

A MEMOIR
ON
ANCIENT SANSKRIT LITERATURE.

BY
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**"The Veda has a two-fold interest : it belongs to the history of the
world and to the history of India."—MAX MÜLLER.**

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THE GA'YATRI.

"LET US MEDITATE ON THE SACRED LIGHT OF THAT
DIVINE SUN, THAT IT MAY ILLUMINATE OUR
MINDS."—*Prof. Wilson's Lectures*, p. 15.



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To

*The Honored memory of my uncle
Raya Tarakanatha Ghosha, Bahadur,
Deputy Collector of Survey at Serampore,
I dedicate this Book.*

PREFACE.

THE design of the present volume is to offer to the Readers, in a compact form, an outline of the Vedas, or more properly of the Ancient Sanskrit Literature which modern Investigations have made known to us. The work makes no pretensions to be considered a complete treatise on the subject, but is intended merely to serve as an introduction to the larger and more systematic works in the English and other European languages ; and especially to prepare the student for the perusal of original works.

Though the researches of occidental *savants* into the Vedas are alike profound and accurate, they carry us into a labyrinth of heterogeneous materials which to digest and at last present in a readable shape is altogether a hard task. The opinions strongly affirmed by one Sanskritist in the West, as well as his general deductions, are seldom found to tally with those of his brother Sanskritist. They, far from helping us to attain the truth, often throw great doubts and confusion on many an important and salient point. I have, therefore, generally avoided raising issues with them whenever I happened to find myself to differ widely from any of them on such controverted points, wishing to arrive at a definite conclusion, whenever we can. To claim to have certainly arrived at a literary truth is highly presumptuous in a country such as we live in, where the spirit of Niebuhr has not as yet been attained.

However at all events their contributions towards ancient Sanskrit literature have elucidated many knotty problems which could never have been solved by the Indian Pandits who hardly possess a scientific turn of mind, and have at last brought to

our knowledge an immense store of information of prime importance which had been so long hid from us by the sacriligious hocus-pocus of the Brahmans, who scornfully debarred us from reading the Vedas. It is, however, a curious reflection on the visissitudes of human affairs that the proud descendants of the holy Rishis should consume their midnight oil on the banks of the Ganges, over their sacred books, published for the first time on the banks of the Neckar and the Thames, by those, whom they look upon as *Mlechhas*.

R. G.

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CHAPTER.—I.

§1. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE VEDAS.

SIR WILLIAM JONES said that the student of Hindu literature and religion found himself in the presence of infinity. With the four Vedas along with the other branch of literature closely connected with them, which are so incredibly vast and of such enormous importance, that not the whole body of sacred literature of any one ancient nation as the Hindus can compeer. To the Vedas must be attached an undying interest and an ever increasing value not only for their great antiquity, but also for the immense flood of light which they throw on the primitive state of the Aryan society and Aryan speech and general mythology. We do not find in the Vedas any traces of a growing religion or a growing language. Nevertheless from them we gain a real insight into the thoughts, the fears, the hopes, the doubts, the faith of our ancestors. The Vaidik religion has become, through the corruptions and prejudices, of a most revolting type, of successive ages, a heterogeneous medley of theology, philosophy, and science.

We find no resemblance between modern Hinduism and the Vaidik religion. It is a pleasure to study the primitive form which religion at first assumed in our

own native land. Beyond doubt, India lays claim to a very high antiquity as well as to a distinguished rank, among the civilized countries of the ancient world. But unfortunately, there is no history¹ to record the heroic exploits of our forefathers, the word HISTORY being itself unknown in the language. In order to get an insight into the religion of the Vaidik age, it is necessary that we should refer to the pages of the Vedas² themselves. The Vedas are the ancient Sâstra of the Hindus.³ They

¹ See Prof. Burnouf's History of Indian Buddhism, p. iii.

² The word Veda is derived from the Sanskrit root *vid* to know, and is the same word as appears in the Greek, *oîda*, Latin *video* and *vido* and in the English *wit*; and may be translated knowing or knowledge.

³ It is interesting to enquire into the origin of the term *Hindu*. It occurs with all the other Sanskrit words in the Sabda-kalpa-druma, and therefore it may seem to many that it is of Sanskritic origin. But the authority which has been cited in it from the Merutantra, xxiii. to prove that it is such, shows, on the contrary, that it is a modern word. In fact, the Tantras are wanting in the halo of antiquity. The oldest among them, says Babu Râjendralâla Mitra, one of the most distinguished Sanskrit scholars in India, was not composed before the 3rd century of Christ, and the majority of them probably between the 6th and the 12th century. There is a word equivalent to our national name in the Zend. And it also reappears as Hoddâ (for Hondâ) in a portion of the Hebrew Scriptures called Esther. The term Hindu is not found to appear in any of the ancient Sanskrit authors. Indeed, this word was never employed in the Sanskrit language. But nevertheless it is not of very modern origin. Herodotus, in his celebrated accounts of India, has noticed the Hindus under the general appellation of *υδοι*. The word Hindu is derived from Sindhu; and the ancient Persians must have at first used the term, as it is established and it cannot be gainsaid, that according to Zend grammar the term Hindu traces its origin from Sindhu. The Avestic Hendu is nothing more than a transformation of the Sanskrit Sindhu. In the Cuneiform writings of the ancient Persians Hiddâs is used for Hindu, and it must be so understood. Hindu is a Persian word, and it signifies a slave. The Mahometans, after having conquered India, indulged themselves in extreme antagonism and hostility towards the Aryan inhabitants, and designated them scornfully by that name. In numerous places in various Persian authors the word Hindu is found to be used in the sense of disrespect and also slave. The illustrious Persian writer Nezâmî in his Sekandarnamah, refers to two Persian poets, ridiculing them by the term Hindu. In the end of the same work the word Hindu is

consist, with a few exceptions, of nothing else than detached prayers addressed to divinities no longer worshipped, and some are entirely unknown. The Vedas are four in number, *viz.*, the Rig-veda, the Sâma-veda, the Yajur-veda, and the Atharva-veda. Manu, in his law book, often speaks of the three Vedas calling them *trayam brahma sanâtanam*.⁴ The Atharvan is not exactly a Veda, although many of the hymns or incantations of which it is composed, appear to be of great antiquity.⁵ It is more like a historical than a liturgical collection. Much of the Atharvan is in the Rig-veda;⁶ but the variations that occur in it are so prominent that a learned writer calls them "capricious inversions and alterations."⁷ Its Sanhitâ consists of 20 Kândas, of these, the first 18 are subdivided into 34 Prapâthakas, with, altogether, 94 Anuvâkas, each containing a number of Mantras. This Veda, perhaps on account of the mystery which shrouds its songs, gained amongst certain schools, a degree of sanctity, which not a little surpassed that of the older Vedas. From the Atharvanarahasya it appears that the three other Vedas enable a man to fulfil the *dharma*, or religious law, but that the Atharvan helps him to attain *moksha*,

employed as an equivalent to the term slave. In the commentary (Sharâya) also it is explained as used in the same sense. The Arabs style the infidel and the wicked, Hindu. The merits of the Sabda-kalpadruma of the late Patriarch of Hindu society Râja Sir Râdhâkânta Deva, are not so much founded on the lexicographical as on the encyclopaedical portion.

⁴ See Manu ii. 77 and 118.

⁵ See, on the subject of this Veda, Müller's Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pp. 38, 446 ff., Weber's History of Indian Literature, p. 10., and Prof. Whitney's papers in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, iii. 305 ff., and iv. 254 ff.

⁶ "By the followers of the Atharvan, the Riks, or stanzas of the Rig-veda, are numerous included in their own Sanhitâ (or collection)." — Sâyanâchârya, Introduction, Müller's edition, p. 2.

⁷ Dr. Roth on the Literature and History of the Vedas.

or eternal beatitude. The Atharvan contains sentences supposed to have the influence of guarding against injurious operations of the divine powers, with imprecations on enemies, prayers against sickness and noxious animals, as well as for the efficacy of healing herbs, for protection in travelling, luck in play, and such like things. The first eighteen books of the Atharvan, of which it was originally composed, are arranged upon one system throughout. A sixth of the bulk not metrical, but consists of longer or shorter prose pieces, which are similar in point of language and style to passages of the Brâhmanas. Of the metrical portion, about one-sixth is found among the hymns of the Rig-veda—chiefly in the tenth book of the latter ; the rest is peculiar to the Atharvan. As respects the question of their authorship tradition does not afford any valuable information : they are with very few exceptions ascribed to fictitious personages. This collection consists of complete hymns and not single unconnected verses ; and its internal arrangement is authentic. In this respect it is akin to the Rik, and can be called a complement of the first Veda, a complement considered as embracing the hymnologic productions of its time, or at a time when the Mantra was no longer a manifestation of direct religious feeling ; but had at last become a formula of incantation. Passages of the Hirdu scriptures themselves seem to support the inference that the Atharvan is not a Veda, as it is not mentioned in the passage cited from the White Yajush by Mr. Colebrooke in his Essay on Religious Ceremonies.

The Rig-veda consists of metrical hymns addressed to different divinities. And there is no doubt that this was composed in the infancy of the human race. The Rig-veda contains some really historical elements, and Prof. Roth very justly calls it the historical Veda. Dr.

Aufrecht remarks that possibly only a small portion of the Vaidik hymns may have been preserved to us in the Rik-sanhitâ.⁸ The Rig-veda is evidently composed of heterogeneous materials. Its first seven books bear a similar character, arranged upon a like plan, according to their authors, and to the divinities addressed. They may be certainly considered to comprehend the oldest, most genuine and most sacred hymns; to have been retained, as far as the tradition goes, as an entegral and not incongruous whole; and evidently remains as it was originally collected and arranged. The eighth and ninth books present quite a different system of internal arrangement, without however any plan. In various instances, the tradition is very unreliable with reference to their authorship, and attributes them to mythical personages. The tenth book corresponds with the arrangement of two of its predecessors, and copiously supplies us with the most distinct evidences of a later origin.

We find in the Rig-veda some few hymns known by the name of Khilas, which were added at the end of a chapter after the whole collection of the ten Mandalas was completed. The Khilas, as the Vaidik apocrypha, must be looked upon as a link closely connecting the Vaidik hymns with the later parts of Indian literature. We can only call them successful imitations of the real and genuine songs, but as such they have acquired a certain reputation. They crept into the Sanhitâ of the other Vedas; they are referred to in the Brâhmanas, although they are not counted in the Anukramanîs. There is another class of hymns called *dânastutis* or praises of certain kings for their gifts to the priests. These hymns

⁸ See Weber's Indische Studien, iv. p. 8.

bear, on the whole, a modern character, and they belong to the Mantra period.

The Rig-veda is certainly a wonderful work, and attests the existence of a scientific development of mind among the Hindus in a time long before the age of the poems of Homer or Hesiod. It must not be assumed that the hymns of this Veda are altogether religious. A hymn in the seventh Mandala recounts in a singularly jocular manner the revival of the frogs at the commencement of the rains and likens their croaking to the singing of the Brahmins in ceremonious worship. In the tenth Mandala we have the lamentation of a gamester over his ruinous devotion to play. Numerous other instances might be easily adduced. In all probability those portions, which must be regarded as non-religious, belong to a later period.

The hymns of the Rig-veda themselves are clearly of different periods, some being older, and some more recent ; but we have no data to determine their relative antiquity. Max Müller designates very aptly the most ancient portion of *slokas* in the Rig-veda by the term *Chhandas*, and those that are comparatively modern, *Mantra*.⁹ But it is to be observed that Müller is altogether singular in the use of these two words in the above sense, as it no where obtains in Sanskrit books. Beside the Brâhmana portion all the rest is called Mantra. In the Purusha Sûkta of the Rig-veda the metrical portion of the Yajush is characterized as *Chhandas*, and this is substantiated by a text of the Atharvan itself (xi,7,24), Pânini in his Sûtras, repeatedly speaks of the Vedas. *Chhandas* is a term indicating sometimes the Mantra portion and sometimes even the Brâhmana¹⁰. In

⁹ History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 70,525 ff,

¹⁰ Goldstücker, Pânini: His Place in Sanskrit Literature, p. 71.

the entire collection of ancient and modern works in Sanskrit, Chhandas is exclusively applied to the whole body of the Vedas. But Chhandas is no where employed for the ancient portion of the Vedas, nor Mantra for those that are comparatively modern. Müller considers that Sanskrit Chhandas and Avestic Zend are both equivalent terms. Although they resemble in sound and letter, yet there is nothing of affinity in signification. Zend means language or translation ; while Chhandas means the original Vedas.

It is, beyond doubt, that such a large national collection as the Rig-veda Sanhitâ could never have been composed by the men of one or even two generations. But it is to be especially observed that the Mantras themselves frequently refer to older Rishis and to older hymns¹¹. As for the authorship of the hymns, the second Mandala belongs chiefly to that of Gritsamada, the third chiefly to that of Visvâmitra, and the fourth chiefly to that of Vâma-Deva. The fifth was composed chiefly by Atri and members of his family ; the sixth by Bharadvâja and members of his family ; the seventh by Vasishtha and his ken ; the first, eighth, ninth, and tenth by various Rishis. The worship which we find in many of the hymns of the Rig-veda must have consisted more of isolated sacrificial offerings than of a series of acts constituting an elaborate sacrifice. There are other hymns, which indicate the existence, at their time, of a ritual, already became highly complex and artificial ; but though these hymns, as well as the former, present sufficient evidence as to the existence, at that early period, of acts of ritual, it does not therefore follow that the Rig-veda, as such, was

¹¹ See Muir's Sanskrit Texts, ii p. 206ff, and iii. pp. 116ff.

strung together for the purpose of being intoned when they were performed.

The Yajur-veda is a collection of sacrificial formulas in prose, as well as in verse, extracted from the Rik. Most of the parts of this Veda give the plainest evidence of a more advanced development of religious ideas and observances than the Rig-veda itself. The Yajur-veda consists principally of prayers and invocations, applicable to the consecration of utensils and materials of sacrificial worship. Prof. Weber is of opinion that it belongs to a period when the Brahmanical element had already become predominant, although it was exposed to frequent and strenuous oppositions; and when on the face of all events, the Brahmanical hierarchy and that most pregnant of all evils, the system of cast¹² had been completely formed.¹³ The origin of the Yajur-veda is precisely like that of the Sâma-veda; but the paraphernalia of the equally complicated and systematised ritual for which the compilation of this Veda became necessary is more elaborate and more attractive than that of the Sâma-veda. Our fathers looked with special preference on the Yajur-veda, for it could better satisfy their sacrificial wants than the Sâman or the Rik. "The Yajur-veda", says Sâyana, in his Introduction to the Taittiriya-sanhitâ, "is like a wall, the two other Vedas like paintings (on it)." The history of the Yajur-veda differs from that of the other Vedas, in that it is characterized by a disagreement between its own schools far more weighty than the dissensions which widened the gulf between the schools of each other Veda. These schools are founded on a division of the Yajur-veda, the one party adhering to

¹² We have followed Mr. Elphinstone (Hist. of India, c. i.) in the orthography of this word: it is from the Portuguese *casta*, breed, race.

