainism, Buddhism, and in early atheistic Samkhya, man also is the architect of his own destiny. In Jainism man is responsible for his many kinds of limitations and suffering due to his karman. In Buddhism and in theistic Samkhya, the cause of human suffering is ajana (avidya in Buddhism and infatuation in Samkhya). Further, Buddhism also holds that desire (trishna) in this worldly existence is a powerful cause of endless births and deaths and these constitute suffering (jara mara). The whole Buddhist doctrine of worldly suffering is based on its metaphysical theory of momentariness.

However, even in theistic systems of India, God is said to be untouched by inauspicious attributes. He is essentially good, pure light without any shadow in it. then, whence suffering? Theistic Indian systems do not undertake the task of metaphysical explanation of first suffering or the first metaphysical cause of suffering. Largely, Ajana or avidya is the immediate cause of suffering and attachment to the world which leads to the endless cycle of births and death. For Indian systems worldly existence are births, so the removal of this ajana is the real cause of endless rebirths, so the removal of this ajana by means of jnana is the only remedy.

In the Vishishtadvaita of Ramanuja, the doctrine of ajana is sought to be replaced by Karma. But he too ultimately holds that Karma along with ajana is the real cause of the miserable worldly existence.

Further Ramanuja holds that the real nature of a jiva is to remain in subservience to God. Hence, revolt against this dependence on the Lord and the

violence of injunctions and prohibition mentioned in the scriptures, due to ajnana may be mention as the specific cause of human bondage and suffering. Hence, the is very much akin to Christianity doctrine, according which sin (moral suffering) came in the world as result of the disobedience to the command of god by Adam. However, there is some difficulty in Ramanuj's philosophy of qualified monism.

According to Ramanuja, cit and acit (jiva and prakriti) form the body of God, who is the indwelling spirit of this body. Again, according to Shariara-Shariar relationship of his system, Ramanuj defines body as the which the Lord completely controls (Sri bhasya 1.2.2; II.9). It is so, then the jives, forming the body of the Lord, have no freedom of will. Hence, not they the body of the Lord, have no freedom of will. Hence; not they but G9d is responsible for the evil and suffering of the jives. However, Ramanuja proves freedom of the jives on the basis of Shastric injunctions and prohibitions.

For commandments can be addressed to such agent only as are capable to entering in action referring from action, according to their thought and will.

Like Kant, Ramanuja maintains that commands mean 'thou oughtest'. 'Ought' implies the capacity of free choice of either obedience or disobedience. In another place too, Ramanuja maintains that each individual jiva has the complete power of initiative in taking action or abstinence from it.

But is not God benevolent, merciful and omnipotent? Why then does he not liberate the jiva from the burden of miserable existence, seeing that He is the Lord of Karma? No doubt God is merciful and through His grace He grants salvation to His devotees. Yes, God does grant salvation to all those jives who seek their refuge in Him.

And I, dwelling in their hearts am moved by compassion and therefore destroy their darkness of soul born of ignorance by lighting the luminous lamp of their knowledge.

Why does the Lord not show any pity for the disobedient evil doer?

For by pity we understand the inability. On somebody's part, to bear the pains of others, coupled with a disregard of his own advantage, when pity has the effect of bringing about the transgression of law on the part of the pitying person, it is in no way to his credit; it rather implies the charge of weakness.

The Lord has to punish the evil-doer both for retributive and preventive ends.

Thus, for Ramanuja, man alone is responsible for his Karman, suffering, and not God, who remains untouched by human weakness and evil.

Views of Lingayat religion respect of: Concept of world (V of BW 177)

This mortal world is but the Maker's mint;
Those who earn merit here, earn also there,
And those who earn not here, earn neither there;
O Kūḍala Saṅgama Lord!⁴³

Views of Lingayat religion respect of: Problem of evil and suffering, in this following Vachana is clarified that there is nothing to worry about bygone wickedness and its sufferings, once the path of reality is understood one should not
(V of BW 73)

Bother not how the bygone sin Departs:
Will not the bitter bottle-gourd,
If filled with sacred ash,

⁴³ *martyalōkavembudu kartārana kammaṭavayyā,*
illi salluvaru alliyū salluvarayyā.
illi salladavaru alliyū sallarayyā,
kūḍala-saṅgama-dēvā.

Within three days be sweet ?
What if it be a butcher's knife
Which has slaughtered a long time?
Will it not turn to gold when touched
By the philosopher's stone?
O Kūḍala Saṅgama Lord,
Will, then, the sin fail to fade
Whent theashmark paints the brow ?⁴⁴

3 SALVATION

One can find lots different ways to get-one-ment with creator. Get-one-met is to be the goal of human being, in this section a brief study is being made to find how regions suggest to salvation.

HUMAN DESTINY

As noted earlier. According to Indian tradition this worldly existence is essentially miserable. This is the starting-point of the soteriological consideration and the way out is taken up as a therapeutic measure. The real cause is avidya of

⁴⁴ *munna māḍida pāpaventu hōhudendu cintisabēḍa.
kahi sōreya kāya tandu vibhūtiya tumbidoḍe
sihiyāgade mūru divasakke?
halavu kāla konda sūnegārana kattiyādaḍēnu
paruṣa muṭṭalike honnāgade, ayyā?
lalāṭadalli vibhūti baralike
pāpa pallaṭavāgade kūḍala-saṅgama-dēvā?*

ajnana. Jainism accepts karma as the real cause of bondage and Ramanuja too regards karman in association with avidya as the cause of human bondage and miseries. But some other peculiarities have also been mentioned already in the Visistadvaita of Ramanuja.

Naturally for Jainism by eradicating Karma, a jiva can win his final destiny of infinite power, knowledge and bliss. According to Ramanuja, the ultimate destiny can be won only by bhakti. In the state of release, the jiva regains his ultimate destiny of dependence on and servitude to the Lord. He is also endowed the agency, which the released soul carries out according to the behest of the Lord.

In other systems of Indian thought, the ultimate destiny is reality liberation from the endless cycle of miserable births and deaths. This state of liberation is called nirvana in Buddhism. This nirvana is really indescribable and can only be described as the state without any sorrow, without egotism and desire, and, without the prospect of any further fall into the cycle of births and deaths.

According to Samkhya, Jainism, Naya and advaitis, the ultimate destiny of an individual is to regain its pristine glory of pure consciousness. Only Vaisheshika system does not admit consciousness as the ultimate nature of consciousness. According to it, consciousness is only an accidental attribute of a jiva, for it arises only when a jiva comes to have a body, sense-organs and their contact with an object.

According to Shankara, liberation is really regaining the pristine state of consciousness, existence and bliss. In its ultimate state it is without any body. Very often it is mentioned that a jiva merges into Brahman, just as the rivers merge into the sea. However, mergence really means perfection and freedom from the limitation (or upadhis) which egotism entails. In the language of Kabir, the dirty water of a drain by losing itself in the river Ganges, gets rid of its dirtiness and becomes perfect by becoming Ganges water (Ganga Jal); a piece of iron by coming in contact with *paras* (philosopher's stone) becomes gold by shedding off its nature as the piece of iron. Here ironness is lost, but iron gets perfected as Gold.

In prophetic religions, God has created man so that he may become as holy as God is. In Christianity God has created man so that he may be a child of God. He can become a child of God. He can become a child of god by being united with God through his faith in the redemptive death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. By remaining in union with God through Christ, man will inherit the Kingdom of God or Heaven. Heavenly abode is said to be full of bliss, without any life of sensuousness. His life will be as holy as of angels who do not have nay marriage-relation. He lives in heavenly glory of holiness and the praise of God (Luke 20.35). Though God has been progressively revealing His laws and commandments through prophets and through history, yet there are men who disobey the commandments of God. They are said to be the children of devil. On the Day of Judgment they will be cast out into hell, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth because of their being burnt there in never-quenching fire. Hence, heaven for the righteous and hell for the sinners or unrighteous are two fates which await men as their final destiny.

For Judaism also heaven and hell are two things that await for the faithful and the unfaithful respectively. Of course, they do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Hence, there can be no talk of union with God through Jesus Christ.