¹³ See Weber's History of Indian Literature, p. 10.

what is called the Black Yajush, and another to the White Yajush. There is strong reason to suppose that the division must have happened even after the time of Pânini.¹⁴ The Black Yajush is the older of the two; the White embraces texts which are not found in the Black; and viewed in reference to the motley character of the former, it looks 'white,' or orderly. The defect, that the distinction between a Mantra and Brâhmana portion is not so clearly established in the Black as in the other Vedas (and hence its motley character) is counteracted in the White; and therefore hints at a period when the material of the old Yajush was systematized in consonance with prevalent theories, literary and ritual. The contents of both divisions of the Yajush are similar in many respects. Some commentators explain Sukla or White by Suddha.¹⁵ The White is attributed to Yâjnavalkya, and the Black to Tittiri.

The Sâma-veda is nothing more than a recast of the Rik, being composed, with a few exceptions, of the very same hymns, broken into parts, and arranged anew, with the primary object of being chanted on different ceremonial occasions. The Sâma-veda consists of two parts; the Archika and Staubhika. The Archika, as adapted to the general and frequent use of the priests, exists in two forms, called Gânas, the Veyagâna and A'raryagâna. The Staubhika exists in the same manner as Uhagâna and Uhya-gâna. The inference that the modern origin of some of the hymns of the Rig-veda, can be proven by their not occurring in the Sâman, has been well and ably refuted by Dr. Pertsch.

Prof. Benfey has shown in the preface (p. xix.) to his valuable edition of the Sâma-veda that there are

¹⁴ Goldstûcker's Pânini, p. 130ff.

¹⁵ Drivedaganga explains Suklâni yajûnshi by suddhâni yadbâbrâhmanen âmisritamantrâtmakâni.

in it some verses, the absence of which in the Rig-veda is conspicuous. The total absence of 71 verses found in the recension of the Sâman, edited by Prof. Benfey, from the recension in which we now possess the Rig-veda, must be accounted for by the circumstance, that these verses belonged to one or the other of the recensions of the Rig-veda, which are altogether lost. The relation between the Sâma-veda and the Rik is to a certain degree analogous to that between the White and the Black Yajush.¹⁶ The Yajush and Sâman were the attendants of the Rik.¹⁷ The hymns in the Sâman and Yajush were composed for sacrificial purposes. The Sâman exhibits not a single sign of having been enlarged from the original size : the Yajush, however, has considerably extended. Both show many readings varying in greater or lesser degree, from those of the Rig-veda. Some of the Sûtras of the Sâman are little more than lists, such as we find in the Anukrainanîs, appended to the other Vedas. Their style, however, very nearly approaches the style of the Sûtra works.

Most of the hymns of the Rig-veda are found in the other Vedas, but none of their verses are to be found in the Rik. The fact that the hymns of the Sâman and Yajush form part of the Rik, does not show that the contents of the Rik were first brought together. Probably, those that were used in worship, *viz.*, those of the Sâman and Yajush were first collected. The collecting together of the Riks had to depend on other and more scientific causes. We may even be justified in supposing that science as usual, may have overdone her work ; and instead of subjecting the ancient hymns

¹⁶ See Weber's Indische Studien, i. p. 63ff.

¹⁷ Kaushîtaki-brâhmana, vi. 11 : Tatparicharanâ bitarau vedau.

to a considerable alteration, may have improved upon them and so transmitted to us a *rifacimento*.

"The true reason why the three first Vedas are often mentioned without any notice of the fourth, must be sought, not in their different origin and antiquity, but in the difference of their use and purport".¹⁸ The Rig-veda affords some insight into the state of society in Vaidik India. The Vedas do not appear to be the productions of one and the same author or even of the same age.¹⁹ "At whatever time the work of collection may have been performed, it was decidedly an era in the history of Indian Literature: from this time the texts became the chief object of the science and industry of the nation; as they had always been of its highest reverence and admiration; and so thorough and religious was the care bestowed upon their preservation that, notwithstanding their mass and the thousands of years which have elapsed since their collection, not a single various reading, so far as is yet known,

¹⁸ See Colebrooke's Essays, p. 3-4.

¹⁹ It seems strange that one so well informed as Max Müller should have published the following sentences: "In the most ancient Sanskrit literature, the idea even of authorship is excluded. Works are spoken of as revealed to and communicated by certain sages, but not as composed by them." History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 523. The Rishis did not in any case lay claim to inspiration; but they knew and believed themselves to be simply the authors of the Vedas, and not to be writing by inspiration from God, as it has been alleged. Here I may cite with advantage one single authority of very great weight on the opinion as to the origin of the four Vedas, held by the Rishis of that age. "From that universal sacrifice (of the victim Purusha) sprang the Rik and Sāman verses: the metres sprang from it: from it the Yajush arose". See Rig-veda, x. 9. In like manner many other authorities might be produced to the same effect, but how those opinions are puerile and contradictory in themselves. The Rishis designated their hymns by various names as *arka*, *uktha*, *rik*, *gir*, *dhī*, *nītha*, *nivid*, *mantra*, *mati*, *sūkta*, *stoma*, *vāch*, *vachas*, etc. etc; and they also often applied to them the title of *brahma* which has the sense of hymn or prayer.

has been suffered to make its way into them. The influence which they have exerted upon the whole literary development of after ages is not easily to be rated too high." ²⁰

All that is not found of the oldest Veda in the Sâman and Yajush, is a Rigveda piecemeal ; its hymns dispersed ; verses from different hymns united, and even the composition of numerous poets brought into the same hymns, as if they had the same author. That under such treatment, the Yajush should have lost all worth as far as poetry is concerned, was only to be expected ; it must be, however, a curious fact, that the Sâman should have preserved so much, as it even now contains, of that beauty which marks so peculiarly the Rig-veda poetry. The Atharvan, too, is composed in a like way as the Yajush, with only this variation, that the additions in it to the mutilated extracts from the Rik are more considerable than those in the Yajush.

There exists no record that carries us back to a more primitive state of the human family than the Rig-veda. And so the few relics that have been preserved to us, are of most intense interest. Max Müller has very justly said that there is one oasis in the vast desert of ancient Asiatic history, and it is the only real Veda, the Rig-veda, the oldest book in the Aryan world. The priority of the Rig-veda to all the other Vedas is thoroughly established from the fact that its numerous hymns are found in them, and that its Rishis are referred to in the Atharva-veda. In the Atharvan the names so mentioned, are principally of the more recent Rishis, and in the Rik are of

²⁰ See Journal of the American Oriental Society, iii. p. 309.

those of a more ancient time.²¹ In the Atharvan a more developed state of the Indian institutions together with the cast system, appears than in the Rik. In the former we observe the people bound hands and feet by the fetters of the hierarchy and of superstition, and in the latter we see the people quite free, imbued with a warm love for nature. Judging from the language and internal character of the Atharvan, we arrive at the conclusion that the main body of this Veda was in existence at a time when the Rik was compiled. In the Sâman we encounter more ancient grammatical forms than those in the Rik ; and it is very doubtful whether the *compilation* of the Sâma collection or the Rik collection was first made. In the Yajur-veda an enumeration is made of the different classes of men who are to be consecrated at the Purusha-medha, and of the names of most of the mixed casts.

Different parts of the Vedas were composed by different Rishis. Each hymn is said to have had its Rishi, and these Rishis comprise a variety of secular as well as religious individuals, who are celebrated at different eras in Hindu tradition. The pristine traditions, though few, are yet sufficient to prove that in the Vaidik age the capacity for metrical composition, and the highest prerogative, of officiating at the service of the gods, was not regarded as exclusively confined to individuals of priestly cast. Visvabârâ, a female of the Atri family, is said to have composed an entire Sûkta (xxviii) of the fifth Mandala of the Rig-veda. The epithets applied by the authors of the hymns to themselves and to the sages who in earlier times had appointed, as well as to their contemporaries who followed them in conducting, the different

²¹ Roth, Literature and History of the Vedas, p. 13.

rites at the services of the gods, are the following : *rishi*, *kavi*, *medhâvin*, *vipra*, *vipaschit*, *vedhas*, *munî*, etc. The Chârvâkas called the authors of the Vedas fools, knaves, and buffoons. ²² The Vedas are said to have been perpetuated by tradition, until they were arranged into their present order by Krishna Dvaipâyana Vyâsa, the Hindu Pisistratus. ²³ Vyâsa, who flourished in the early part of the twelfth century B. C., ²⁴ having compiled and arranged the so-called revealed scriptures of the Hindus, taught them to several of his disciples, *viz.*, the Rik to Paila, the Yajush to Vaisampâyana, the Sâman to Jaimini, and the Atharvan to Sâmantha.

§2. THE LANGUAGE OF THE VEDAS.

The Vedas are written in an ancient form of Sanskrit which is to the later what Chaucer's writings are to modern English. The Vedas abound in obsolete and peculiar formations, made up with the more recent grammatical forms with so much irregularity as lead to the inference that the language was too unsettled and variable to be brought under subjection to a system of rigid grammatical rules.

"The Language of the Vedas is an older dialect, varying very considerably both in its grammatical and lexical character, from the classical Sanskrit. Its grammatical peculiarities run through all departments: euphonic rules, word formation and composition, declension, conjugation, syntax.....[These peculiarities] are partly

²² See Sarvadarsana Sangraha, p. 6. sc. 10.

²³ See Prof. Lassen's Ind. Ant. i. p. 629, note, and also see Mahâbhârata, i. 2417, and 4236.

²⁴ See Archdeacon Pratt's Letter on Colebrooke's Determination of the Date of the Vedas, in the Journal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1862, p. 52; and Journal of the American Oriental Society, viii., pp. 83, 84.

such as characterize an older language, consisting in a greater originality of forms and the like, and partly such as characterize a language which is still in the bloom and vigour of life, its freedom untrammelled by other rules than those of common usage, and which has not like the (modern) Sanskrit, passed into oblivion as a native spoken dialect, become merely a conventional medium of communication among the learned, being forced, as it were, into a mould of regularity by long and exhausting grammatical treatment. The dissimilarity existing between the two, in respect of the stock of words of which each is made up, is, to say the least, not less marked. Not single words alone, but whole classes of derivations and roots, with the families that are formed from them, which the Veda exhibits in frequent and familiar use, are wholly wanting, or have left but faint traces, in the classical dialect; and this, to such an extent as seems to demand, if the two be actually related to one another directly as mother and daughter, a longer interval between them than we should be inclined to assume, from the character and degree of the grammatical and more especially the phonetic, differences".²⁵

§3. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE VAIDIK AGE.

The chronology of the Vaidik age is indicated in the different styles of composition of the different Vedas and Vedāngas. Max Müller divides the Vaidik age into four distinct periods: namely the Chhandas period, the Mantra period, the Brāhmaṇa period, and the Sūtra period. The respective styles of composition of these four

²⁵ See Journal of the American Oriental Society, iii., 296, 297 ff.

periods differ very much from each other. The Chhandas period furnishes us with a fair picture of the infant society of India at a time when no particular system of religion was prevalent. Sacrifices were not then in vogue. But in the Mantra period, sacrifices were held in great estimation. The Brâhmana period gave birth to the Brahmans. In this period, theological speculations were much indulged in. Lastly in the Sûtra period, commentaries on the Vedas and Upanishads were prepared. About this time the Sanskrit language underwent important alterations. We can place the Sûtra period in the middle of the Vaidik and Paurânika ages, forming a period in which occurred one of the most remarkable changes in the Hindu religion and society.

The Chhandas period may be supposed, says Max Müller, to have lasted from 1200 to 1000 B. c. ; the Mantra period from 1000 to 800 B. c. ; the Brâhmana period from 800 to 600 B. c. ; and the Sûtra period extending from 600 to 200 B. c. To decide the question with absolute certainty as to the dates of these four periods of ancient Sanskrit literature, would be impossible, for Hindu literature itself is almost without known dates, owing either to the peculiar organisation of the Hindu mind, or to the convulsions of Indian society. The present condition of Sanskrit philology does not afford the scholar the requisite data for embarking with any chance of success in such chronological speculations. Uncertainty hangs over these periods ; and to assign an approximate length to each of these periods is altogether hazardous. It should be well understood that these dates are only approximately accurate, and notwithstanding the apparent accuracy of the figures, it is clear that one cannot in this case arrive at any precise determination. Moreover Max Müller would perhaps have done better, if he had not

sought to fix such precise limits and to write down the result of his investigations so accurately. As there is necessarily always much vagueness in calculations of this nature, it is well that the form given to hypotheses be just as vague as our data; and as there is nothing so certain as a number once pronounced, I think it would have been better to remain partly in the dark, which in fact, is quite excusable in such matters. Besides, every body will see that the chronological limits assigned by Max Müller to the four periods of Vaidik literature are too narrow rather than too wide. The same conviction has been expressed by Prof. Wilson, M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, and Prof. Whitney. If Max Müller has been wanting in any thing it is chiefly through an excess of reserve. The period of the *Sanhitās*, such as we now possess, is dated at least 1000 years before the Christian era. One may, without the slightest hesitation, place the period of *Chhandas* far beyond that. Then one again alights upon the calculations of Sir William Jones, and of Colebrooke, who assigned to the composition of the *Rig-veda* a period 14 or 15 hundred years before Christ.

In another point of view, this uniform length of two centuries assigned to the period of the *Brāhmanas*, as well as to that of the *Mantras* and of *Chhandas*, is equally liable to criticism. If the period of the *Sūtras* comprised four entire centuries, it seems scarcely probable that the period of the *Brāhmanas* which are just as long and perhaps equally numerous, should not have extended over a longer time, including the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*. Moreover there is certainly a far smaller interval between the *Brāhmanas* and the *Sūtras*, than there is between the *Mantras* and the *Brāhmanas*. Nevertheless Max Müller reckons only two centuries between each of

these two classes. Analogy would seem to authorise the assumption of a far longer interval between the latter than between the former. There is an immense difference between the period assigned to the collection of sacred poetry, and the period in which they are commented upon ; there is a smaller difference between this latter epoch and the one in which these manifold and obscure commentaries are reduced to clear and orderly rules. As for the period of the Mantras, it seems in its turn too extensive, if that of the Brâhmanas is not sufficiently so. Granted that two centuries had been necessary for the composition of the Brâhmanas, the simple collection of the Sanhitâs did not require so much time. Thus, without contesting the absolute length of the united periods, their relative length does not seem to be very acceptable, and their proportions might be settled in a totally different manner, which could be justified equally well. As for the period of the Chhandas, the first of all, and the most fertile, since it has rendered all the rest comparatively worthless, it is to be presumed that it was the longest ; and this inspiration, which, during more than three thousand years has enlivened the entire religious creed of a great people, cannot have been of so short a duration, since its effects are so durable.

Max Müller divides the Vaidik hymns into two classes, the Mantras, which in his opinion, may have been composed between 1000 and 800 B. C. ; and the Chhandas which may have been produced between 1200 and 1000 B. C. I must hazard my opinion fixing the age of the composition of the mass of the Brâhmanas between 1500-1200 B. C. ; for the Sanhitâ we must take a space at least 600-700 years, with an interval of about two hundred years between the termination

of the Brâhmana period. In this manner we obtain for the majority of the Sanhitâ the period from 1700-2300. The oldest hymns as well as sacrificial formulas may be more ancient still, taking a few hundred years more ; so that I would assign the very commencement of Vaidik literature to the years 2300-2700 B. c. However there are no mile-stones in Vaidik literature. The classification of ancient Sanskrit literature by Max Müller has now become a theme for discussion by every Sanskrit scholar. But where it is to end is not easy to surmise. It has been questioned whether the basis of that clasification is scientific or ritual or theological. But whatever may be advanced by his opponents against such an arrangement, I have every reason to place my faith in Müllers distribution of Vaidik literature into four distinct periods.

§ 4. THE EARLIEST HISTORY OF THE ARYAN FAMILY.

The plateau of Iran was the earliest centre of ethnic radiation, the homestead of the human family, the ancestral abode of those races which have hitherto guided the van of civilization. The languages and mythologies of almost all the great historic races, however now widely separated, beckon to the mountain outlooks of Iran. Amidst the recesses of that focus of movement and cradle of historic races, lie the materials of forty centuries of human history. When such dubious half-blind guides as mythology and tradition fail to penetrate into what lie in the prehistoric deeps the languages can only with scientific certainty point out. So Comparative Philology has been very justly called linguistic Palaeontology. It is not how-

ever yet decided at what period the Aryas (in Zend, Airyas) ²⁶ descended into the plains of India whether guided by an impulse or coerced by some catastrophe or natural volition. ²⁷ When the Aryans first entered India, it was covered with immense forests. They made their way by setting fire to these. When, in the natural course of events, this branch of the Indo—European race began to multiply, the countries which they at first adopted as their home, either as agriculturists or as shepherds, became more and more insufficient for the supply of their growing wants. ²⁸ The Aryans were originally a wandering tribe like the modern Arabs; but they probably did not lead the life of agricultural nomads, such as, according to Tacitus, the ancient Germans did. To tend sheep was then their only vocation and means of livelihood. They were at the head of large families and took a leading part in all the sacrifices. And they were also the writers of the Vedas. In times of war they were commanders of the army. It was long after their advent to India that they engaged in agricultural pursuits, and in building cities.

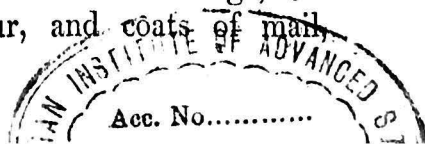
Some eminent scholars hold that the Aryans, at the period of the composition of the Vaidik hymns, were a nomadic and pastoral people. That favorite notion cannot be substantiated, as must be evident from the numerous allusions to permanent dwellings, villages, and towns; and we can hardly conceive our Aryan fathers to have been in this particular point far behind their savage enemies, the demolition of whose numerous cities is so repeatedly

²⁶ Compare Greek ἀπτή

²⁷ See Lassen's *Ind. Ant.* i. p. 515; Müller in Bunsen's *Philosophy of History*, i. p. 129.

²⁸ See Pictet's *Origines Indo-Européennes*, p. 2.

spoken of. A nomadic people they might have been, in some respect, but they were perhaps to a certain extent an agricultural people. They were a manufacturing people; and what is more remarkable they were a maritime and mercantile people. The Vedas furnish us with various descriptions of the fine arts. They also prove that the Aryans were not only familiar with the oceans, but sometimes must have engaged in naval expeditions. The Aryans lived in permanent habitations, and their houses were roofed, had windows and doors. They kept herds, and tilled the soil. They had domesticated the cow, the sheep, the goat, the horse, and the dog. They fabricated yokes, axles and ploughs; wrought in various metals; spun and wove; made vessels of wood and metal; had musical instruments of shells and reeds. They counted beyond a hundred. They navigated rivers in oared boats; fought in battle chariots, with swords, lances, bows, clubs and bucklers. They also employed spies. The Aryans are described as knowing how to "measure the land with a rod," "plough earth for barley," and "bring home the produce of their fields in carts," as having been acquainted with the use of iron and the art of making steel, for a singer praises Indra, as eagerly "as a carpenter bends the pliant metal round the wheel"; and when Vispalâ, wife of Khela, had her foot cut off "like the wing of a bird in an engagement by night," the Asvins gave her an iron leg that she might walk. Mention is made of the needle and sewing in the Rig-veda. There are some scholars who go the length of affirming that the ancient Hindus knew not the art of preparing needle-made garments. It would be strange enough to suppose that the Aryans of the Vaidik age, who were able to forge, and were in the habit of using armour, and coats of mail,



never had the idea of fashioning cloth into garments. Another sign of social progress we gain from their knowledge of herbs and modes of medical treatment. "Ambrosia," says a son of Kanva, "is in the waters;" "all medicaments are in the waters," thus anticipating in so remote antiquity the hydropathic doctrine of the present century. There is to be found a curious hymn, which shows that even the complicated law of inheritance, which is one of the peculiarities of the existing Hindu law, was to a certain extent in vogue in those days. The Aryans had conceptions of the rights of property and definite guarantees for their preservation, knew formalities for transactions of exchange and sale, for payment of wages and for the administration of oath. There is also mention of money. Their riches the Aryans "hid in a chest, a hill, or a well." Earrings and finger-rings and wheels and yokes of chariots, were made of gold.

We have no knowledge of the political condition of the Aryans, beyond the specification of a number of names of princes. These names are, as might be supposed, peculiar to the Vedas. We have particular intimation, not only of Râjas, but of envoys, and heralds, of travellers and of houses provided for their accommodation and refreshment. It is worthy of note here that in so ancient a time the marriage system was included among the other social institutions. It is exceedingly difficult to determine in what manner the nuptial ceremonies were performed and what were the rules observed in such ceremonies. There are no signs of polygamy. Nor were they unacquainted with the vices of civilization, for we read in the Vedas of common women, of secret births, of gamblers and thieves. However women among the Aryans enjoyed far greater privileges than were accorded to them in later times. They were quite at liberty to walk and ride

abroad, and were, without any reserve, present at public feasts and games. From numerous passages we learn that a virtuous maiden who grows old in her father's house, claims from him her support. But Prof. Weber advances some astounding proofs of the little confidence entertained in ancient times by the Aryans in the chastity of their women.²⁹ Notwithstanding all this women were held by the authors of the Brâhmanas in high estimation; but still there are other places in which they are spoken of disparagingly.³⁰ Adultery was no uncommon occurrence.³¹ It is stated that the wife of the person offering Varuna *praghâsâ* must have one or more paramours.³² Remarriage of women was customary among the Aryans of those days.³³ From a text of the Atharva-veda (ix. 5, 27f) we learn that a woman who had one husband, could get another, and they were not separated. If a woman could marry another while her husband was living, that she could also marry when she became widow, is altogether probable. It is to be stated, however, that there is no mention of Sûdras as a class with which Brahmans intermarried. Although marriages between these two were disapproved of, yet we can hardly believe that they were prohibited.³⁴ And there is no text to establish or countenance laws which allow the marriage of children.³⁵

§5. VAIDIK THEOGONY AND MYTHOLOGY

The Vaidik Hindus never worshipped idols.³⁶ The Vedas inculcate, on the contrary, the worship of the

²⁹ See Nidâna Sûtra, iii. 8., and also Satapatha-brâhmana, iii. 2*1, 40.

³⁰ See Taittirîya-Sanhitâ, vi. 5, 8, 2.

³¹ *Ibid*, v. 6, 8, 3.

³² See Satapatha-Brâhmana, ii. 5, 2, 20.

³³ See Taittirîya-âranyaka, vi. 1, 14. ³⁴ See Vâjasaneyi-Sanhitâ, 23, 30.

³⁵ See Max Müller's Chips from a German Workshop, ii. p. 313.

³⁶ "The Vedas hold out precautions against framing a Diety after human imagination, and recommend mankind to direct all researches towards the

great powers of Nature personified and the elements. Indra, Agni, and Varuna are there spoken of as the principal gods. There are other inferior gods. In one hymn the division of the gods into young and old is suggested.³⁷ In the *Rig-veda* we first witness the homage paid to Agni. He was worshipped in three forms. Agni (the name is identical with the Latin *ignis*) is indeed called the lowest of the gods, but notwithstanding this he is greatly revered.³⁸ Agni is first invoked in all the sacrifices. He is said to be the tutelary god. The attributes of Agni, in his various characters, are very confused. As the sacrificial fire, he is the servant of both men and gods, carrying the invocations and the offerings of the former to the latter; he is the *Hotri*, who invites the gods to the ceremony; the *Purohita*, who performs the rite on behalf of the lord of the house. Represented as a divinity, his is immortality, his is never-failing youth, invested with infinite power, and glory; the granter of victory, of wealth, of cattle, of food, of health, of life; he sojourns in a car drawn by red horses; he is the source of effulgent light, and the destroyer of all things. Agni is the "golden haired," and regarded as an emblem of purity. He is known under various appellations; and many dieties inferior to him are purely his manifestations. The acts and attributes of other dieties are often imputed to him. He is identified with Yama, Varuna, Mitra; with the *Sūrya*, and with the eternal Vedhas. There are some of the Vaidik hymns which might easily lead one to suppose that to kindle fire on the altar was the duty to

surrounding objects, viewed, either collectively or individually, bearing in mind their regular, wise, and wonderful combinations and arrangements."—Introduction to the Abridgement of the Vedant by Raja Rammohun Roy, p.vii.

³⁷ See *Rig-veda*, i. 27, 13.

³⁸ Schol. ad. Pind. Nem. x. 59.

which man first awoke ; but there are also other passages which speak of fire as “constantly kindled” in the house of a pious worshipper, and hence it is most probable that he only gave “fresh vital air” to the flames at sunrise, and then presented his offering of butter to whichever god he wished to invoke ; but when the Soma-juice was offered, a ceremonial called a Soma-yâga appears to have been held on such occasions, and additional fire was kindled, by means of a species of churn made of *acacia*, called *arani* wood.

Sûrya is regarded as a distinct god. And he is known under many and various appellations. Sûrya occupies a place in Vaidik worship which is not so conspicuous as we should naturally anticipate from the magnificence and splendour of that luminous body. Like Agni and Indra Sûrya is the granter of temporal blessings, the source of light. He is said to be the healer of leprosy. Only three Suktas in the first Book of the Rig-veda are addressed to him individually, and these “convey no very strikingly expressive acknowledgement of his supremacy.” But although Sun-worship was not prominent, the Hindus loved light and even warmth, and the Sun, the “ray diffuser.” The expressions of the Rishis in their hymns to this deity exhibit a careful and loving observation of Nature. The Sûrya is spoken of as coming “from a distance,” “removing all sins” ; or the divine Sun is entreated to take away the “sickness of the heart,” and the “yellowness of the body.”

In that class of the Rig-veda hymns looked upon as the oldest portion of Vaidik poetry, the character of Indra is that of a powerful ruler of the bright firmament, and his chief feat is that of conquering the demon, Vritra, a symbolical personification of the cloud which obscures the clearness of the sky, and restrains the fructifying rain from the earth. In his contests with Vritra, he is, there-

fore, spoken of as opening the reservoirs of the waters, as clearing the cloud with his far-whirling thunder-bolt, as casting the waters down to earth, and restoring the sun to the sky. He is, in consequence, the upholder of heaven, earth, and firmament, and the god who has generated the sun and the dawn. And since the atmospheric phenomena personified in these conceptions are ever recurring, he is undying and ever youthful. He is the lord of the virtuous and the discomfiter of those who condemn religious rites and ceremonies.

No particular account of Varuna (वरुणः) is given.³⁹ Varuna occupies a rather more prominent place in the hymns; he presides over the light and it is supposed that in one passage the constellations are called his holy acts, and the moon moves by his command. He is called the source of light: he grants wealth averts evil, and protects cattle. In one passage, he is said to abide in the ocean, he is acquainted with the course of ships, but he is also represented, in the same place, as acquainted with the flight of birds, and the periodical succession of the months. The character of Varuna does not appear to have been the same throughout the whole period represented by the Vaidik hymns, but, to have changed according as new imaginations were connected with the idea out of which he arose.

The details of Ushâs excite admiration for the display of poetical genius therein made. The connexion of the personified Dawn or Ushâs with the Sûrya makes its worship a form of solar adoration. The language of the hymns addressed to her, involves no mystery. The invigorating influence which the dawn exercises on both body and mind, and the luminous and other pleasant pheno-

³⁹ See Oxford Essays for 1856, p. 41.

mena connected with day break, constitute the subject of some of the best portions of Vaidik poetry ; and out of them the conceptions of Ushâs arise. She is invoked as the affluent, as the giver of food, and bringer of opulence ; she is asked to lavish on the pious riches, with horses and cattle, posterity and troops of slaves ; and she is panegyricized for the numerous and various boons she has bestowed on the worshippers who were liberal to her. She is the goddess indued with an excellent intellect, and the truthful, or fulfiller of her promises. She invigorates the diligent ; when she appears, bipeds and quadrupeds "are in motion," the winged birds hover in the air, and men who have to earn their bread quit their homes. She rides, in a golden chariot, which is large and beautiful. The relation of Ushâs to other Vaidik deities is of a two-fold, a physical and a ritual, character, in as much as the phenomena of Dawn are associated with other phenomena of Nature, and as certain religious ceremonies are enacted at the beginning of the day. For this, she is frequently addressed as the daughter of heaven ; and when her parents are spoken of, the commentator explains this word as signifying heaven and earth. She is further called the daughter of the night ; but, on other grounds, she is also described as having Night for her sister. She is, besides, the sister of Bhaga and Varuna. and the faithful wife of Sûrya.