In Islam, after death, the spirit of man returns to God. On the day resurrection he will rise from his grave. If he is proved faithful to God and His prophet Mohammad on the Day of Judgment, then he will be led into the Paradise, where he will have a life of never-ending enjoyment. In like manner, the evil-doer will be consigned to never –quenching hell-fire. In other words, on the day judgment all person will have to cross the bridge of al-Sirat. Those who fall will go to hell, and, those who get across will go to heavens. Hence, the inheritance of heaven and hell is the ultimate destiny, according to Islam.

In the same manner, in Zorostricism, on the day of reckoning, every person will have to cross the bridge of Chinvat. The pious soul will easily pass the bridge and will go to heaven. However, the impious, the worshipper of Ahruman will fall from the bridge to pass into hell. However, the Parsi believers that hell-life is not eternal.

For on the day of restoration, people suffering in hell will be purified and ultimately they will remain in heaven afterwards.

But what happens to souls from the time of death to the time the resurrection and the day of judgment? For the Jews. Souls live in Shoel in a weak state of animation. Christians also have developed the notion of a region of purgatory (under the influence of Plato and Parsiism) where they will be purged of their sins and evil nature. Dr. Iqbal also suggests that heaven and hell are not permanent resting places, but they are stages of the progress of the soul.

Of course, in Rigvedic Aryan Hinduism certainly there is the concept of heaven. Heaven is pictured where all desires are fulfilled (RV IX113.7-110). This is reserved for those who risk their lives in battle, arrange sacrifices and give offerings and pious gifts (RV X 14.8). In heaven the pious will have the fellowship with their Father (I.109.7). The heaven abode of Visnu has also been mentioned in RV.I 154.5-6. In like manner, there is something like hell for the wicked, mentioned as of 'deep place' (RV IV 5.5) or 'pit' (RV VII. 104.3). Reminding one of Jewish Sheol. This concept of heaven and hell was greatly elaborated in later Pauranic Hinduism, no doubt under the influence of Islam.

SALVATION AND LIBERATION

The concept of salvation is found in prophetic religions and of liberation in Indian systems of thought. 'Salvation' means escape from the anger of God which leads to the eternal damnation of the sinner into hell. Hell has been pictured as a place of very great physic-psychical torture. On the other hand, 'liberation' means escape from the endless cycle of births and deaths. As any form of worldly existence in Indian tradition is said to be miserable, so liberation ultimately means escape from miseries. Hence, there is hardly much difference from salvation and liberation, for the both cases it means escape from miseries. Positively both mean a life of unending bliss (in heaven for the prophetic religions, and, restoration of the pristine

existence of the jives before their fall). This is also true Buddhism nirvana. But the respective means of attaining salvation and liberation markedly differ.

For the Jews salvation can be attained by means of obedience to the laws of Moses and by the culture of moral life of compassion, mercy and by having a contrite heart for the many sins of omissions and commissions. One has to remain true to one's Judaic tradition even at the cost of one's martyrdom.

The Christians seeks union with God by having faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. It is said to have full faith in the redemptive and vicarious death of Jesus on the cross. By 'redemptive' is meant that sins are so many cases of debt one owes to God. Hence, debt has to be paid for. Now faith in Jesus means that Jesus by his crucifixion has paid this debt to God. Secondly, it is vicarious death in the sense that in the place of the sinner. Jesus himself has carried away the sins of the believer. This sacrificial death of Jesus is an arrangement made by God. For redeeming man of his sins. Hence, it is the free gift of God for all those persons who believe in the sacrificial death of Jesus

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. (St. John 3.16).

This forgiveness of sins is not only found in the peace of mind of a true Christian, but also reflected in his transformed life in the spirit of God. He is a new creature> (Galatians 6.15)

For Muslims one can win salvation by strict obedience to the commandments of Allah, and, by observing the five pillars of faith, one has to accept Allah as one God, Mohammed as His last and final prophet. On the Day of Judgment, the prophet will intercede on behalf of his true followers for the forgiveness of sins of omission and commission. A true believer has to resign himself to the sovereign will of Allah.

A Parsi is a co-worker and co-sharer with God in the struggle of Goodness over evil. He has to triumph over the evil by means of Humta (good thought), Hukhta (Good word) and Hvarshta (Good deeds).

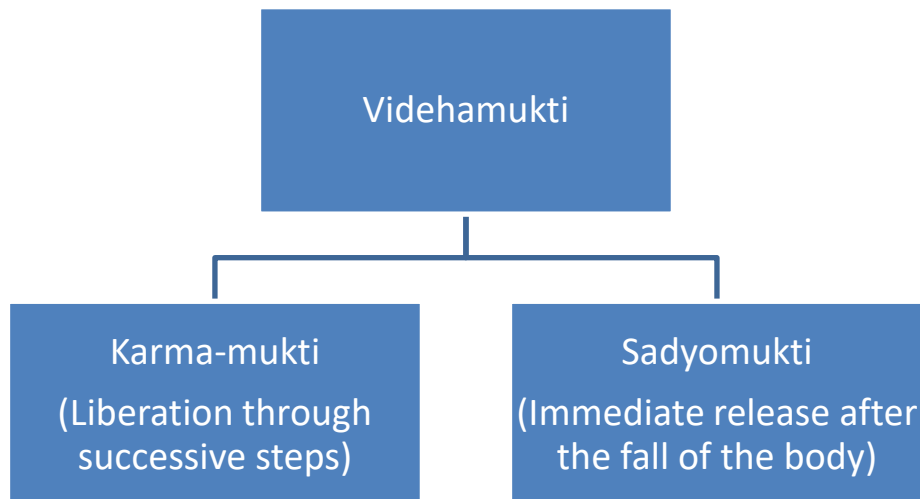
The doctrine of liberation has been taken up in Hinduism with a good deal of detail.

'Liberation' in India tradition has been named 'moksha', 'mukti', 'tr̥sna' etc., (and literally means 'escape'). Hence, liberation means escape from the cycle of endless births and deaths, entailing miseries. In general, the cause of bondage or miseries of rebirths is said to be ajnana, so escape from bondage means regaining of the true jnana of the nature of jiva himself. This ajnana means the realization of the pristine glory of the jiva as pure consciousness (Samkhya, Nyaya, Jainism). However, in this connection the views of Shankara and Ramanuja are important, and, a summary of their views of Shankara and Ramanuja are important, and, a summary of their views can be given here since they have already been mentioned earlier under 'Hinduism'.

SHANKARA

For Shankara escape from the miserable existence of endless rebirths and deaths can be obtained from Brahma-jnana only. Brahma-prapti really means becoming Brahma itself. This is a state where all differences of father-mother, low-high, caste and so on, are utterly lost. Brahma-jnana is Religion-finding one's real nature which a jiva is (jivo Brahmaaiva nr̥pah).

There are two kinds of Mukti, namely jivanmukti (liberation in this very life) and videhamukti (liberation after the fall of the body).



The problem of jivanmukti is important for Shankara for a jivanmukta alone can be upholder of Brahma-jnana, exemplified in his life, and, can be the competent guide for seekers after Brahma-jnana.

Mandanamishra and Ramanuja do not regard the state of jivanmukti as true liberation. The very existence of the body is the mark of persistence of ajnana according to Mandana and Ramanuja. Shankara would not accept this objection, since for Shankara, Brahma-jnana destroys accumulated and current Karmas, but fructuous Karmas (prarabdha) continue till the fall of the body. For Shankara Brahma-jnana destroys ahamkara (egotism), desire and the reality of the world. The feeling of embodiment is lost, but not the body which continues as the momentum even when the push of the Karmas is lost. Even here there are stages.

- 1 Brahmanidhi who knows and realizes Brahma and the illusoriness of the world.
- 2 Brahmanidhivara who rises from his Samadhi (trance) according to his will.
- 3 Brahmanidhavaridhi whose Samadhi cannot be terminated by external agency.
- 4 Brahmanidhavarista whose Samadhi cannot be terminated even by external agency.

The example of Brahmanidhavarista (i.e., the most realized soul of Brahma-jnana) was found in Ramakrishna.

After the fall of the body, a seeker devoted to Ishvara with a view to obtaining Brahma-realization, gets liberation in successive stages, due to the Grace of God. His final liberation comes only after the dissolution of the world (Brahmasutra-Shankara-bhasya IV. 3.10; IV. 4.22). Sadyamukti is obtained by a jivanmukta who obtains his Brahma-jnana by means of jnanayoga.