The Asvins are the gods of the healing art. The two *cosmical* Asvins are often represented as perpetually young, handsome, travelling in a three wheeled triangular car, drawn by asses. They ever occupy themselves with multifarious earthly transactions ; they bestow benefits upon their worshippers, enable them to baffle their enemies, assist them in their need, and extricate them from difficulty. Their business is more earthly than

heavenly, and they are said to be precursors of the Dawn.

Pûshan is the protector on a journey, particularly of robbers : he is said to be the divinity presiding over the earth. The character of Rudra is similar ; but he is the source of fertility and giver of happiness, and he evidently presides over medicinal plants and removal of disease. Mitra and Varuna are the most important, from the identification of the former with the Mithra of the Zendavesta and the latter with the οὐρανός of the Greeks.⁴⁰ Miṭra seems more connected with the day and Varuna with the night ; and what is more remarkable, the hymns addressed to the latter abound with the moral element. The Maruts are very commonly represented as the attendants of Indra. The invocations of the Visvedevas⁴¹ as they are called, represent a later phase of thought than invocations of the single deities.

Dyaus and Prithivî are invited to attend religious rites, and supplicated for different boons. In the Vaidik hymns Heaven and Earth are characterized as vast, broad, profound, productive ; and as innocuous or beneficent, promoters of righteousness and omniscient. The Heaven is styled father and the Earth mother. They are not only the parents of men but of the gods also. Heaven and Earth are spoken of as created. Indra is described as their creator. The creation of Heaven and Earth is also imputed to Soma, Pûshan, Dhâtri and to Hiranyagarbha. They received their shape from Tvash-

⁴⁰ Herodotus confounds Mitra with Mylitha^o : but the important thing to observe is, that Mitra was a Persian god. But there are evidently many passages in the Vandidâd which prove that among the ancient Persians Mithra was sometimes represented as the Sun. The modern Pârsis understand by it Meher Izad, in contradistinction to Khurbeshîd, the Sun.

⁴¹ Visve Devâh, though treated as a plural, has sometimes the meaning of a *pluralis majestaticus*. See Ewald, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch*, § 1786.

tri, they sprung from the head and feet of Purusha, and they are supported by Mitra, Savitri, Varuna, Indra Agni, Soma, and Hiranyagarbha. Aditi is the only goddess spoken of in the Rig-veda. She is an object of celebration in the Veda, when she is invoked for physical blessings, for preservation and for forgiveness. She is the mother of Varuna and some of the principal deities. In the Sâma-veda Aditi is represented with her sons and brothers. The Adityas are seven in number, but their names are not specified. They are characterized as bright, sinless, pure, blameless, holy, golden, strong, vast, sleepless, many-eyed far-observing, unwinking, kings, and resistless. Vâyu is frequently associated with Indra, does not appear to occupy a prominent place in the Rig-veda. He is spoken of as beautiful, most handsome in form, and conspicuous. Savitri is the golden deity, the yellow-haired, golden-handed, golden-tongued. He is the bestower of all desirable things, and confers blessings from the sky, from the atmosphere, and from the earth. Tvastri, as represented in the Rig-veda, is the divine artizan. Sarasvatî is a goddess of some importance in the Rig-veda. She is represented as a river and as a deity. Sarasvatî attends the sacrifices along with other goddesses, Ilâ, Bhârâtî, Mahî, Hotrâ, Vârutrî, Dhis-hanâ. Aranyâni is mentioned as the goddess of forest solitude. Râkâ Sinivâlî and Gungû are three other goddesses represented in the Rig-veda. Sraddhâ is an object of adoration in the morning, at noon, and at sunset. She prospers the liberal worshippers of the gods, and imparts faith. Lakshmî and Sîri do not occur in the Rig-veda in the sense as they appear in the later mythology. Sîri is mentioned as issuing forth from Prajâpati when he was wrapped up in intense austerity.

These gods are merely poetical names, which gradually assumed a divine personality never thought of by the original authors. In the Rig-veda the gods, though frequently spoken of as immortal, are no way regarded as without beginning or as self-existent beings. According to the Taittirîya-brâhmana they attained their divine rank by austerity.⁴¹ The gods are said to possess to an eminent degree the qualities of Rishis or Kavis. This possibly implies, *e converso*, that the Rishis believed in their affinity with the divine nature, and thought to possess superior wisdom and particular knowledge of the deities. "Indeed, the relations between the Vaidik Aryans and their deities appear to have been of a childlike and filial character; the evils which they suffered they ascribed to some offence of omission or commission which had been given to a deity; whilst the good which they received was in like manner ascribed to his kindness and favor."⁴² Prof. Roth is singular in believing that the highest deities of the primitive Aryan times represented, chiefly, not the conspicuous processes of external nature, but the higher relations of moral and social life. The strain in which the Aryan of that period invokes his gods clearly convinces us that he sought them, not for his spiritual but for his material welfare. Ethical considerations are therefore extraneous to these instinctive outbursts of the pious mind. Sin and evil, indeed, are often adverted to, and the gods are extolled because they destroy sinners and evil-doers. There are to be found hymns in the Rig-veda which depart materially from

⁴¹ See Mnir's Original Sanskrit Texts, iii. p. 276.

⁴² See Wheeler's History of India, i. p. 13.

the simplicity of the conceptions we allude to. In these, this instinctive utterance of feeling gives way to the language of speculation ; the allegories of poetry surrender to the mysticism of the thoughtful mind ; and the mysteries of nature becoming more vehemently felt, the circle of beings which awe the popular mind, becomes wider.

§ 6. PROGRESS OF THE VAIDIK RELIGION TOWARDS ABSTRACT CONCEPTIONS OF THE DEITY.

The religion of the Vedas consists mostly of the worship of the elements. The Sabaism of the Hindus differs entirely from that of the Chaldeans. It would be absurd to maintain that the Vedas inculcate a pure system of religion, when they uphold every kind of superstition. The Vedas contain no real system ; they never classify nor define the objects of worship. This was, however, done at last by commentators, who seem to have generally misunderstood the religion taught in them. There are numerous passages in the Rig-veda in many of which a monotheistic and in many others a pantheistic tendency is very clearly manifested. The Vedas cannot contain monotheism, polytheism and pantheism. They contain but the common principle of all the three. This prehistoric star dust of all the systems may properly be called pantheism, not in exclusive sense, it is philosophical abstraction but intense realisation. Polytheism like pantheism is in the free plastic age. The complicated polytheism which we find in the hymns of the Rig-veda is but the full development of polytheism of anterior centuries. It is evident that monotheism was never the starting point of the Vaidik system. The ideas of entity and nonentity were very familiar to the Vaidik

Rishis. ⁴⁴ In the 90th hymn of the tenth Mandala of the Rig-veda the unity of the Godhead, is recognised, although in a clearly pantheistic sense. Some scholars had gone so far as to assert that the idea of one God breaks through the mist of a polytheistic and an idolatrous phraseology. This is a mistake. The Vaidik hymns are both polytheistic and polytheistic. The age when they were composed, as appears clearly from the Brâhmanas or Directories for their use in the Brahma sacrifices, was followed by a palpable deterioration in the thought and feeling of the ancient Indians. At first the polytheism was simple. "The polytheistic idea, however, when once it had began to work, would tend constantly to multiply the number of divinities, as we see it has already done in the Vaidik age."⁴⁵ There never was nor could be a pure polytheism or a pure monotheism. It is beyond doubt, that the human mind, as in the degree it observes and reflects, advances more rapidly towards monotheism. But it is to be confessed that such movement is very slow and often obstructed by tradition and habit. We must not place at the commencement that which ought to be placed at the very end. However it is clear and fully admitted that our ancestors were polytheists before their separation; and they could never completely forget what they once learnt and brought with them as a heritage from their original home. Such teaching which again they had left as a legacy had acted most forcibly on the mind of their descendants from generations to generations, until the proper philosophical age dawned and the Upanishads were written. But the influence of such philosophical books is in no way complete nor permanent; and their attempts towards obliteration at once

⁴⁴ See Rig-veda, x. 72.

⁴⁵ See Pictet's *Origines Indo-Européennes*, ii. pp. 708ff.

from the mind, of the polytheistic principles, were far from being successful,

The Vaidik Rishis had not attained to a clear and logical comprehension of the characteristics which they themselves ascribed to the objects of their worship. The conceptions of the Godhead indicated in the Vaidik texts are of a fluctuating and undecided character. The remarkable representations of a host of subordinate objects of worship, exhibit to us a conception of the universe by the Hindus of the Vaidik age which was mythical, sacramental, polytheistic, and even pantheistic. There is a hymn in the tenth Mandala of a long antecedent period, of philosophical thought in which we find the concept of a beginning of all things, and of a state, before all things were created. In the beginning there was nothing, no sky, no firmament. No space there was, no life, no time, no difference between day and night. "Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled in gloom profound, as ocean without light." There was only the deep abyss, a chaotic mass, which swallowed every thing. "That one," the poet says, "breathed, and lived ; it enjoyed more than mere existence ; yet its life was not dependent on any thing else, as our life depends on the air which we breathe. It breathed breathless." Max Müller says "language blushes at such expressions, but her blush is a blush of triumph." The creation is but the manifestation of His will ; and a mere evolution of one substance. The Rishis had the idea of the universe having sprung out of darkness and out of a pre-existing chaos ; and this doctrine is enunciated in one of the later hymns of the Rig-veda (x. 129). In the Vaidik period we find that the difference between mind and matter was as yet but imperfectly conceived.

§ 7. FUTURE LIFE ACCORDING TO THE VEDAS.

In the ninth and tenth Mandalas of the Rig-veda there are some distinct references made to a future life. Beside these there are other passages which intimate the same belief. The enjoyments of such a life are to be understood as of a sensual kind ⁴⁶ In the Vaidik age even the gods themselves were regarded as subject to the influence of carnal appetites. Immunity from taxation is held out as the greatest boon to be received in the next world. ⁴⁷ A funeral hymn offered to Agni ⁴⁸ also contains some verses which fully give the views of the writer on the future life. The *pitris*, or ancestral fathers of families, who have gone to their account and passed into the heavenly state, are represented as objects of adoration to their descendants. It is said, that there exist three heavens ⁴⁹ of which the *pitris* occupy the highest. In certain passages of the Rig-veda the word *manas* is found to be used for the soul or the animating principle which is never annihilated after the termination of earthly existence. A'tman is also employed in several portions of the Rig-veda for the living principle, and in these parts, the sun is addressed as the soul of all things changeable or unchangeable (i. 115, 1.). Some texts however refer indistinctly to the punishment of the wicked. ⁵⁰ In the Atharva-veda (xii. 4, 36) the adjective form of the usual word for hell occurs: and that region is described as the future abode of the illiberal.

A few indications there are "of a hope of immortality, hatred of untruth, and abhorrence of sin." From the

⁴⁶ See Rig-veda, ix. 133, 7ff.

⁴⁷ See Atharva-veda, iii. 29, 3.

⁴⁸ See Rig-veda, x. 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, xviii. 2, 48.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, iv. 5.5; vii. 140, 3; ix. 73, 8.

Rig-veda we learn that the Rishis had but faintly conceived the idea of the soul being immortal.⁵¹ It is scarcely to be expected that in such primitive times they would have very clear ideas on this subject; but it is after all worthy to be noticed that long before Greece or Rome became cultivated communities, and when Europe was the home of uncivilized barbarians the Rishis had some concept of this doctrine. Modern psychologists cannot teach us more than what was taught by our ancestors some thousand years ago. In the Brâhmanas immortality⁵² is promised to those who rightly understand and practise the rites of sacrifice without a miss.

In the Rig-veda Yama is nowhere described in the same way as he is, in the later mythology.⁵³ Indeed, the hymns of that Veda do not represent as far as I am aware, any such penal retribution. But Yama is still to a certain extent an object of terror and horror. And in a verse of the Atharvân (xviii, 2, 27) death is said to be the messenger of Yama who conveys the spirits of men to the abode of their forefathers. The body which the deceased is to assume again in his other existence, cannot be the same one which is consumed by the flames, or covered up by the earth; it may not even be similar to it, because he is to live henceforth in the company of divine spirits,

⁵¹ See Rig-veda, i. 22.

⁵² Prof. Roth, after extracting several passages from the Rik in which a belief in immortality is clearly conveyed, says with great force: 'We here find, not without astonishment, beautiful conceptions on immortality expressed in unadorned language with childlike conviction. If it were necessary, we might here find the most powerful weapons against the view which has lately been revived, and proclaimed as new, that Persia was the only birthplace of the idea of immortality, and that even the nations of Europe had derived it from that quarter. As if the religious spirit of every gifted race was not able to arrive at it by its own strength.—See Muir's Article on Yama, in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. p. 10.

⁵³ See Wilson's Vishnu-purâna, p. 207, note 3.

and must be clothed similarly to have a right of place among them. And the ancient Indian religion, in complete harmony with the conceptions of the highest gods, and the feeling of an affinity between the human and the divine spirits, plainly teaches that the deceased, purged of all imperfections, is invested by the divine hand with a shining and all glorious spiritual body.⁵⁴ Nowhere in the Rig-veda is any trace discoverable of metempsychosis.⁵⁵ But on the contrary, it is promised, as the highest reward, that the pious man shall again be born in the next world with his identical body.⁵⁶ The Apotheosis of the sons of Angiras; of the Ribhus, the sons of Sudhanvan; and afterwards of the seven Rishis, completely negatives the doctrine of the metempsychosis or transmigration of the human soul into brute and vegetable forms, and the notion of the absorption of the soul into the Godhead.

⁵⁴ See Roth's article on the Morality of the Vedas in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, iii. p.343.

⁵⁵ See Wilson's Rig-veda, iii. p. xiii; Müller's Chips, i. p. 45.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, iv. 6. 1. 1. xii. 8. 3. 31.

CHAPTER II.

§ 1. THE OFFICES OF THE FOUR CLASSES OF PRIESTS.