RAMANUJA

Brahma of Ramanuja is personal and can be obtained through bhakti. Bhakti is a constant and steady remembrance of the Lord. This remembrance remains as uninterrupted as the flow of oil in a burning lamp. This bhakti is not pure feeling, but is karma-Jnana-Samucchaya (i.e., an intermixture of Karma and Jnana, action and knowledge). Liberation is obtained through the grace of God by seekers who seek it by deserving it by virtue of their love and devotion to God. God grants liberation to man by restoring the dependence (or refuge) of the seeker on God.

Liberation is of two kinds:

1. Kaivalya in which stage the jiva remains totally free, though subservient to the Lord.
2. Kanikarya-bhava in which the jiva fully enjoys the dependence of the Lord. Here are also stages of development that continue indefinitely.
 - a. The liberated attains salokya i.e., the abode of the Lord.
 - b. Further, reaches Sanidhya i.e., the presence of God.
 - c. Further still the mukta (liberated) becomes like the Lord (swarupya). In this state he enjoys all the powers of the Lord except the creation and dissolution of the world.
 - d. Finally, the mukta enjoys fellowship with the Lord.

One can note that the doctrine of Grace and the attainment of fellowship with God in Ramanuja and Christianity are very similar ideas.

SIN

The concept of sin has relevance in theism only, where God is taken to be person. 'Sin' means disobedience of the law and commandments of God. It should be distinguished from crime which means violation of the legal code of a country e.g., theft, murder, fraud etc. again sin is to be distinguished from moral lapses e.g., cruelty, greed, ingratitude etc. crime is related to laws external to man, and moral lapses are related to the internal laws written in one's heart or conscience. Sin, however, has its relation with God as Person, who asks man to obey, observe and carry out his commandments and laws. The concept of sin is most pronounced in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Rgvedic worship of Varuna and Ramanuja. As distinguished from sin is the concept of ajnana or avidya. ajnana not only makes man ignorant of his real nature, but makes him commit many immoral acts. Hence, ajnana is deeply related with morality. Sin requires penitence leading to forgiveness and finally reconciliation with God. Whose commandments and laws have been violated by the sinner. As against penitence, forgiveness and reconciliation, moral lapses under the influence of ajnana require penances and in general internalization of morality. For example, in Indian system in order to overcome the endless cycle of rebirths, the seeker has to renounce his desires (trsnā) for women, wealth, name and fame etc. in other words it is a matter of self-culture and self-conquest, if one wants to gain liberation (moksha).

With this introduction, we can take up the problem of sin in different theistic systems.

Parsiism: there is only one God called Ahura Mazda. He is also the law-giver for the guidance of man. As Ahura Mazda has created man with free will, so man can either obey or disobey the law of God. This law is in the form of asha (corresponding to rta of Varuna of the Rgveda) is moral, natural and spiritual. Disobedience, specially when man was created pure? Because there is Ahirman who

not only creates natural calamities but disorders the mind of man evil things and disobedience.

Judaism: the first sin came into the world by the first Adam. This sin considered in the disobedience of man in eating the forbidden fruit of knowledge. As the further story of Judaism continues, God gave his commandments in the form of law, injunctions and prohibitions. Disobedience of God's commandments was deemed as sin. The two great sins of the Jews were defiling the Sabbath (i.e., working on that day) and Idol worship. The history of the Jews when they were ruled by others, were defeated and even taken into exile is the story of worshipping of idols of Baal, Asherah and many others. Jesus was accused of defiling the Sabbath, for he performed many miracles of healing on Sabbath. Again, Jesus was accused of blasphemy when he claimed that he and God are one (St. John 10.30) and that he claimed that he was before Abraham was born (St. John 8.58). Hence, idol worship, defilement of Sabbath and blasphemy were great sins.

Christianity: in Christianity too sin means rebellion against God, and, this disobedience is widespread. Adam sinned by his disobedience and this spirit of disobedience was enveloped the whole human race (Romans 5.12). This is known as the doctrine of original sin of man. This means that man's evil nature has deep root in him. St Paul writes that man is torn into conflict between his human (animal) nature and God's spirit within him. This human nature is so strong that man falls a prey to his passions and animal desires, and becomes a creature of sin. In other words by following his animal nature, he substitutes his animal image for the image of God planted in him at the time of creation. True, God has given us the Law to guide us. But we are compelled by our human nature to violate the law.

I am a mortal man, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do; for I don't do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate. (Romans 7.14-15)

The conclusion is that knowing the Law is not enough, for the animal passion is so strong in man that knowing the law he becomes helpless and he keeps on violating the law. The more he knows about the law, the more miserable he becomes, for he becomes conscious of his not keeping the law. The more he

becomes aware of his rebellion against God, the more he suffers from his sense of guilt. Hence, there is need for a way out of sin in man. Here we are led to faith in the redemptive death of Jesus on the Cross. But we find that there is a good deal of similarity between the load of karma in Hinduism and the doctrine for original sin. A Hindu is born a prisoner of his past karma which determines his conduct to a great extent. How can a Hindu get rid of the load of Karma? As a Christianity the Grace of God saves a man from his burden of sin, so in Hinduism too in the bhakti school of Ramanuja and others, the grace of God overcomes the burden of karma and helps a bhakta to get his salvation.

Islam: no doubt for Islam too, sin means rebellion against God. This was the besetting sin of Iblis, who disobeyed god by not bowing down before Adam. Ever since the Devil is at work and he beguiles human beings into sin. A Muslim is advised that he should have a great deal of faith in God in order to escape from sin. No doubt he should get repentant for any act of violating the law. But it is hoped that by observing the five pillars of five prayers, Ramdan fast, zakat etc it would be possible for him to overcome the sin the Muslim commits.

It appears that insistence on faith in God and his apostle and daily prayers are form of devotion standing on par with bhakti. Of course, the vivid picture of hell is also calculated to instill fear in the heart of the possible violation of the law. The dependence of a Muslim on the mercy and compassion of God and the efficacious advocacy of the prophet Mohammad on the day of judgment would suffice to the forgiveness of his sins.

Rgvediv conception of sin: we have already held that indo-Aryan and Iranians lived together before their parting. Naturally some sort of Parsiism concerning monotheistic worship might have been the common faith of all Aryans. This monotheistic worship lingers in the worship of rgvedic god Varuna.

The Rgvedic Aryans in the presence of Varuna were quite conscious of the moral laws of rta promulgated by God Varuna. They were also conscious of their violation and seek forgiveness of their sins of commission and omission.

- 1 whatever law of thine, O God, O Varuna, as we are men,
 Day by day we violate.
- 2 Give us not as prey to death, to be destroyed by thee in wrath,
 To thy fierce anger when displeased. (RV.125).

In the same vein RV.VII. 89 the Rgvedic Aryans plead for God's mercy.

O Varuna, whatever the offence may be which we as men commit
against the heavenly host,

When through out want of thought, we violate thy laws, O God, for
that inequity. (RV VII. 89.5)

It is to be noted that both in the new Testaments (Roman 5.12) (7.24) and RV.
1.25.2 and Cor. 15.56 the wages of sin are said to be death.

Ramanuja: For Ramanuja, sin is rebellion against God. God has given man his
freedom of will and in Shastras has given him instructions for his guidance. These
instructions are in the form of many injunctions and prohibitions. By his violation of
God's commandments in the Shastras man is condemned to the endless cycle of
rebirths and deaths. This doctrine of endless rebirths means endless suffering and
compares favorably with the doctrine of hell-fire in prophetic religions. Nay more.
For the vile offender God,

Gives him evil intellect and will and actuates him to proceed along evil
lines, (veadarthasanraham, padas 125, 125)

This evil disposition is really a punishment and saintly nature is a reward of
the righteous. This again means the same thing that holy lives fit for the fellowship of
God are the supreme end of creation. Here Ramanuja and Christianity join hands.
According to Ramkrishna, sin follows from the acceptance of free will. But man is not
free. Everything depends on the will of God. Hence, there is neither free will in man
nor is he a sinner (M 274, M677, M.820) from the viewpoint of a man who has
realized God, everything good and bad is the play of God's maya. Man is a machine

and the lord alone is the operator (m211). But Ramkrishna also admits that for the neophyte there is a feeling of sin in the beginning (M 403).