How the Vaidik religion gradually changed, may be best known from the Vedas. In a history of ancient Sanskrit literature the Chhandas period is the most interesting and most important in a philosophical point of view. In the Chhandas period, the state of human society being simple, religion was necessarily so. Now the Rishis were the priests of different families to whom they imparted religious instruction. The manner in which the idea of religion, however childish, entered the human mind in the infancy of society, is a question too complicated to be dealt with by generalisations from local phenomena. But the religion of the Rishis underwent, in the process of time, a gradual change. As soon as we enter into the Mantra period, we observe the gross superstitious character of the Vaidik religion. If we compare the Rik with the other two Vedas, the difference between the Chhandas and Mantra periods becomes apparent and quite intelligible. The religious ideas which began to take root in the minds of the Hindus of the Mantra period, were sufficiently powerful to make them relinquish all regard for the religion of the Rig-veda. A priesthood was now systematically created. In the Chhandas period, the Rishis used to hold divine service in their families, but now nothing could be done without a priest.

Asvalâyana says that there were four priests, each having three men under him. And the sixteen priests are commonly called by the general term of Ritviz,¹ and

¹ See Prof. Roth's Sanskrit and German Dictionary *sub voce ritviz*, where the appellations of the sixteen kinds of priests are given. See also the passage in the Satapatha-Brâhmana, xii. 2 et seq., there referred to.

were chosen by the Yajamâna. There were other priests, who did not rank as Ritviz. The Kaushîtakins admit the so-called Sadasya into the Ritviz who were to superintend all the sacrifices. These priests had peculiar duties to perform, which are prescribed in the Brâhmanas. The Adhvaryus had to measure the ground, to build the *vedi*, to make the sacrificial vessels, to fetch wood and water, to light the fire, to bring the animal and immolate it. And they certainly formed the lowest class of priests. The Udgâtris had to act as the chorus. The peculiar duty of the Hotris was to recite certain hymns in praise of the deities in a loud and distinct voice during the time of sacrifices. The Hotris were by far the most highly educated class of priests. The most ancient name of a professional priest was Purohita ; he was more than a chaplain. He was the counsellor of a chief, and the minister of a king, and his companion, too, in peace and war. The original institution of a Purohita must not be accepted as the sign of a far advanced hierarchical system. The office of a Purohita was regarded as a divine institution. Vasishtha and Visvâmitra were the Purohitas of king Sudâs.² The chief occupation of the Purohita was simply to perform the ordinary sacrifices, but his office also partook of a political character. The ancient appellations of the theologians of the Rik as Bahvrichas, those of the Sâmanas Chhandogas, and of the Yajush as Adhvaryus are to be found in the Sanhitâ of the Black Yajush. The Yajush applies the term

² Visvâmitra, says Signor de Gubernatis, is to be understood as one of the appellations of the sun, and as both the person who holds the name, and Indra are the sons of Kusika, they must be brothers. Vasishtha is the greatest of the Vasus, and means Agni, the solar fire, and points out, like Visvâmitra, to the sun. Sudâs signifies the horse of the sun, or the sun himself. His theory however is quite untenable. Ancient Indian tradition speaks of both Visvâmitra and Vasishtha as real personages. See the Rivista Orientale, i. pp. 409 ff., 478 ff

Adhvaryus to its own adherents, whilst their opponents are designated Charakâdhvaryus. This natural hostility is also clearly shown in a passage of the Sanhitâ of the White Yajush. ³ But this spirit of hostility was not exclusively confined to the different schools of the Yajurveda; the followers of the Atharva-veda seem to have evinced similar sectarian jealousies towards the adherents of the other Vedas. ⁴

The Brahma had to watch over the three classes of priests and to remedy any defect which might vitiate the efficiency of the sacrifice. And the Rig-veda itself, though perhaps in one of its latest portions, recognises the superiority of the Brahma priest. He was, therefore, supposed to know the whole ceremonial and all the hymns used by the Hotri, Adhvaryu, and Udgâtri. The office of a Brahma priest was not a birth right, but every priest could obtain it by assiduous and unremitting study, great ability, and superior ingenuity. The descendants of such Brahma priests are the Brahmins. The Rishis used to worship three times daily. The three daily prayers, at sun-rise, noon, and sunset, are called *rita*. The Hotri performs his duties with the Rik, the Udgâtri with the Sâman, the Adhvarya with the Yajush and the Brahma with all the three first Vedas.

§ 2. VAIDIK SACRIFICES

In the Rig-veda Darsapûrnamâsa and other sacrifices are mentioned; but the modes in which, and the objects for which, they were performed, were all forgotten in the times subsequent to the Vaidik age. They were preserved only

³ See Weber's History of Indian Literature, p. 84; Müller's History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 350.

⁴ See Indische Studien, i. p. 296.

as relics of ancient times and performed in altogether a different manner, and with a different object. At the commencement of the Darsapûrnamâsa sacrifice the Adhvaryu having placed the cows and calves together, has to touch the calves with a branch. This sacrifice was celebrated at the full and change of the moon. Besides this, we have innumerable names of sacrifices; of which the Râjasûya, Agnihotra, Asvamedha, Somayâga, and Purushamedha are by far the most remarkable. The Asvamedha sacrifice was possibly adopted by the Hindus from the Scythians, before they crossed the Indus. For the festival, a certain number of animals were tied to posts, but after the customary prayers had been offered up, they were three times led round the sacrificial fire; they were immolated by an axe; and the flesh cut up into fragments, dressed, partly roasted, and partly boiled, and made into balls and eaten. This ceremony was afterwards performed symbolically. ⁵ At the performance of the sacrifice, six hundred and nine animals of various descriptions, domestic and wild, according to the deity to whom they were offered, were tied to twenty-one yûpas, or sacrificial posts. Elephants, camels, ⁶ and buffaloes, birds, porpoises, crocodiles, snakes, and even mosquitoes and worms are named among the animals.

The Gomedha was celebrated by the Rishis, when they used to eat beef. ⁷ The sacrifice of the cow was common in the Vaidik ritual, and not typical as many would imagine. In the Brâhmana of the Black Yajur-veda, and in the Asvalâyana-sûtra also, mention is made of different sacrifices and ceremonies of which the slaughter of the cattle formed a part. In the Râjasuya and Vâja-

⁵ See Wilson's Introduction to the Rig-veda.

⁶ Compare Sanskrit *kramela*, and Greek *καμηλος*.

⁷ See Rig-veda, i. p. 165; iii. pp. 163, 276, 416 and 453.

peya ceremonies the sacrifice of this animal also formed an integral part. It is true, that there was a time when bovine meat was actually deemed a delightful aliment, a token of generous hospitality in honor of a respected guest or *goghna*;⁸ and it was even considered an essential accompaniment in the journey from this to the future world,—so much so that a cow was in all cases burnt with the dead. The Sautrâmani ceremony has been incorporated in the Taittirîya-brâhmana and there is a wide difference in the treatment which this sacrifice receives in the Satapatha-brâhmana. The Sarvamedhas and Brahmajajna are passed over by the Satapatha. They find place in the A'ranyaka of the Taittirîyas, but not in their Brâhmanas. The Pitrimedha has place in the Brâhmanas of the Taittirîyas. The Purushamedha was celebrated by a Brahman or Kshatriya who longed for pre-eminence above all things. It required forty days for its completion, and more than hundred victims. In the Purushamedha men were victims, and prayers and hymns recited. As soon as the prescribed prayers and hymns were concluded, the victims were set free, and substitutionary offering of butter thrown upon the sacrificial fire. Though the human sacrifice was not really performed, yet still many were eager to offer human victims to evince their piety towards the gods which the history of Sunahsepha abundantly proves. Human sacrifices were not, however, unknown; although infrequent and sometimes typical. The Brahmans were, it is beyond doubt, familiar with the idea of human sacrifice.⁹ The story of Sunahsepha forms part of the inauguration of a king.

⁸ Asiatic Researches, vii, p. 288.

⁹ See Wilson's Essay on Human Sacrifice in the Veda: Roth, in Weber's Indische Studien, i. pp. 457-464; and ii. pp. 111-123; Weber's Hist. of Ind. Literature, p. 84.

The principal object for which the Sâma-veda was composed, is the performance of those sacrifices of which the juice of the Soma plant forms the chief ingredient ; and of such sacrifices the most remarkable is the Jyotishtoma, which consists of seven stages : but the celebration of the Agnishtoma alone was deemed obligatory, while other six stages, though adding to the virtue of the sacrificer, were understood as voluntary. Soma is the god who represents and animates the juice of the Soma plant, an intoxicating beverage which formed a prominent feature in the sacrifices of the Vaidik age. The high antiquity of this cultus is attested by the references to it found occurring in the Persian Avesta.¹⁰ The plants were gathered by the roots on the hills by moonlight, and brought home in carts drawn by rams ; the stalks were bruised and crushed between stones, and placed with the juice in a sieve of goats' hair, and were further pressed and squeezed by the priests' ten fingers ornamented by rings of flattened gold. Finally the juice mixed with barley, wheat, and clarified butter, is brought into a state of fermentation ; and is then drawn off in a scoop and offered up thrice a day to the gods, and a laddleful is taken for the priests. The Sâma-veda is almost entirely composed of songs to accompany this ceremony, and the Rig-veda too contains numerous passages which have close reference to it. It was without doubt the greatest and the most sacred offering of the ancient Indian worship.¹¹ The earliest Hindu settlers were much addicted to the drinking of spirits,

¹⁰ See Plutarch de Isid et Osir. 46, in which the Soma, or as it is in Zend, *haoma*, appears to be referred to under the appellation *šmum*.

¹¹ See Windischmann's Dissertation on the Soma Worship of the Arians ; Whitney's Main Results of the Later Vedic Researches in Germany ; Lassen's Ind. Ant, i. p. 516 ; and Roth's articles in the Journal of the German Oriental Society, for 1848 (pp. 216ff.) and 1850 (pp. 417 ff.).

and indulged excessively both in Soma and other strong drinks. To their gods the most acceptable offering was Soma beer ; and wine or spirit was in a public manner sold in shops solely opened with this view, for the general use of the community. In the Rig-veda a hymn occurs which shows beyond all controversy that wine was kept in leather bottles¹² and sold without any reserve to all comers.

The Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa contains mantras from which we learn about the preparation of the liquor, but no information is obtained of how the distillation was effected. In the post-Vaidik age the name Soma came to be commonly applied to the moon and its regent. Even in the Rig-veda some traces of this application seem to be discoverable (x. 85, 3 and 5).¹³

§ 3. THE DIVISION OF THE VEDAS INTO MANTRAS AND BRAHMANAS.

The division of the Vedas is two-fold, into Mantras and Brāhmaṇas.¹⁴ Such a division is in fact an indispensable one, separating two different classes of writings, which are related to one another as canonized text on the one hand, and canonized explanation on the other. That part of each which contains the mantras, is called its Sanhitā.¹⁵ The

¹² Wilson's Rig-veda, ii. p. 204.

¹³ Compare "The transference of the name Soma to the moon, which appears in the later history of the Indian religion, is hitherto obscure: the Vedas do not know it, nor do they seem to prepare the way for it in any manner" Journal of the American Oriental Society, iii. p. 300.

¹⁴ Sāyana says in his Commentary on the Rig-veda, "The definition (of the Veda) as a book composed of mantra and brāhmaṇa, is unobjectionable. Hence Apastamba says in the Yajñaparibhāṣā, Mantra and Brāhmaṇa have the name of Veda."

¹⁵ See Müller's History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 350, and Weber's History of Indian Literature, p. 83.

Brâhmanas presuppose the earlier existence of the Mantras. The proof that the Mantras are far older than any other portion of Indian literature, is to be found in the character of their language. Though the Mantras and Brâhmanas were held at a later period to have existed simultaneously, it admits of no question that the Brâhmana portion of each Veda is posterior to some part at least of its Sanhitâ, for the former evidently refers to, and contains quotations from, the latter ; and it scarcely needs to be stated that so large a collection of works as that represented by both portions must have been the gradual product of a considerable space of time. Indeed, they reflect various conditions and mutations of society, various phases of religious belief, and even different periods of language. The difficulty however, accurately to distinguish these periods, is greatly enhanced by the apparent losses, probably considerable, which these writings sustained before they were marshalled together and preserved in the shape in which we now possess them. Pânini states that there are old and new Brâhmanas. The Brâhmanas are the Talmud of the Hindus. The Mantras and Brâhmanas had to pass through a considerable number of Sâkhâs, and the curious dissensions which in the process of time sprung up between these schools, both with respect to the Vaidik texts and their interpretation, was very severe. The Mantras are replete with thanksgivings of the Rishis. The Sanhitâs are in verse, the Brâhmanas in prose. The Mantras were for ages unwritten, and the elliptical style of their composition is alone evidence of their oral transmission. If the Brâhmanas could all be collected, they would become an extraordinarily voluminous work ; and their perusal would convince any body that they are not the work of a few individuals.

Each Rishi has composed a different Brâhmana to convey, what in his opinion constitutes, the real meaning of the Vaidik rituals. They represent a complete period through which the whole stream of thought poured in one channel. The number of the old Brâhmanas must have been very considerable as every Sâkhâ consisted of a Sanhitâ and Brâhmana. It must not, therefore, be considered that they were not all composed independently by different authors. Each Brâhmana was included in its own Veda, and was used by its own class of Brahmans. Hence different Brâhmanas obtained their names from the different classes of Brahmans. For the Rig-veda the Brâhmanas of the Bahvrichas, or the Aitareya and Sâṅkhâya; for the Sâma-veda, the Brâhmanas of the Chhandogas, or the Tândya, the Panchavinsa and the Chhândogya; for the White Yajur-veda the Brâhmanas of the Taittirîyas, for the Black Yajur-veda the Satapathâ-brâhmana; and for the Atharva-veda the Gopatha-brâhmana.

In the Brâhmanas we find a pantheistic system; and this system was adapted to the explanation of the Vaidik deities. "There is throughout the Brâhmanas, such a complete misunderstanding of the original intention of the Vaidik hymns, that we can hardly understand how such an estrangement could have taken place, unless there had been at some time or other a sudden and violent break in the chain of tradition." And again: "Every page of the Brâhmanas contains the clearest proof that the spirit of the ancient Vaidik poetry, and the purport of the original Vaidik sacrifices were both beyond the comprehension of the authors of the Brâhmanas.....we thus perceive the wide chasm between the Brâhmana period and that period by which it is preceded-

ed.”¹⁶ In the Brâhmanas, numerous mythical tales occur of battles between the Devas and Asuras, which are to be understood as contests between the Aryas and the aborigines.¹⁷ A Brâhmana was originally a theological tract, and it was so designated, not that it treats of Brahma,¹⁸ but only because it was composed by the Brahmins. The complete body of the Brâhmanas was subjected in the course of time to glaring alterations. And their prevalence constitutes a distinct stage in the progress of the religious history of the Hindus. The Brâhmanas are the dogmatical books of the Brahmins, a system of tenets scientifically arranged, resulting from religious practice. They were not, however, meant to afford a thorough explanation of the principles of belief; but they are very useful for such an exposition, simply because they were written with the view of explaining and establishing the whole customary ceremonial of worship. The Brâhmanas, on the whole, exhibit a phase in the intellectual history of the Hindus; but in a literary point of view, they are altogether disappointing. They are not wanting in sound reasoning, in striking thoughts, in bold expressions and curious traditions. The general character of these works is marked by dull and at the same time high and lofty language, priestly whims, and vagaries, and antiquarian pedantry. The Brâhmanas can only claim to be studied as the physician is required to study the often repeated caprices of a madman.