EXPIATION AND ATONEMENT

‘Expiation’ means reparation of wrong acts, and ‘atonement’ means wiping out one’s sin, or, freeing oneself from the stain of sin. Parsi religion holds that it is better not to sin than to expiate oneself for it. Usually prayers were made for atoning sin. Sincere penance was necessary, along with the recital of sacred gatha. It was supposed that the recital of one gatha touts at least one demon. Only in this life expiration through prayers is possible. True repentance means a change of will. Confession of one’s sin has to be made before a Parsi priest known as Dastur. Loud confession and bathing one’s face with tears were deemed efficacious for expiating one’s sin. However, non-repetition of the same sin is the only mark of purification.

Judaism has very many prescribed rites for cleansing one’s sins. Commonly animal sacrifice along with repentance was deemed efficacious for wiping out one’s sin (Leviticus 6.24-27). Later on feeling of repentance was emphasized in the place of animal sacrifice.

The sacrificial animal had to be without blemish. It used to be a [prt domestic animal. At the time of sacrifice, the man seeking expiation, has to put his hands on the head of the animal to be sacrificed, effecting identification with the animal to be slain (Leviticus 1.3-5). Secondly, the sacrificer himself had to slay the animal be one loved as his pet. The slain animal is killed as the substitute of the sacrificer. Hence, the sacrificer confesses his sin of Hindu omission and commission, seeking the Grace of God for wiping out his sin a portion of the sacrificer animal was burnt in fire as the sweet savour pleasing to the Lord. Here one can easily see the similarity between Vedic and early Jewish rites of sacrificing the animal and burning in the fire. For the Vedic people agni was the mouth of Gods through which the slain animal was consumed.

But animal sacrifice without repentance for the sin was unavailing. Later on repentance was emphasized.

The Lord says, "I hate your religious festivals-----when you bring be burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them----instead let justice flow like a stream---"(Amos 5.21-24).

Again,

'I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifice' (Hosea 6.6.)

Repentance was so much emphasized that a Jew took to fasting, alms giving, the study of Torah, and even submission to stripes as means of atonement. But living Grace was the final and only way out of one's sin. Confession of one's sin in public and before God was also another expedient for atonement.

On the day atonement, even the sin of the people as a whole had to be expiated by animal sacrifice and repentance on the part of the people concerned (Leviticus, chapters 16-17).

Christian doctrine of atonement cannot be understood without Jewish doctrine of expiation and atonement just mentioned above. It was the doctrine of original sin' which distorted the will of man. This original sin simply means that by virtue of this deep-rooted inclination in man makes him more of an animal than a spiritual being. Man is torn into conflict on account of his human nature which works against his spiritual nature given to him by God at the time of the creation of man. But man knows these laws, but the animal nature within him is so strong that he becomes powerless.

When I want to do good, I don't; and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. (Roman 7.15, 19).

The result? Man remains a helpless victim of his own human nature and sin. But God has created man in His own image and He wants man to remain holy by turning to him and being obedient to Him. How is this possible?

In Christianity the concept of God as Judge and Law-giver is changed into loving, forgiving and redeeming God. God sent Jesus as His only Son, who remained obedient to Him in every way. Nay, he remained sinless to the end of his life. Therefore, he alone was fit to be sacrificed, as in the past animals without blemish were sacrificed, as in the past animals without blemish were sacrificed, as in the past animals without blemish were sacrificed for the atonement of the sins of His people. Hence, the New Testament records.

Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

How it is possible to overcome their human nature and consequent sin?

Well, the death of Jesus was shown two things very clearly. First, God loves man and is ready to forgive his sins and to take him back to His fellowship. He has shown that Christ on the Cross was praying for forgiving the people who conspired to kill him. So God too is willing to take back a sinner to His fold. Further, this shows that without coming to God through Jesus, man will remain sinning and conspiring to kill saintly men. Hence, the death of Jesus shows the depth and degradation of man under the influence of sin. What should a man do to get the forgiveness of his sin and a life of virtue over one's sinfulness?

By faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus, as the people in the past got their peace of mind by yearly sacrifice of animals, God has accepted the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus remitting the sins of every one who puts his trust in Jesus. This faith in Jesus strengthens the life of spirit within man and his strengthened spirit means the restoration of the image of God which God had planted in him at the time of the creation of man. One can easily see the resemblance of Indian tradition, according to which man in his liberation regains his pristine glory that was lost to him by ajnana. In Christian doctrine of atonement (i.e., the remission of one's sins) too, man regains his lost image of God.

Again, this doctrine of faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus is taken to be the grace of God. Man, by his own merits of good works can earn this forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God. It is a free gift of God for all those who believe.

Kathopanishad holds that the Grace (Prasada) of the creator enables a man to behold His greatness (2.20)

This soul (Atman) is not to be obtained by instruction, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. It is to be obtained only by the one whom he chooses.

And Ramanuja has accepted this doctrine of Grace, as before him the Alvaras also did the same. But apart from this doctrine of bhakti which has already been explained earlier, the dharma-kanda of Manu, Yajnavalkya has also mentioned a detailed account of expiation (prayaschita). A very brief account can be mentioned here to illustrate the various means of expiation.

Drinking of intoxicating was strictly prohibited. Those who violated this prohibition could expiate the this violation by drinking the same liquor when boiling hot. A killer of a Brahmin had to be killed by archers appointed for this purpose. A thief of gold was considered pure by being killed. Wrongful appropriation of a field, a well etc., could be expiated by taking Panchagavya (five things belonging to a cow, namely milk, ghee, curd, cow dug and urine). This is known as go-vrata. At times generous gifts to Brahmins, pilgrimage to sacred places could be the means of expiating heinous crimes.

Views of Lingayat religion respect of: Human Destiny. One who is unable to handle situation lives in is not at all called to be brave (V of AW 127)

Unable to ride the horse given,

Wish to get another,

Are not brave, neither stable,

This is the reason all the next three worlds

are suffering by carrying future

how they can know Guheshwara Linga (reality)⁴⁵

Views of Lingayat religion respect of: Sin (V of B 239)

Mark you, virtue and sin
Are your own choice;
To say 'Sir' is heaven;
To say 'you there!' is Hell..
O Kūḍala Saṅgama Lord,
In saying 'God', and 'Saint'
And 'bless you, Master' - here
Is Kailāsa!⁴⁶

Views of Lingayat religion respect of Sin; Guru Basaveshwara in his Vachana specifies every human being is bound by the greed. One must be very stiff to mindset to attain salvation (V of BW 69)

⁴⁵ *koṭṭa kudureyanēralariyade
mattondu kudureyanēra bayasuvaru,
vīrarū alla, dhīrarū alla, idu kāraṇa -
nere mūru lōkavellavū hallaṇava hottukonḍu,
tolalutta iddāre.
guhēśwaranēmba lingavanavaretta ballaru?*

⁴⁶ *punya pāpaṅgaḷembuvu tammiṣṭa kaṇḍirē,
'ayyā' endade svarga, 'elavō' endade naraka.
'dēvā, bhakta jayā, jīyā' emba nuḍiyolaḷage
kailāsaviddudē kūḍala-saṅgama-dēvā.*

Fettered by greed, a bondman to this earth,
What chance have I to love you, Lord ?
O treasury of compassion, you who make
The heart brave, O most bountiful,
Show me your mercy, Lord !
Pray, rid me of these bonds of earth.
O Lord of pious hearts,
Let me live as a bee
In the lotus of your feet,
Kūḍala Saṅgama Lord !⁴⁷

3.WORSHIP

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Worship: Both worship and prayer involve dualism, for worship of a deity, and prayer is also made to a personal deity who can respond to the entreaties of his devotees. We are not said to worship attributeless Brahman. Brahman can be realized only by trance (Samadhi) or nidhidhyasana as Shankara tells us.

‘Prayer’ comes under ‘worship’.