The Gopatha-brâhmana of the Athârva-veda is the Veda of the Bhrigu-angiras; which does not properly belong to the sacred literature of the Brahmins. In the

¹⁶ See Müller's Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pp. 432, 434 ff.

¹⁷ See Weber's Indische Studien, i. 186; and ii. 243.

¹⁸ See Haug's Dissertation on the Original Signification of the word *brahma*.

Gopatha the title of Brahma-veda, another name of the Atharvan, does not occur.¹⁹ The primary object of this Brâhmana is to show and establish the necessity and efficacy of the four Vedas. The first part of the Gopatha comprises five Prapâthakas ; and the other part, called the Uttarabrâhmana, consists of more than five Prapâthakas. The ceremonial in general is discussed in the Gopatha in a similar manner as in the other Brâhmanas. There is, indeed, very little difference to be found between the Gopatha and the other Brâhmanas ; and it is hardly possible to discover any traces of its more recent origin. It begins with a theory of the creation of the universe as do the other Brâhmanas. The Gopatha was composed after the schism of the Charakas and Vâjāsaneiyins. And we must assign to this Brâhmana a later date than to the Brâhmanas of the other Vedas. The number of the Brâhmanas relating to the Sâma-Veda, is eight ; and their names are : Panchavinsa, the Shadvinsa, the Sâmaavidhi, the Arsheya, the Devatâdhyâya, the Sanhitopanishad, and the Upanishad, which probably is the Chândogya-upanishad, and thus is ranked amongst the Brâhmanas. A later Brâhmana probably of modern date, and which is not mentioned by Sâyana, is the Adbhuta-brâhmaṇa.

The Chhândoga-brâhmana of the Sâma-veda, of which the Chhândogya-upanishad constitutes a part, comprises ten Prapâthakas ; of these the first two are called the Chhândogya-mantra-brâhmana, and the rest forms the Chhândogya-upanishad. The Aitareya consists of eight Panchikâs, each of these comprising five Adhyâyas, and all the Adhyâyas together, two hundred and eighty five Khandas ; the Aranyaka is also reckoned as a part of the Aitareya, and is similarly ascribed to

¹⁹ See Yâjñavalkya, i. 22.

Mahidâsa, the son of Itarâ. The Aitareya is one of the collections of the sayings of ancient Brahma priests explanatory of the sacred duties of the so-called Hotri priests. Its style is throughout uniform, The greater part of the work appears to have proceeded from one and the same pen ; some additions, however, were made afterwards. The Aitareya-brâhmana contains a number of most remarkable legends, highly illustrative of the state of Brahmanism of the age in which it was composed. A story in the Satapatha-brâhmana illustrates the relations between the priestly and royal families in the early history of India, and gives us an insight into the policy which actuated the Brahmans from time to time to struggle for political influence. The Satapatha furnishes us with the dogmatical, exetical, mystical, and philosophical lucubrations of a long succession of early Doctors of Theology and Philosophy. A partial examination of this Brâhmana shows it to be stamped with a character quite similar to that of the Aitareya. And again these two works have claims to be very ancient records of the religious beliefs and rituals, and of the archaic institutions of Indian society. The Satapatha may have been edited by Yâjnavalkya, but its principal parts, like those of the other Brâhmanas, must have been accumulating for some period before they were all collected and arranged to form the sacred code of a new Charana. Each collection of ancient Brâhmanas must have been the work of individual teachers ; and the different texts of one and the same Brâhmana differ from one another. We possess the Brâhmanas of the Bahvrchas in the Sâkhâs of the Aitareyas and the Kaushîtakins. But even the Brâhmana of the Kaushîtakins which has been transmitted to us as a distinct work, different from the Brâhmana of the Aitareyas, must

be regarded as a part of the original bulk of Brâhmana literature, extant among the Bahvrichas. Its internal arrangement differs in a considerable degree from that of the Aitareya-brâhmana. Most of the Brâhmanas are collective works. The Brâhmanas of the Taittirîyas, in the Sâkhâs both of the Apastambîyas and the Aitareyas, consist of some portions which bear the name of Katha, and were originally the property of his followers. In the Brâhmana of the Chhandogas it is apparent that after the main collection was completed, another Brâhmana was added which is called Shadvinsa-brâhmana. This Brâhmana is supposed to be of very modern date. It speaks not only of temples but also images of gods. The Shadvinsa as well as Adbhuta-brâhmana have been considered to be the only Brâhmana of the Chhandogas and they form the most important portion of that class of literature.

§4. THE PROPER MEANING OF SAKHA, CHARANA AND PARISHAD.

The word Sâkhâ is sometimes applied to the three original Sanhitâs, the Rik, the Yajush and the Sâmman. A Sâkhâ frequently signifies the various editions of the Vedas. There was another class of Sâkhâs, though of a confessedly later date, founded on Sûtras, which seem to have derived their names from historical personages. There was, no doubt, an original difference between a Sâkhâ and a Charana; but these two words were frequently used synonymously. Pânini speaks of Charanas as comprising a number of followers.²⁰ If Sâkhâ is employed in the sense of Charana, this is to be accounted for only by the fact that in India the Sâkhâs

²⁰ See Pânini, iv. 2. 46.

existed not as written books, but really in the tradition of the Charanas, each member of a Charana representing and possessing a copy of a book. A Sâkhâ as always a portion of the Sruti, cannot properly include law books. But adherents of certain Sâkhâs might easily adopt a code of institutions, which would go by the name of their Charana. In the Charanavyûha, a work by Saunka, treating of these various schools, five Sâkhâs are innumeraled of the Rig-veda, viz., those of the Sâkalas, Bâshkalas, Asvalâyanas, Sânkhâyanas and Mândukâyanas. Of the Yajur-veda forty-two or forty-four out of eighty-six are mentioned. Fifteen of which belong to the Vâjasaneyins, including those of the Kânvas and Mâdhyandinas. Twelve out of a thousand are said to have once existed of the Sâmā : and of the Atharva-veda nine.

The Atharvanarahasya, a modern treatise on the Atharva-veda, attributing the same number of Sâkhâs to the Sâmā-veda and Atharva-veda, speaks of twenty-one of the Rig-veda, and a hundred of the Yajur-veda. Of all these Sâkhâs, however, the Rig-veda is now extant only in one ; the Yajush in three, and we may say in four ; the Samā in perhaps two ; and the Atharvan in one. The only recension in which the Sanhitâ of the Rig-veda is to be found, is that of the Sâkala school. The text of the Black Yajush is extant in the recensions of two schools, that of Apastamba, and that of Charaka ; and the White Yajush exists in the recensions of the Mâdhyandina and Kânva schools. The Sanhitâ of the Sâmā is preserved in two recensions : in that of the Rânâyanîya, and probably also the Kauthama school. The text of the Atharvan is preserved only in the Saunaka school. Each Sâkhâ claimed the possession of the only true and genuine Veda. The discrepancies between these Sâkhâs, however, consisted chiefly in numerous variations of their arrange-

ment of the sacred scriptures ; in their manifest additions or total omissions of texts.

Although the words *Sâkhâ* and *Charana* were sometimes used synonymously, yet *Sâkhâ* properly applies to the traditional text followed as in the phrase *Sâkhâm adlâte* ; and *Charana* are ideal succession of teachers and pupils. We should then understand by *Sâkhâ* a traditional recension of any of the Vedas, handed down by different *Charanas*, or different schools or sects, each strictly adhering to its own traditional text and interpretation. The Brahmins themselves were fully aware of this difference between *Sâkhâ* and *Charana*. It is highly probable about the establishment of new *Charanas* on sacred texts peculiar to themselves, in the event of gross or slight discrepancies in the text of the hymns, as well as differences in the *Brâhmanas*, as a *Sâkhâ* consisted of a *Sanhitâ* and also a *Brâhmana*.

A *Parishad* means an assembly or a Brahmanic settlement ; and the *Pârshada* might be the title of any book that belonged to a *Parishad*. The law books lay down the number, age, and qualifications of the Brahmins who must have any claim to compose such an assembly to give decisive opinions on all subjects they would be referred to. The members of the same *Charana* might become fellows of different *Parishads* and *vice versa*. The real ancestors of the Brahmins are eight in number ; and eight *Gotras* are again divided into forty-nine different *Gotras*, and these constitute a still larger number of families. *Gotras* were confined to *Kshatriyas* and *Vâisyas* as well as among Brahmins ; and they depended on a community of blood corresponding to families. *Charanas* existed among the priestly cast only. They depended on the community of sacred texts ; and were merely ideal fellowships. All Brahmin families that keep and preserve sacred olr

sacrificial fire claim a descent from the seven Rishis.²¹ A Brahman is bound by law to know to which of the forty-nine Gotras his own family belongs, and in consecrating his own fire he must invoke solemnly the ancestors who founded the Gotra to which he belongs. Such names as gotra, varga, paksha, and gana are all applied in one and the same sense. And these genealogies represent something real and historical.

§5. CAST.

Ancient Roman society was split into two grand orders, the Patricians and the Plebeians; early Indian society, likewise had two divisions, the Aryas and the Dasyus, the cause of which can only be that the former were the conquerors and the latter, the conquered. At the time when the Aryas left their original home on the north of the Himâlaya, and set foot on Indian soil, they naturally came into contact with the Dasyus or the aborigines of India. These people, forming the Turanian branch of the human family, differed widely from the Aryas, in their physical appearance and color, language and manners. Under such divergence, there was no ground for the establishment or conservation of feelings of amity and unity between the classes. Consequently, the Aryas and the Dasyus frequently found themselves in the bitterest conflict. The Aryas, as they were naturally of fair complexion, of majestic appearance, civilized and much more advanced, in thought, looked down upon the aborigines who were of beastly appearance. In the Vedas, the aborigines are frequently called Dasyus or Dâsas;²² and the Aryas, with a certain degree of

²¹ Bhrigu, Angiras, Visvâmitra, Vasishtha, Kâsyapa, Atri and Agasti.

²² See Rig-veda, i. 12, 4.

hatred, called them *krishnatvach*.²³ From the Vedas, we obtain sufficient evidence of there having been a wide difference and natural enmity between them ; the Aryas are found scornfully to apply to the Dasyus the terms of *avrata*, *apavrata*, *ayajva*, *abrahma*, *adeva*, *anindra*, etc, etc.²⁴ The main difference consisted only in color and feature ; and hence *varna* gradually came to imply cast. The Aryas conquered the aborigines and occupied the northern part of India ; and they in consequence of their defeat expatriated themselves to the southern part. But those among the aborigines who, although once conquered, came into subjection and acknowledged loyalty, were taken into Aryan society and gradually formed the Sûdra class. An Aryan and a Sûdra are quite distinct from each other.²⁵ In this manner, it can be proved that in the earliest times there were in India but two classes of people, the Aryas and the Dasyus, the bright and the dark race, and there was no distinction of cast, as now understood. Cast is not a Vaidik, but purely an ethnological institution.

In several places of the Rig-veda, five classes are generally spoken of, such as *panchakrishti*, *panchakshitayah*, *panchacharshani*, *panchajanah*, *panchabhûmah*, and *panchajâta*. There is no clue to be found for the better understanding of what social classification these classes implied. Mankind, in a collective sense, are said to be distinguished into five classes. Sâyana, according to the received tradition of his own time, explains these terms to denote the four casts, with the Nishâdas for a fifth. Yâska, in Nirukta, iil. 8, refers to the opinions of older schools, and says that these five classes of beings are the Gandharvas, Pitris, Devas, Asuras and Rakshases,

²³ *Ibid*, i. 130, 8.

²⁴ *Ibid*, v. 1, 8, 9 ; x. 86, 19 ; i. 103, 3 ; and vi. 25, 2.

²⁵ See Atharva-veda, iv. 20, 4.

and according to some the four casts, and the barbarian or Nishâda. This meaning seems quite immaterial and is merely imaginary. When the five classes are designated by so many distinct appellatives and especially by such a one as panchabhûmah, it appears that these classifications arose possibly from the different localities the Aryas first occupied after their advent to India.

In the Brâhmana period, the Brahmans obtained superiority over all others. But how and at what time the cast system began to be prevalent in India, cannot be satisfactorily determined. It is quite certain that no such distinction existed when the Aryas came, and even long after they had settled here. There is no mention in any part of the first Mandala, of the denomination Kshatriya or Sûdra or Vaisya. The denomination Brahman occurs, but in what sense is altogether open to question. *Brahma*, in the neuter, signifies prayer, preservation, or sacrificial food ; and *Brahmâ*, in the masculine, implies the particular priest, so called ; in neither of the instances does it ever mean a distinct cast. Prof. Wilson very reasonably doubts whether the Brahmans were regarded as a cast when the first *Ashtaka* of the *Rig-veda* was composed. The subjective theology of the Rishis, or the *Sanhitâs* of the *Rik*, *Yajush*, *Sâman* and *Atharvan*, makes no mention of the four original orders ; but the *Brâhmanas*, or the objective theosophy of the *Vedas*, are found to convey definite information about the four casts.

Only in the 90th hymn of the tenth Mandala of the *Rig-veda*, do we find mention made of the four different casts. This hymn is entitled the *Purusha Sûkta*, and is found also in the 31st Book of the *Vâyasaneysi-sanhitâ*, and in the 19th Book of the *Atharva-veda*. The *Purusha Sûkta*, as judged by its contents, is among the latest portions of the *Rig-veda*. The fact that the *Sâma-veda*

has not any verse extracted from it, is not without meaning. This view, however, is controverted by Dr. Haug. If it could be proved that this hymn, as we now possess it, had existed, as Dr. Haug believes, when at the time, the practice of Human sacrifices prevailed, its antiquity would be established. But if it formed merely a part of the ceremonial at a subsequent period when Human sacrifices had ceased or had become simply formal, and animals were immolated in their stead, the evidence becomes far less strong. The Purusha Sûkta possesses every mark of modernness both in its diction and in its ideas; the ideas appear to be far more advanced than those which are found in other portions of the Rig-veda, and the language very nearly approaches to the modern Sanskrit. On this subject, Mr. Colebrooke gives his opinion as follows: "That remarkable hymn is in language, metre, and style, very different from the rest of the prayers with which it is associated." It has a decidedly modern tone; and must have been composed after the Sanskrit language had been refined, and its grammar and rhythm perfected. The internal evidence which it furnishes, serves to demonstrate the important fact that the compilation of the Vedas, in their present arrangement, took place after the Sanskrit tongue had advanced from the rustic and irregular dialect in which the multitude of hymns and prayer of the Vedas was composed, to the polished and sonorous language in which the mythological poems, sacred and profane, have been written" ²⁶ I see no reason why the Purusha-Sûkta must not have existed before the beginning of the Brâhmana period.