⁴⁷ *āseyemba pāśadalli bhava-bandhananāgirdenayyā,
sakṛtu nimma neneyalu enage terahillayyā!
karuṇākarā, abhayakarā, varadā nī karuṇisayyā,
saṁsāra-bandhanavanu māṇisi, enage kṛpeya māḍi
nimma śrīpāda-padmadalli bhramaranāgirisu,
bhakta-jana-manōvallabhā, kūḍala-saṅgama-dēvā.*

Worship includes not only prayer but much more. The object of worship, as Rudolph Otto tells us, is tremendous mystery (*Mysterium tremendum et fascinans*). 'Mystery' does not mean an unsolved problem, for a problem is one which is in due course soluble. But God is mystery for He is essentially indescribable and unknowable in the sense that no factual cognition of God is possible. God is said to be most mysterious to the person who has the most favored vision of Him. He can be described only as *neti, neti* (not this, not this). In prophetic tradition, God is recognized as one's Creator, and, the worshipper realizes his state of creatureliness and absolute dependence, as even Ramanuja would concede, hence, good requires utmost obedience and complete surrender of his worshippers. Can this God, as the object of one's worship be finite?

William James, John Stuart Mill think that God with so much evil in the world cannot be infinitely powerful and good. But theists do not think so. A worshipper has to surrender himself to God without any reserve. This total, all out surrender is possible only when the object of worship is infinite, as J.N. Finady has pointed out.

Not only the object of worship is infinite on whom the worshipper depends for his being, but he also feels that God is holy and no man with unclean lips and moral lapse can even approach Him. Hence, the worshipper is filled with holy dread and regards himself nothing but dust and ashes. He is also afraid at times that there is really not worshipping an infinite God, but a finite caricature of Him. This is what Appaya Dikshit felt that he had confined the Omnipresent Lord to particular places of worship.

Worship matures into *bhakti*, which, according to *Bhagavata Purana*, consists of listening to His deeds, praising Him, remembering Him, washing His feet, paying obeisance, prostrating before Him, doing service to Him humbly overwhelming love for and full dedication to God. With some modification it applies to the worship of every kind of God.

In *bhakti*, the worshipper has to be constantly vigilant, lest he may slip away from his devotion to God. It has been likened to the effort of a baby monkey who has to cling to his mother, lest he falls. This is known as *markata-kishora-nyaya*. But

the final stage of bhakti is called prapatti in which stage the Lord Himself comes down to the help of His devotee, and the devotee completely surrenders himself to God as his only and last refuge. Prapti has the following features;

1. Favorable goodwill to all human beings and creatures.
2. Absence of ill-will towards any being.
3. Full faith in God that He will protect him and would provide him his daily needs.
4. Taking refuge in God as his redeemer and savior.
5. Feeling one's helplessness in saving himself without the help from God, as St. Paul too holds.
6. Surrender of one's whole being to God, known as Sharanagati.

According to Gita 7.16 there are four kinds of devotees:

1. There are devotees who seek the Lord for granting them earth prosperity (artharthi).
2. Devotees in distress for its removal (artharthi).
3. For obtaining Brahma-Jnana, by sharpening the intellect and purifying the heart of the devotee (Jijnasu).
4. Devotee who desire communion with God (sayujyarthi).

Sayujyarthi is the best and jijnasu is the second best. For worship the following features are necessary:

- i God has to be regarded as Infinite, having the characteristics of mystery, Omnipotence, personality and so on.
- ii God has to be regarded as having surpassing excellence and beyond the grasp of human intellect.
- iii feeling of absolute dependence.
- iv Surrender of one's total being to God.

- v Throwing one's burden on God with full commitment and self-involvement.
- vi In the last resort a bhakta cannot help praising and chanting His goodness to Him and to all men.

Prayer: Prayer is worship in which outpouring of heart can be verbalized either explicitly or implicitly (internally). It is the experience of the worshippers that prayers are most certainly answered. Even when the prayer is not immediately replied as the worshipper wants, still it helps him in the most unexpected ways. According to the Gita just as the worshipper is temperamentally and in accordance with his Samskaras, so is his deity (17.4); just as his devotion to his deity is, so is the reward of his worship (7.21). a contrite heart, full of faith in God, brings even god to his worshipper. Ramanuja holds that God, unable to endure separation from his worshippers, cannot maintain His own atman.

It is also held by theistic devotees that God provides all the needs of His devotee. Jesus said that men should first seek the kingdom of God and then God will provide all their needs (Mathew 6>33). Similarly, Kabir holds that God cannot allow His devotees to remain in want. Again, Jesus has said, 'Ask, seek and knock at the door'. If man can give good things to his children when they ask, then how can God deny his worshipper what he wants (Mathew 7.7-12)?

We have already given Christians' lords' Prayer and the Gayatri of the Hindus. A Muslim has to pray five times every day and he begin the invocation with 'Allah is great'. Prayers are obligatory and optional. It is obligatory to pray five times daily, attending congregational Friday prayer in a mosque. Optional prayers are of many kinds e.g., after the death of a Muslim, after he successful Haj pilgrimage and so on. The purpose of prayers is to keep the Muslim believer in communion with God, and, to keep him free from evil thought and works.

PRAYER AND MAGIC

Prayer has to be said with full awareness of its subject matter and full faith. God may or may not grant what the worshipper wishes. A worshipper gets what is best for him, but one cannot force God to grant what the worshipper wants, no matter with what earnestness he makes this supplication. This need not be the case of magic, where the desired result must follow from the magical incantation. Here magic is most like the natural law where the result must follow if the correct formula has been adopted. Again, in a prayer there is always a benign deity to whom the appeal is made. In contrast, in magic there may or may not be any deity who can be sent to the wishes of the magic-users.

1. Both magic-spell and prayers are verbalized responses to the supernatural Agencies, but there are significant differences.

- a) Prayers are for the well being of all and a worshipper remains without any ill-will towards anybody.

In contrast, magic spell might be used for doing harm.

- b) In prayer, the wish of the worshipper may or may not be granted. However, magic is believed to bring forth the result by the mere force of the spell, for the spell itself is said to be efficacious.
- c) Prayers are made in ordinary language, which is intelligible and meaningful. But magic spell consists of meaningless words.
- d) The order or words in a prayer can be altered almost at will or otherwise, but the order of meaningless words in magic incantations is fixed, and, words have to be pronounced most correctly. Alteration in the order of words or, its incorrect pronunciation is supposed to be followed by calamities for the user of the spell.
- e) In prayer, there is always a personal deity to whom supplication is made. In magic there might or might not be a deity, but the important

thing is that the spell be correctly pronounced, word-order be kept intact and the spell be repeated for a required number of times.

In early Mimamsa it was held that there are no gods. The so-called deities, namely Indra, Varuna, Mitra etc., are mere names and occasions for repeating the Vedic mantras. What is necessary is that the mantras be correctly pronounced with the proper order of words. But this view did not last long.

PRAYER AND CONCENTRATION (SAMADHI)

In Indian tradition especially in Jainism and Buddhism, the existence of God is denied, at least in principle. Here, dhyana (Jainism) and Samadhi (meditation in Buddhism) take the place of prayer:

In the Advaitism of Shankara, at times, prayer and worship are regarded as mere means for obtaining jnana. Here God takes kindly to His worshippers. He purifies the head and heart of his devotees. After this purification, the seeker can resort to the Jnanamarga consisting of Shravana, manana and nididhyasana.

However, the system of Ramanuja is fully theistic and here there is room for prayer and bhakti. We have already made a reference to it.

Views of Lingayat religion respect of worship, (V of BW 930)

What boots in your Liṅga worshipping
Unless you have a common love,
A common art, a common joy?
What boots your Liṅga-worshipping
Unless, by worship of Lord Kūḍala Saṅgama.
You merge in Him as stream in stream?⁴⁸

5. COMPARISON

COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIAN RELIGIONS

Karma-samasara-jnana-mukti are the four-fold pillars of Indian religions, even though they may differ in many other features. Further, whatever might have been the original languages of these religions; in the end they all adopted Sanskrit as the medium of their thought. For example, Buddhism was propagated at the beginning in the language of Pali, and, Jainism was written in Prakrta. But towards their final form they have presented their systems in Sanskrit. Again, Jainism and Buddhism are not offshoots of Hinduism. They are parallel and independent religious movements. But on the whole they have the same cultural background of music, literature, script and iconology. However, each of these religions mentioned here has different religious history. For example, Jainism is considered pre-Vedic with Rishabha Muni as its founder, and, certainly Lord Buddha was the founder of Buddhism and Buddhism has its own separate and independent history of different councils,

⁴⁸ *liṅgava pūjisi phalavēṇayyā,
samarati samakāle samasukhavanariyadannakka?
liṅgava pūjisi phalavēṇayyā,
kūḍala-saṅgama-dēvara pūjisi
nadiyoḷage nadi berasidantāgadannakka?*

schools and missionary enterprise. Again, Sikhism hearkens back to non-Vedic cults and cannot be traced to Vedism at all. Its religious concepts, practices and martial discipline are its distinctive features, though Sikhism is Hinduistic in a wide sense. It shares in common with Indian religions, the four-fold pillars of Karma-samsara-jnana-mukti.