According to Manu, the Sûdra is prohibited from reading the Vedas. The Vedas, therefore, have a relation only

²⁶ See Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays*, i. p. 309, note.

to those of the three superior classes, who have received the investiture. But it is a very remarkable and curious fact that we find Kavasha Ailûsha, of course a Sûdra, to have composed a few of the Sûktas in the tenth Book of the Rig-veda. Yet the same Kavasha was expelled from the sacrifice, as an unbeliever, and as the son of a vile slave. He was, however, readmitted, but only because the gods had shown him special favor. This is acknowledged by the Brâhmanas of the Aitareyas and Kaushîtakins; and in the Mâhabhârata, Kavasha is called a Nishâda.

CHAPTER III.

§1. THE ARANYAKAS.

OF the Brâhmanas we find a part called A'ranyakas. By the word A'ranyaka Pânini understands a forester.¹ If the A'ranyakas were extant during his time, he would have recognized them as parts of the Vedas. The A'ranyakas are so called, according to Sâyana, because they were read in the forest, as if they were the text books of the anchorites, whose devotions were purely spiritual.² Of the A'ranyakas there are four extant, the Brihad, the Taittirîya, the Aitareya, and the Kaushîtakî. These, no doubt, belong to a class of Sanskrit writings, the history of which has not yet been properly investigated. Their style is full of strange solecisms.³ The A'ranyakas were considered to contain the quintessence of the Vedas; and they only treat of the science of Brahma. The Aranyakas, as an enlargement upon the Brâhmanas, presuppose their existence. They are anterior to the Sûtras and likewise they are posterior to the Brâhmanas to which they form a kind of appendix.

The A'ranyakas elucidate the obscure points of religion and philosophy, the nature of God, and the creation of the world, the relation of man to God and subjects of like nature. The names of the authors are unknown to us, because they disclaimed authorship on the ground that their productions would loose all the authority; and also for other reasons that they are merely compilations from other works. Modes of modern thought are not wholly wanting in them. The problems discussed in the A'ranyakas, are not however in themselves modern. In one view the A'ranyakas are old, for they exhibit the very

¹ Aranyân manushyc. 4. 2. 129.

² Goldstûcker's Pânini, p. 129; Weber's Indische Studien, v. p. 149.

³ See Cowell's Introduction to the Kaushîtakî-upanishad, p. viii.

dawn of thought ; in another, they are modern, for they reflect that dawn with all the experience of days that are past. The Aranyakas abound in passages which are unequalled in any language, for grandeur, simplicity and boldness.

§2. THE UPANISHADS.

The original Upanishads had their place in the Aranyakas and Brâhmanas. The most important of them are full of theosophy and philosophy. Max Müller has surmised that the word "Upanishad meant originally the act of sitting down near a teacher, of submissively listening to him," whence it came to mean "implicit faith, and at last truth or divine revelation." It may be supposed with some reason that these works derived their name from the mysteriousness of the doctrines contained in them ; and perhaps also from the mystical and obscure manner in which they propound them. It is very probable that, in the time of Pânini, the works bearing the name of Upanishads were not then in existence.⁴ Their number is not very considerable. The Upanishads are for the most part short. The ordinary enumeration of them is fifty-one. And besides these there are some others, but they are all spurious. The whole fifty-one were translated into Latin and published by Anquetil du Perron in 1801, under the title of "Oupnekhat." His translations were largely from a Persian version prepared at the order of Dârâ Shakhoh. The various systems of Hindu philosophy have their basis in the Upanishads, though quite antagonistic in their character. Most of the modern Upanishads are really the works of Gaudapâda, Sankara, and other philosophers. Founders of new sects composed numerous

⁴ Goldstücker's Pânini, p. 141.

other Upanishads of their own as the ancient ones did not suit their purpose.⁵ The Upanishads are commonly in the form of dialogue ; they are in the main written in prose with occasional fragments of verse, but sometimes they are all in verse. They exhibit, on the whole, no system or method. The authors are merely poets rather than philosophers, who throw out rhapsodies which are altogether unconnected and often contradictory, and seem to have no thought or even care of bringing into agreement to-day's feelings with those of yesterday or tomorrow.⁶ They shadow forth the later Vedânta as the oracular ebullitions of Heraclitus ὁσσοτελὺς shadow forth the complete developed system of Platonic philosophy. The reader of the Upanishads does not meet with any difficulty in recognizing familiar ideas in the rigid speculations of the Phaedrus as well as in Empedocles or Pythagoras, in the Neo-platonism of the Alexandrian, as well as in the Gnostics, schools.* The Upanishads from beginning to end, consist of texts which systematically teach that God is the one spirit, which is the substance of the universe ; that the creation is nothing else than a multiplication and development of Himself : and the universe is to Him what the butter is to the milk, or as vapour rising from the ocean, condensing and falling back to the source whence it came. They are not the works of the same author or even productions of the same age. They inculcate pantheism of one kind or another. The theory of no two of them can be regarded precisely the same. Some of them abound in speculations, much after the fashion of development philosophers, on the physical

* Ward, A View of the History, Literature and Mythology, of the Hindus, ii. p. 61.

⁶ See Rev. Prof. Banerjea's Dialogues on Hindu. Philosophy, pp. 14, 42ff.

primeval element of the universe, and whatever is, on the impulse of the moment, accepted as a first principle, is announced to be Brahma or God. The great teachers of this Parâ, or superior knowledge, are Kshatriyas, and Brahmans are merely represented as becoming pupils of the great Kshatriya kings. The Kshatriya mind first followed out these bold speculations, and we can scarcely escape this conclusion when we add to this the remarkable fact that the Gâyatrî itself, the most sacred symbol in the universe, is a hymn by an author, not a Brahman but a Kshatriya. The Upanishads abound in descriptions not merely of carnal observances, but also of obscenities still worse and grosser than Jayadeva's battles of love.

Almost all the Upanishads are small books, save the Brihadâraṇyaka, which constitutes the last five Prapâthakas of the fourteenth book of the Śatapatha-brâhmana. This Upanishad is divided into six chapters, and each chapter is again sub-divided into different Brâhmanas. The Brihadâraṇyaka is the conclusion of the Vâjasaneyi-Saṁhitâ. It consists of seven chapters, or eight lectures. The Taittirîya-upanishad is a part of the Taittirîya-âraṇyaka of the Black Yajush. It is divided into two parts as Sikshâ-vallî and Brahmânanda-vallî. We trace in it the germ of the Vedânta system. The Taittirîya-âraṇyaka is older than the Brihadâraṇyaka. It shows a strange medley of post-Vaidik ideas and names. The Aitareya-âraṇyaka forms a work by itself; the second and third parts of which form the Bahvrîcha-upanishad. The Aitareya is more speculative and mystical than legendary or practical. There is another Aranyaka within a Sâkhâ of the Rig-veda, which is called the Kaushîtakî-âraṇyaka in three Adhyâyas of which the third constitutes the Kaushîtakî-upanishad. There are no Ara-

nyakas for the Sâma-veda, nor for the Atharva-veda. The A'ranyakas derive their authority from Sruti. Sâyana states that the Taittirîya-upanishad comprises three parts, and they go by the names of Sânhitî, Yâjuikî, and Vârunî; of these the last is the most important, because it teaches the knowledge of the Divine Self. The Aitareya is included in the second A'ranyaka of the Aitareya-brâhmana. It contains three chapters. The Taittirîya and Aitareya resemble each other in a great measure. The Svetâsvatara is comparatively modern. In fact it does not belong to the series of the more ancient Upanishads. It was composed after the publication of the Vedânta and Sâṅkhya, and is a compound of Vedânta pantheism and the Sâṅkhya duality. The Vâjasaneyi-upanishad is very short. It is composed of only eighteen Srutis; and forms an index to the Vâjasaneyi-saṅhitâ. The Talavakâra, or Kena, -upanishad, which is one of the shortest, and one of the most philosophical treatises of this kind, puts in clearer language, perhaps, than any other Upanishad, the doctrine that the true knowledge of the Supreme Spirit consists in the consciousness which man acquires of his complete inability to understand it, since the human mind being capable only of comprehending finite objects, cannot have a knowledge of what is infinite. The Kena is included in both the Atharvan and Sâman. The Katha has always been considered as one of the best Upanishads, and it must be admitted on the point of its elevation of thought, elegance of expression, beauty of imagery, and ingenuous fervour, few stand parallel to it. It consists of two Adhyâyas, each of which contains three Vallîs. The first part is quite independent. But the second is composed almost entirely of Vaidik quotations, which prove more in detail the doctrine enunciated in the first. It is on this account that both parts are with rea-

son counted as two different Upanishads. There can be no doubt as to the second part being later than the first, and this is clear from several other, particularly linguistic, reasons. But Dr. Weber is of opinion that the Katha originally closed with the third Vallî.⁷ This Upanishad treats ; first, of the highest object of man ; second, the First Cause of the world and His attributes ; third, the connexion of this Cause with the world. These questions are mooted in the different chapters in a manner which is quite peculiar to the Upanishads in general. The standpoint of the Katha is however on the whole that of the scholastic doctrines of the Vednâta philosophy. We cannot give the same credit to the philosophy as to the form of the Katha ; there is scarcely any link connecting the thoughts, so that they rather show that it is plainly a compilation than the production of an original and devout thinker. According to the Katha, the knowledge of Brahma hangs upon a process of thinking, i. e., it is derived from philosophy and not from revelation. The Prasna, one of the Upanishads in the Atharva-veda, is divided into six chapters, each of which attempts to solve a distinct question. From the first question we arrive at the knowledge of the relation that exists between Prajâpati and the creatures, the period of creation, and the manner in which Prajâpati is to be worshipped. The description is altogether mythological and symbolical, and does not show any well defined thought. The second recounts his relation to individual bodies. By the third question we should understand that life, when produced from the soul, is said to be composed of the five vital airs, by whose regular actions the functions of the body are upheld. The remaining part of this question furnishes us with a speci-

⁷ See Indische Studien, ii. pp. 197-200ff.

men of the anatomical and physiological knowledge of the author ; and a bold attempt to apply the functions observed in the microcosm of the human body to the macrocosm of the world. The fourth question is free from mythological embellishments, and gives the substance of the doctrines of the entire Upanishad.

The Mundaka-upanishad contains three Mundakas, each of which is sub-divided into two Khandas. There are two sciences, according to the first Mundaka, the *aparâ* and the *parâ*. The former is founded on the four Vedas and the six Vedângas ; the latter refers to Brahma, that Being who is incomprehensible to the organs of action and intellect, and without qualities. We find a mention of the Vedânta and Yoga in this Upanishad. "It would almost be a contradiction in terms, to say that the Mundaka is a section of the Atharva-veda, which it condemns, along with the others, as inferior science. And if it must be referred to a post-Vaidik age, it would be difficult to affirm that it was composed before the age of Buddha."⁸ The identity between the Katha, Prasna, and Mundaka appears not merely in the mode of explanation, but also in the images and in entire passages, and is very remarkable. More particularly is this the case between the Mundaka and Katha than between the Mundaka and Prasna, upanishads. Which of these Upanishads was the original, or what relation they bear to other sources, can hardly be decided. This much, however, may be said, that the Prasna bears every mark of compilation. Mândûkya has only twelve slokas. In these slokas the meaning of the mystical syllable *Om*⁹ is unravelled. This

⁸ Rev. Prof. Banerjee's Dialogues.

⁹ Its primeval sense is that of emphatic or solemn affirmation or assent. The Aitareya-brâhmana mentioning a religious ceremony at which verses from the Rik, as well as songs called Gathas, were chanted by the Hotri, and responses given by another priest, the Adhvaryu says : " *om* is the response of the Adh-

Upanishad is taken from various sources. From it, the contents having been stripped of their abstruse phrasology, we are to understand that Brahma comprehends all things, both objects of perception and those which are beyond the reach of perception. Brahma has four modes of existence, the waking state, the state of dreaming, the state of profound sleep, and a fourth state quite different from any of the former; this state is indescribable, in which all manifestations have ceased, it is blissful and without duality. The Mândūkya is one of the latest among the Upanishads which shew the pristine notion of the Infinite Spirit wholly uncontaminated by sectarian

varyu to the Rik verses (chanted by the Hotri), and in like manner *tatha* is his response to the Gathas, for *om* is employed by the gods, whereas *tatha* is used by men.' Here is the original sense of the word; it leaves no doubt that *om* is merely an older and curtailed form of the common Sanskrit word *evam*, which, proceeding from the pronominal base 'a' in some derivations changed to 'e'—may have at one time existed in the form *avam*, when, by the elision of the vowel following *v* for which there are sufficient analogies in Sanskrit *avam* would become *aum*, and hence keeping pace with the phonetic laws of language, *om*. The etymology of the word seems to have been altogether lost, even at an early stage of Sanskrit literature; for another is obtained in the ancient grammars, preparing the way for as to account for the mysticism which many religious and theological works of ancient and medieval India, suppose to be embodied in it. According to this latter etymology, *om* would form from a radical *av* by means of an affix *man*, when *om* would be a garbled form of *avman* or *oman*; and as *av* signifies the notion of 'protect, preserve, save,' *om* would be a term implying 'protection or salvation'.