With the points mentioned above, we can make very brief comparison with one another.

JAINISM AND HINDUISM

1. Jainism is nearer Hinduism than Buddhism. Its doctrine of Ahimsa is accepted by all the systems of India, at least in principle. Both Hinduism and Jainism accept the four-fold principle of Karma-Samsara-Jnana-Mukti.
 2. In the same manner, the Jain doctrine of Panch-Mahavratas is the most accepted moral principle of all the religious systems of India.
 3. Jainism and Hinduism, both accept the substantial concept of soul. However, Jainism has its own distinctive features that differentiate it from Hinduism.
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1. Ahimsa (non-violence) is the most distinctive feature of Jainism. Even when it is accepted in principle by other Indian systems, yet animal-sacrifice is even now in vogue in Hinduism in certain quarters e.g., buffalo-sacrifice in Nepal and Kalighat in West Bengal.
 2. As noted earlier, Jainism has its own Scripture and it does not accept the authority of the Vedas. For this reason Jainism is considered as unorthodox (Nastika School of thought).

3. Jainism in principle does not support theism, for according to it the liberated souls or eternal spirits do not respond to any supplication and have no part to play in any mundane affairs. But Hinduism is largely theistic.
4. No doubt Jains install the image of Lord Mahvira, but it is done as a support (alambana) of concentration (dhyanas). But Hinduism indulges in idol-worship in the form of arca.
5. Jainism does not accept idol-worship of God. On the other hand, it accepts the role of reason as authority in matters of religious choice. In contrast, Hinduism accepts the existence of God and regards the Vedas as authoritative religious scriptures, for the spiritual guidance of man.
6. Jainism has no place for caste, but caste is the most distinctive feature of Sanatana Hinduism.

JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

1. Both Jainism and Buddhism accept the four-fold pillars of Karma-Samsara-Jnana-Mukti.
2. Both of them in principle are wholly atheistic, even when Lord Buddha in the end came to be worshipped in the form of trikaya Buddha, and, Lord Mahavira is accepted as a support for sustaining dhyana (meditation).
3. Both of them accept Yoga, dhyana and Samadhi (concentration) as the means of winning liberation.
4. Both of them accept reason for reaching right belief, and do not advise to accept scripture as an infallible guide for spiritual attainment.
5. Both of them do not accept caste, and, Buddhism is imposed to casteism.
6. Comparatively Jainism is much older than Buddhism, though both of them are equally non-Vedic, and, are independent and parallel religious movements. They cannot be considered as off-shoots of Brahmanism. They have a separate history of their own, independently of Brahmanism. However, Jainism is nearer Hinduism than is Buddhism.

7. Both of them are Kshatriya movements and are not due to any Brahminical teaching.
8. Tri-ratna (three Jewels) of right-faith, right knowledge and right conduct in Jainism really correspond to shila, Samadhi and prajna (wisdom) in Buddhism.
9. Finally both of them are instances of spiritual Hinduism. But they have their differentiating features too:

But they have their differentiative features too:

1. Jainism and Buddhism differ with regard to their metaphysical postulates. Jains believe in substance, specially spirits. Buddhism has its basis in momentariness and regards everything without any essential character of its own (nis-swabhava). For Buddhism so-called souls are spirits only an aggregate or gestalt of passing events.
2. Naturally, they differ with regard to the final destiny of each jiva. For Jainism in the state of release a jiva attains omniscience, unhindered intuition of all things and omnipotence (ananata jnana, ananta darshan, ananta charitra and ananata virya). For Buddhism the state of release is indescribable nirvana.
3. In logic too they differ: Jainism believes that reality is multi-faceted. So it advances the logic anekantavada and saptabhanginaya. As opposed to this Buddhism advanced the doctrine of anattavada (soul-lessness) and momentariness.
4. The original language of Jaina Scripture is Prakrit and of Buddhism is Pali.
5. But Buddhism became a great missionary religion and even now is found all over the globe. But Jainism remained a conservative religion, and, is not found anywhere except in India.
6. In relation to Hinduism, Jainism has become almost a part of Hinduism. But Buddhism has constantly remained opposed to Hinduism.
7. Buddhism has avoided the extreme of tapa (austerities) and ahimsa of Jainism and itself as middle-roader (madya-margi).

HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM

Whatever might have been the differences between Vedic Aryans and Buddhism, at present all forms of religion of Indian origin accept the four-fold principle of Karma-Samsara-Jnana-Mukti. But apart from this fundamental similarity, there are deep-seated differences between Brahmanical Hinduism and Buddhism. These differences clearly show that Buddhism and Hinduism are parallel and independent religious movements, and, Buddhism cannot be said to be an offshoot of Hinduism.

1. Hinduism, specially of Shankara and Ramanujam accepts the authority of the Vedas as the ultimate court of appeal for all religious issues. In contrast, Buddhism advises us not to take any authority for granted. Every religious truth has to be rationally evaluated.
2. As noted earlier, Hinduism accepts the reality of God in general and, more so in modern times. However, Buddhism accepts the postulates of momentariness. According to it there is nothing with its substantial character and essence. Naturally there are no eternal and immortal souls, and, there is no creator God. Hence, Buddhism in principle is atheistic, and, Hinduism is on the whole theistic.

Of course, much later in the history of Buddhism, Lord Buddha came to be worshipped in the form of Trikaya Buddha, and, even some Bhodhisattvas came to acquire the status of deities. Again, in Shankara's religious philosophy, the place of god may be of secondary importance, but then His existence is not denied.

3. Buddhism has no lace for caste, and, Lord Buddha has presented very convincing arguments against caste. In contrast, Hinduism is based on caste with the superiority of Brahmins in that caste-system.
4. Lord Buddha was also very much opposed to animal-sacrifice. However, though on the whole animal-sacrifice in Hinduism is not very popular now, yet in Nepal and at Kalighat, Culcutta, animal sacrifice is performed. But Buddhism is not opposed non-vegetarian food.

- 5 Buddhism was formed by a Shatriya, and, not by Brahmins. So with the rise of Brahmanism, Buddhism has almost disappeared from India. This shows that Brahminism and Buddhism were opposed in their religious outlook, social order, metaphysics and logic.
- 6 Even the language of Buddhist teaching was the language of people, which was Pali. But Hinduism has maintained Sanskrit as its language.
- 7 Buddhism was a missionary religion and it spread throughout the whole of Asia. Even now it is a living religion of Asia, however, Hinduism never believed in missionary enterprise and in this century Radhakrishnan was opposed to missionary enterprise. Only now Arya Samaj has taken up the work of missionary enterprise.
- 8 Buddhism favors Samnyasa for obtaining nirvana. Hinduism does not favour Samnyasa without undergoing the earlier three stages of studentship, house-holder ship and forest-dwelling. Mandana was opposed to Shankara, when the latter advanced the acceptance of Samnyasa without observing the first three stages of life.

But apart from conceptual comparison, religions have interrelations in general, and, we can now take up the problem of 'Encounter of religions'.

COMPARISON OF HINDUISM AND LINGAYAT RELIGION

Similarities and difference between the Hinduism and Lingayat religions are discussed in the second chapter at Lingayat and Hinduism.

Chapter X

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of our study of the living religions of the world, a certain metaphysical scheme is suggested to us. We do not think that metaphysics is a scientific enterprise, even though it may be deeply indebted to science. For example, the metaphysics of A. N. Whitehead and Samuel Alexander is based on physics and mathematics of their day. But their metaphysics is not an enterprise of science. The function of metaphysics is to widen the horizon of knowledge and to increase our sensitivity to higher dimensions of reality. This was strongly suggested by Kant, and, this is what we understand as the function of metaphysics.

We had to clarify our stand with regard to metaphysics, because religious theologies are so many instances of metaphysics. Both religious metaphysics and theology do not provide us with scientific knowledge for predicting and guiding the adjective behavior of men. They are pleas for intellectual insight or bodhi (enlightenment) in the direction of making of higher men. Metaphysics is more of an intellectual construction and religious theologies are practical guides towards making men fit for heaven,. The element of knowing is subordinate to the end of becoming. This is well illustrated in the enlightenment of Lord Buddha and later in achieving nirvana. With this introduction let us summarize our main findings of the comparative study of religions.

I. the first important postulate of religion is that the supreme object of religious adoration is unknown and unknowable. Why?

a. According to Kant, the noumenon behind the phenomena is at the basis of knowing, remembering and perceiving all objects. Hence this Synthetic Unity of Appreciation is the very condition of knowing, so it cannot be itself an object of thought.

Now it is indeed, very evident that I cannot know as an object that I must presuppose in order to know an object....

b. There is little doubt that the Upanishads are the most profound and respected religious writings of the Hindus. Not only Shankara, Ramanuja have devoted their attention to the *Upanishadas*, but even in the modern times, Rammohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo cannot be understood without the Upanishads.

For the Upanishads, according to *Advaitism*, *Brahminism* is the sole reality which is to be meditated upon and realized. But this *Brahmana* is pure consciousness, without any object whatsoever, this objectless consciousness, without any object whatsoever. This objectless consciousness is at the basis of any knowledge of any object whatsoever. But it cannot be an object to itself.

You could not see the seer of seeing.

You could not hear the hearer of hearing.

You could not think the thinker of thinking.

You could not understand the understander of understanding.

c. That God, the supreme reality of religious worship is unknowable is also supported by Ludwig Wittgenstein who is said to be the philosopher God is the meaning of the universe. Perhaps Wittgenstein thinks of God as the Creator of the universe with some end of the universe, and, this end is the meaning of the world. The meaning and the creator God are external to the world. But, according to Wittgenstein, we can know the world and all the objects comprised within it. This is also supported by the fact that according to Judaism God is not immanent in the world but is transcendent of the Universe. Hence, the statement of the Jew Wittgenstein in relation to the unknowable God are:

It is logically impossible for the sense of the world to be itself a part of the world, since the meaning of anything cannot be a part of that of which it is the meaning.

Further,

God does not manifest Himself in the world.

Again,

The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies out side of space and time.

d. Certainly the evolutionary scheme of the universe, presented by A.N. Whitehead and Samuel Alexander. Is not a scientific construction, but is an imaginative structure in relation to a world-view.

According to the evolutionary scheme of things, the supreme reality is creative current which is due course has given rise to matter, Life, Mind and self-consciousness. On viewing this scheme we find that there are two major tendencies evolved in things, namely, conatus and nisus. By virtue of conatus each being remains preserved in its being. For many millions of years, things and living species, more or less, have contained to bi in the self-same being. Man too has remained physically unchanged in his own nature. But apart from conatus, there is also nisus by virtue of which man tends to grow higher, physically and spiritually. By virtue of this nisus within man, he makes an ideal picture of his highest being. He projects his picture on the wider canvas of the universe in the form of his creator and determinator of his highest destiny. By virtue of the worship of this projected image of a creator, man feels to be an entire and perfect self.

This nisus within each man is said to be an impingent of the creative reality. This immanence of the transcendent reality has been advanced by Hindu theology all through its entire duration. The *Upanishadas* inform us that the supreme Brahman which is in the sun, sky and all things is found most articulate in man and in his thinking. *Brahdarnyaka Upanishad* twenty two times tells us that transcendent Brahman is the soul, the inner controller and immortal Self of every man. Again,

Both he who is here is a person and he who is yonder in the Sun. he is one.

The presence of transcendent as immanent to some extent is also supported by the doctrine of holism.

e. 'Holism' was first propounded by Aristotle and was raised to the status of quasi-scientific explanation by Hans Driesch. The theory of holism was raised to ontology in J.C. Smuts, A.N. Whitehead and Samuel Alexander. But it received special attention by the Gestaltists in psychology. This theory of holism need not be taken to be fully scientific, but it can be used speculatively to throw light on religious concepts.

According to the psychology of 'Personality', it was thought that there are two tendencies within man, namely, autonomy and homonymy. By virtue of autonomy, each individual actualizes its potentialities within the organism itself. But by virtue of homonymy an individual expands and enriches its personality by appropriating things and values in his social sphere. Not only this, but it also tends to have an ideal self or a symbolic self. It is this self which gives rise to the formation of one's deity. By worshipping his deity, the individual gets the sense of his being a complete and perfect self. For example, the *Advaitin* maintains that a knower of Brahman himself becomes Brahmin. Sri Ramakrishna says,

If you meditate on an ideal you will acquire its nature. If you think of God day and night, you will acquire the nature of God. (M 657, the Gospel of Shri Ramkrishna 1986).

Similarly, the Bible says,

You must be perfect... just as your father in heaven is perfect! (Mt. 5.48)

Is this ideal self in the form of one's deity mere fiction?

II. The picture or the symbolic self is not mere fiction, for it wells up from the very depth of one's being, where there is the nucleus of the evolutionary current, or, where Brahman dwells as the inner controller. Hence, the ideal self in the form of

deity grips not only an individual, but all the members of a community participating in a common world-view. On account of this holistic homonymy and nisus within man, man cannot live without some deity. This is what is known as religion a priori i.e., man cannot live without some religion. Hence, the oft quoted lines of St. Augustine:

Thou has created us for thyself and our heart knows no rest until it may repose in thee.

What is the nature of this ideal self, projected in the form of one's deity?

III. God , as the picture of what is felt as the inmost being of the individual and shared collectively by the larger community having more or less same world view. In this, god remains external and objective for all believers. Besides, this deity in some sense outlines the nature of the supreme reality called Brahman in the Upanishads, and, creative current in the evolutionary scheme of things.

Secondly, the deity as the ideal Self must be various. As the individuals are said to have different *Samskaras*, so their deity also must be relative to the kind of persons they are (Gita XVII, 3-6). Similarly, C.G. Jung holds that each individual differs from others by virtue of his type. Mental structure and function. In his doctrine of individuation he outlines the four kinds of deity, according to the development of an individual, namely, shadow, anima-animus, mana-personality and mundala-experience. This, the worshipful deity will differ with various believing communities, sharing the different world-views. As a matter of fact in each believing community, some believers may oppose or protest against the prevailing deity due to change in their intellectual climate, yielding different world-views. Can say that his religious view is better or truer than those of others?

Whatever form of deity we have is of that supreme reality which has no shape or form. it is said to be the Supreme Spirit. How can anybody claim the monopoly of his form of the Supreme spirit? But a little more will be added towards the end of his short summary.

IV. We find that the Supreme reality by itself is unknown and unknowable. Yet again by virtue of the *nisus* and the holistic tendency in man, he is compelled to know the unknowable. This is the great predicament of man. Man has to talk about God in relation to whom he should remain silent. The Upanishad hold that Brahmin is inexpressible.

Wherefrom words turn back,

Together with the mind, not having attained. (Taitt. Up 2.4)

Similarly, Kabir states that by talking about God. We distort His essence. The more we talk, the greater is distortion. However, communicability about God, specially amongst believers, is necessary. Here Kabir tells us that no God-talk is literally true, but a talk which gives us assurance about Him and yields us peace, then we should talk in that kind of appropriate language. However, towards the end of the 20th century, in the west and in India, religion hold is being loosened. Why?

V. In the west, traditional form of Christianity has lost much of its hold on the masses. Reason/ the West fought two divesting wars, bringing ruin and dissolution and much suffering. And the combatants were all Christians. From this the west and the combatants were all Christians. From this the west came to the conclusion that god is not concerned with man. Secondly, with the spread of science and technology, the presence of god is not involved in most cases. For fighting's out drought, famine, and other natural calamities, not God but the technical skill is most sought. Hence, God has been edged out from almost all walks of life. For this reason, Deitrich Bonhoeffer has popularized secular Christianity. This simply means that God is to be found in the midst of secular activities rather than beyond the clouds. Thus, secular activities have become sanctified. Some of the best Muslims and Christians pray to God before undertaking their secular activities. But this grand spectacle is seen only in a few good devotees. In general however churches have become emptier.

In India the same scene is present though in a different form. by to over-population, unemployment and run-away inflation, Indian people have become far more this-worldly than ever before. The sole function of religion survives in the form of casteism and communalism. Hence, the politicians trade on the religious sentiments of the people. No doubt certain religious festivals are observed by people in great strength, Hardwar, Kumbh Mela's, as also Gang bathing at Sonapur are very big draw. Does this mean that the people have become very religious? Let us look at 'Ashwini Bhatnagar reports' under the caption 'Kumbh Kaleidoscope' presented in 'the Times of India, dated February 19, 1989'.

A good looking widow Sharmila of 22 was shaved in spite of her cries and pleadings. Again, the Kumbh was the biggest gathering of religious heads. Three out of four Shankaracharya were present and also Depraaha Baba. What were they doing here? They showered their blessings on all the VIPs who cared to come to their *Ashramas*.

Blessing Rajiv Gandhi here and cursing the national Front there.

They spoke on politics and Ram Janmabhoomi but not on sati or dowry. The issues were left to torment society.

The people in general do not fully realize the depth of trade of saint poets against external ritualism. External ritualism robs the people of observing morality. But, religious observances without morality rob the devotees of their spiritualism. This is the real meaning underlying the criticism of external ritualism by the saints. With the loss of spiritual values, corruption has become rampant in all walks of life. There is hardly a day when the reports of such corruption are not made in Indian dailies. However, unless the society improves with a view to supporting religious spiritualism, religious values will be completely ruined. What will be left of the contributions of sages and seers, of Sufism and of Ramkrishna, Vivekananda and Aurobindo?

VI. True, so far great religious insights have been won only by individuals. For example, sages meditating in a forest, a Buddha meditating under the Banyan tree at Bodh-Gaya, a prophet Muhammad meditating in the cave of Mt. Hira, a Christ praying alone in a desert place, are so many illustrations of religious insights won by religious stalwarts. But the society too, ideal or actual has to serve as a vale of soul-making. When Alexander came to India, he marveled at the renunciates who had conquered their lower passions. By the then society too held these men and their ideals in great esteem and reverence. Thus, the society has to change as much as the individuals for a higher spiritual attainment.

Pt Nehru spoke of making India a welfare State and we can think about it in terms of five sheaths maintained by Taittiriya Upanishad (2.2.4). The doctrine of five sheaths has been mentioned in relation to an individual. But this doctrine can be more appropriately applied to society which has many times been taken as an organism.

The first sheath is called *annamaya* i.e., the basic social order is one in which all the members of society are provided with food and suitable employment. The second order is said to be *pranamaya* i.e., in this order members are given opportunities for health, vigor and virility. Thirdly, There is the *manmaya* order in which members are provided with opportunities of cultivating science, technology and other means of a civilized State. Then there is the *Vijñānamaya* order in which everybody works according to his abilities and gets according to his need. This is the order in which the State encourages its citizens for higher pursuits for the health ones

Soul, in the last order the society inspires its members to have the vision of bliss and supreme contentment. Each and every order has to be run in accordance with the principal contained doctrine of difference less Brahmin i.e., in a spirit of justice and egalitarianism.

VII. (a) Fundamentalism and conservatism maintain that the best religious insights have already been made once for all in the past. Present and future can only

distort this insight, but cannot improve upon it. on the contrary reformists and progressives take their stand on Scientism. According to them science is progressive and adds real knowledge about the world. Many things said by religions in pre scientific age concerning this world and man cannot be accepted if they collide with scientific knowledge.

Even when one cannot set aside the claims of science and the application of scientific methodology to religions, one cannot go all along with science. But religions must get deepened and enriched by mutual religious dialogue and also by the findings of science.

(b) Supreme reality is unknown and unknowable.

(c) The holistic tendency in each man to become whole and perfect, and, the nisus in each man according to the evolutionary scheme of things, compel man to have the image of a worshipful deity, which may be called the divine image in him.

i) Each deity depends on the hereditary tendencies and each age. All theses constituents together are known as one's *Samskaras*.

ii) Naturally as *Samskaras* differ, so will be the difference with regard to deity.

iii) No monopolistic claim can be made in favor of any one deity.

iv) Quite naturally no one has any right to participate in any religious warfare. Any such fight destroys the divine image in him.

v) No one has any right to blaspheme any religion whether of one's own or of others.

vi) Each deity has to be worshipped according to the absolute standard of difference less Brahman. In other words, each from the theistic worship should lead to the attainment of that mental state in which all differences of caste, creed colour etc., are dissolved.

vii) Further, each form of religion should try to establish a higher social order which will ultimately lead to the emergence of higher humanity with the prospect of richer and greater spiritual attainments.

In this study discussion is made upon significant social features of Lingayath religion such as, "*Anubhava Mantapa*" first democratic type of council found by Sri Basaveshvara. where in all the walks of society were given equal opportunity to indulge in religious, social, moral, economical, supreme reality, human values, feminine empowerment, discussions, the proceedings of *Anubhava Mantapa* were conducted in writing. When a thought get approval of the house it was considered to include in to literary treasure of *Vachana* literature. The *Vachana* literatures is still inspiring in to all the walks of life and till to date it is ready reckon'er. *Kayaka Dashooha*, is one of the very significant doctrine drawn from the house where in one must indulge in *Kayaka* (work with divine mentality) for sustenance of self, having motif of universal welfare, dependency is strongly prohibited, when it come to the returns of *Kayaka* part of the earning from *Kayaka* is to spending in the form of *Dashooha* is mandatory.

Equality & Eradication of untouchability, Equal right to women.

Lingayat religions own doctrines regarding practices with scientific reasoning enrich the religion. Practices of Lingayat Religion namely, *Astavarana*, *Panchachara*, *Shatsthala*, *Istalinga* and etc., These brand new ethical, philosophical aspects written in native language are taking Lingayat religion as an stable, complete, world religion.

This endeavor trying to prove Lingayat religion is also an independent religion through comparison with major religions followed in India. Lingayat religion has stability to stand in the line of contemporary religions.

By following the above discussion it follows that the Lingayath religion is an independent religion and it is better equipped than major religions followed in India in solving the contemporary problems. However the present day efforts of propagating teachings of Lingayath religion and its proponent Guru Basaveshvara should be brought out of the territorial limit and spread to the world. As Lingayath religion has all the qualities of world religion. Its most essentiality is to recognize Lingayath religion as an independent religion by constitutional bodies of such as Census Commission of India, Parliament of India and Government of India.

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ABBREVIATIONS

V of AW 182	182 nd Vachana of Allama Prabhu taken from Ganaka Vachana Samputa
V of BW 930	930 th Vachana of Basaveshwara taken from Ganaka Vachana Samputa
Sel V of S	Selected Vachana's of Sharanas edited by H.S.Shivprakash, O.L.Nagbhushanaswami, Pub: Basava Samiti, Bangalore. Collection of Vachan's of some Sharanas translated into English.
SVS	Samagra Vachana Samputa, a collection of Vachana wrote by various Sharanas/Sharnes Published in 15 editions, by Kannada Pustaka Pradhikar (Kannada Book Authority of Karnataka), Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.
S V S 6/58 /47	Samagra Vachana Samputa, a collection of Vachana wrote by various Sharanas/Sharnes Published in 15 editions, by Kannada Pustaka Pradhikar (Kannada Book Authority of Karnataka), Government of Karnataka, Bangalore. /6 number of edition. /58 Serial number of Vachana. /47 number of Vachana of an individual Sharana/Sharane in the edition.
V of A	Translated form of "Vachanas of Akkamahadevi". By Proff. Armendo Manenzes, S.M Angadi, Pub: Manohar Appasab Adake, Dharwad. 1973. /866 denote number of Vachana in the book.
V of B	Translated form of Vachana of Sri Basaveshvara taken from book "Vachanas of Basavanna" By: L M A Manzes, S M Angadi, Pub: Annana Balaga Sirigere, 1967. /866 denote number of Vachana in the book.
V of S	Translated form of Vachana of Sri Siddarameshwara taken from book "Vachanas of Siddarama" By: L M A Manzes, S M Angadi, Pub: Karnataka University Dharwad, 1978. /866 denote number of Vachana in the book.