Hence *om* became the auspicious word. Manu ordains: 'A Brahman, at the beginning and end (of a lesson on the Veda), must always pronounce the syllable *om*; for unless *om* precede, his learning will slip away from him; and unless it follow, nothing will be long retained.' That the mysterious power which was imputed to this word, must have been the subject of early speculation, is obvious enough. A reason adduced for it, by Manu himself, is borne out by several Upanishads. That there happens no connexion whatever, as has been surmised by some writers to be the case between *om* and *αμην*, calls for scarcely any remark, after the etymological explanations given above; but it may be more satisfactory to compare the Latin *omen* with a Sanskrit *avman*, 'protection,' as derived by the grammarians *av* (in the Latin *ave-o*), than to explain it in the fashion of the Roman etymologists.

views. The order, in which the state of Brahma's existence is described, exhibits, on the whole, a very profound mode of thought. In the Chhândogya-upanishad a number of most curious modes of Upâsanâ is prescribed. One of these devotions is so grossly obscene and filthy that I must refrain from translating or reproducing it here. The Bahvrichas placed A'tman or the Self at the beginning of all things. The Taittirîyas speak of Brahma as true, omniscient and infinite. Calling Brahma as neuter, they give proofs of their having been impressed with the idea of a Power. It was decidedly an era in the history of the human intellect when the apparent identity of the Self in the masculine, and Brahma in the neuter, was for the first time clearly established. The Chhandogas speak of a *Sat*, or a Being which had the eagerness to be many. The A'tharvanikas speak of the Creator as Akshar ; and it is very doubtful whether they had with this word any idea of Element or of the Indestructible. The term used by the Vâjasaneyins is Avyâkṛita, or the Undeveloped. The Upanishads are the principal parts of the Vedas. Of all the Vaidik works, they were the last composed.

§3. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SRUTI AND SMRITI.

The Vaidik Sanhitâs, Brâhmanas and Upanishads are known by the name of Sruti. Except the Vedas, all the other works of the Vaidik age, are called Sûtra. The Sûtra period is very important in the Vaidik age ; and forms no doubt the connecting link between the Vaidik and the later Sanskrit. The distinction between Sruti and Smṛiti, had been established by the Brahmans prior to the rise of Buddhism, or prior to the time when the style of Sûtras gained admittance into Indian literature. The name of Smṛiti occurs for the first time in the

Taittirīya-āraṇyaka,¹⁰ though it is used there in the sense of Sruti. That the Smṛiti has no claim to an independent authority, but derives its sanction from its relation to the Sruti, is to be understood by its very name which means *recollection*. In the Sūtras the distinction between Sruti and Smṛiti is plainly marked out. We find the distinction as shown in the Anupada-sūtras.¹¹ And also in the Nidāna-sūtras ancient tradition is mentioned by the name of Smṛiti.¹²

§4. THE PECULIARITIES OF THE SUTRAS.

Sūtra is the technical name given to aphoristic rules, and to works consisting of such rules. The importance of the term may be conceived from the fact, that the groundworks of the whole ritual, grammatical, metrical, and philosophical literature of India are indited in the aphoristic style, which exhibits one of the peculiarities of Hindu authorship. Though there is no clear evidence as to the cause which gave birth to this peculiarity in Hindu composition; the method of instruction followed in ancient India renders it probable that these Sūtras were so composed and were intended to accelerate the studies of the pupil who had to learn by heart. But it is equally probable that this method of schooling itself gained ground because of the scarcity or clumsiness of the materials used for writing purposes, and in consequence of the expediency of economising this material as far as would be possible. The Sūtra works are all brief and systematic, and enigmatical. Conciseness is the prin-

¹⁰ Taittirīya-Araṇyaka, i. 1, 2 : Smṛitih pratyakshamaitīhyamanumān-schatuṣṭaya.

¹¹ See Anupada-sūtra, ii. 4 : Sruti Smṛitī drishtasampannaiḥ.

¹² See Nidāna-sūtra, ii. 1 : A'chārya Smṛitinām. Yājñikāḥ smṛitau.

cipal object which guided the authors of the Sûtra works. Even the bare simplicity of the design vanishes in the perplexity of the structure. To acquire mastery over the Sûtra works is next to impossible, without the help of the key which is found in separate Sûtras called Paribhâshâ. Notwithstanding this key the pupil also must be in possession of the laws of the so-called Anuvritti and Nirvritti. It is certainly one of the most curious sorts of literary composition that the human mind ever produced ; and if altogether worthless in an artistic point of view, it is remarkable that the Hindus should have fabricated this most difficult form and adopted it as the most convenient vehicle of expression for every branch of learning.

The studied brevity of the Sûtras renders them in a high degree obscure and ambiguous. Notwithstanding the key to their interpretations, there are to be found many seeming contradictions. The Sûtras bewilder even a scholar and puzzle him at the very threshold in a labyrinth of symbols and abbreviations. The Sûtra works contain the quintessence of all the knowledge which the Brâhmanas had accumulated during many centuries of study and reflection. The cut and dry style of the Sûtras is so peculiar to India itself that it allows of no comparison with the style of composition of other countries in the early times when they were composed.

§5. THE VEDANGAS

We have to search for Vedânga doctrines in all their originality and authenticity in the Brâhmanas and Sûtras and not in those barren tracts which are now known by the name of Vedângas. The Vedângas are not parts of the Vedas themselves, but supplementary to them, and, in the form in which we possess them, are not, wholly genuine ; and in fact are of little importance. All those

The second is Chhandas which treats of metre. The work of Pingalanâga on Chhandas, which is frequently quoted under the title of Vedânga, is not of great antiquity. Some suppose Pingala was the same as Patanjali the author of the Mahâbhâshya.¹⁶ But the identity of Pingala and Patanjali is far from probable. It is not surprising that Pingala does not confine himself to the metres of Sanskrit, but gives also rules bearing on the metres of Prâkrita; and even Kâtyâyana-vararuchi, the author of the Vârttikas on Pânini, the great Father of Sanskrit Grammar, is said to have written a Prâkrita grammar. It must be admitted that the treatise of Pingala on Chhandas was one of the last books that were included in the Sûtra period. Prof. Wilson supposes it to be scarcely regarded as belonging to this period. But it is no valid objection that those rules which refer to the Chhandas are not observed in the Vedas. However on any ground, we cannot exclude it from this period altogether. Pingala is quoted as an authority on metre in the Parisishtas. We learn from Shadagurusishya that Pingala was the younger brother or at least the descendant of Pânini. The first Prâtisâkhya contains a section on metre which is far more valuable than this utterly unimportant book known by the name of Chhandas.

The third is Vyâkarana. The Hindus paid much attention to the science of grammar. Pânini throws much light on the Vaidik Sanskrit; and his grammar consists of eight Adhyâyas, each Adhyâya comprising four Pâdas, and each Pâda a number of Sûtras. The latter amount on the whole to 3996 Sûtras or aphorisms composed with the symbolic brevity of the most concise *memoria technica*; but three, perhaps four, of them did not originally belong to the work. The arrangement of these rules differs

¹⁶ See Colebrooke's Miscellaneous Essays, ii. p. 63.

completely from what a European would expect in a grammatical treatise, for it is based on the principle of tracing linguistic phenomena, and not concerned in the taxonomy of the linguistic material, according to the so-called parts of speech. In a general manner, Pânini's work may be called a natural history of the Sanskrit language. The Sûtras are all made up of the driest technicalities. Pânini records such phenomena of the language as are exceedingly interesting and useful from a grammatical point of view. Words which he has treated of are also of historical and antiquarian interest. The perfect phonetic system on which Pânini's grammar is built, is without a shadow of doubt, borrowed from the Prâtisâkhyas ; but the source of Pânini's purely grammatical doctrines must be sought for elsewhere. To fix the age in which Pânini lived, is a task I am incapable of performing ; as many of the Hindu authors shine, to use the words of a well-known Sanskrit scholar, like fixed stars in India's literary firmament, but no telescope can discover any appreciable diameter. However it must be of some interest to know whether that Patriarch of Sanskrit Philology is likely to have lived before the death of Buddha, or after this event. According to the views expressed by Prof. Goldstücker, it is probable that Pânini lived before Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist religion, whose death took place about 543 B. C. ; but that a more definite date of the great grammarian has but little chance of being obtained in the actual condition of Sanskrit philology. It is a matter of great surprise that Müller holds Pânini to be anterior to Yâska. But he ought to have known that Yâska is noticed by Pânini, ¹⁷ and consequently we must believe that Pânini is posterior to Yâska.

¹⁷ Pânini, ii. 4, 63 : Yâskâdibhyo gotre.

The Mahâbhâshya is not a full commentary on Pânini, but, with a few exceptions, only a commentary on the Vârttikas, or critical remarks of Kâtyâyana on Pânini. From circumstantial evidence, Prof. Goldstücker has proved that Patanjali wrote his Mahâbhâshya between 140 and 120 B. C.¹⁸ Kâtyâyana, the critic of the great grammarian is most likely the same with the Kâtyâyana who wrote the grammatical treatise called the Prâtisâkhya of the White Yajush. Prof. Goldstücker has shown that he cannot have been a contemporary of Pânini, as is generally supposed. He has also proved that this Kâtyâyana was a cotemporary of Patanjali, and probably being the teacher of the latter, therefore lived in the beginning of the second century before Christ. Kâtyâyana completed and corrected Pânini's grammar ; and his Vârttikas show a more wide and profound knowledge of Sanskrit than the work of Pânini himself.

There are two different books on grammatical subjects written in the period anterior to Panini : the Unâdisûtras and the Phit-sûtras of Sântanâchârya. As to when Sântana's Phit-sûtras were composed, we are perfectly in the dark. Pânini does not presuppose a knowledge of them, and the grammatical terms employed by Sântana are quite different from those adopted by Pânini. Although those Sûtras treat simply of the accent, and the accent used in the Vaidik language only ; the subject of Sântana's work compels us to suppose that he was anterior to Pânini. " The Unadi-sûtras are rules for deriving, from the acknowledged verbal roots of the Sanskrit, a number of appellative nouns, by means of a species of suffixes, which, though nearly allied to the so-called *krits*, are not commonly used for the purposes of derivation"....." A peculiarity of all words derived

¹⁸ Pânini : His Place in Sanskrit Literature, p. 235ff.

by an unâdi is, that, whether they be substantives or adjectives, they do not express a general or indefinite agent, but receive an individual signification, not necessarily resulting from the combination of the suffix with a verbal root."¹⁹ The Unâdi-sûtras we now possess, are not in their original form. It was not the purpose of the author to give a complete list of all the Unâdi words, but merely to collect the most important of them. In fact these were originally intended for the Vêda only, and subsequently enlarged by adding rules, on the formation of non-Vaidik words. The Unâdi-sûtras may have been composed by Sâkatâyana, a Sûdra and a follower of Buddha. A very interesting passage in Virâlâ's Rupamâlâ, distinctly ascribes the authorship of the Unâdi-sûtras to Vararuchi, and Vararuchi is another name of Kâtyâyana.

The fourth Vedânga is the Nirukta of Yâska, which is a sort of commentary on the Nighântus. The Nirukta frequently refers to the Brâhmanas, and brings forward various legends, such as those about Devâpi (xi-10) and Visvâmitra (ii. 24). Yâska furnishes us also with the names of no less than seventeen interpreters who had preceded him,²⁰ and whose explanations of the Veda are generally in conflict. The Nighântus comprise a vocabulary of obsolete terms. The first three sections are made up of lists of synonymous words. The two other sections consist of mere lists of words of different meanings. The Nighântus, and Nirukta are closely connected ; the former is older than the latter. If the Nirukta belongs to Yâska, the Nighântus also could not have proceeded from his pen. To the Nirukta we are inclined to attribute a very high antiquity ; it belongs to the oldest part of Sanskrit literature.

¹⁹ See Dr Aufrecht's Unâdi-sûtras, p. v.

²⁰ Roth's Illustrations, pp. 221f.

rature excepting the Vaidik writings, and to an already far advanced period of grammar and interpretation.

Yâska prefixed the Nighantus to his own work, the Nirukta, in which he throws light on the obscurities of the Vedas. When this work of Yâska was composed, and even at a much earlier period, it is obvious that the sense of most of the Vaidik words had been completely confounded. This clearly appears from the fact of such works as the Nighantus and Nirukta being written at all. The Nirukta together with the Prâtisâkhyas and the Grammar of Pânini supplies the most important information on the growth of grammatical science in India. Yâska is wholly uninformed of algebraical symbols such as are contained in Pânini. The introduction to the Nirukta, which presents a full sketch of a grammatical and exegetical system, brings to our knowledge the views of Yâska and his predecessors; and it is in this manner we are able to establish a complete comparison of these older grammarians with Pânini.

The fifth is the Kalpa, or the ceremonial. The accounts of the sacrifices are found in the Kalpa works. But they are merely extracted from the Brâhmanas. The composition and publication of the Kalpa-sûtras are important events in the Vaidik history. Though they do not claim to be Smritis, still they are enumerated amongst the Svâdhyâyas. The Kalpa-sûtras must have been drawn up for the easy reference of the priests, who would otherwise have had to grope in the dark through the liturgical Sanhitâs and Brâhmanas for the *dissecta membra* of the sacrificial and other rites. Thus there are the Kalpa-sûtras for the Hotri priests by A'svalâyana and Sâmkhayana; for the Adhvaryus by Apastamba, Baudhâyana and Kâtyâyana; and for the Udgâtris by Lâtyâyana and Drâhyâyana. The Kalpa-sûtras are divided into three

classes, as Srauta, Grihya, and Sâmayâchârîka : the first prescribes the especial Vaidik ceremonials, such as those to be celebrated on the days of new and full moon. The rites according to the Srauta-sûtras can be performed by rich people and no other and therefore, have been made obligatory only under certain restrictions. The second enjoins the domestic rites practised at various stages of the life of the Hindu from birth to death. The Grihya-sûtras give general rules which are to be observed at marriages, at the birth of a child, on the day of naming the child, at the tonsure and investiture of a boy &c. Indeed, the Grihya-sûtras contain all the rules bearing on those principal and purificatory ceremonies which are included under the general name of *Samskâra*.²¹ The rites and ceremonies according to the Grihya are called Pâkayajna. By a Pâkayajna we are to understand a piece of wood placed on the fire in the hearth, an oblation made to the gods, and gifts bestowed on the Brahmans. The third regulates the daily observances of the twice born. The rules of the Sâmayâchârîka-sûtras are rather based on secular authority than sacred. They describe the duties of a boy as a Brahman-charin or catechumen, in the house of his preceptor. They regulate the proper diet of a Brahman ; what food is allowable and what not, what days should be allotted for fasting, and what penance ought to be performed for not observing duty. They decide, in a great measure, the duties and rights of kings and magistrates, civil rights, and even rules of social politeness.

The Kalpa-sûtras mark a new period of literature, and they likewise contributed to the extinction of the numerous Brâhmanas. At any rate, the introduction of a Kalpa-sûtra was the introduction of a new book of liturgy. The Srauta and Grihya-sûtras are of much greater

²¹ Cf. Wilson's Dictionary s. v.

moment than the Sāmāyāchārika. The Grihya and Sāmāyāchārika-sūtras have generally been confounded, but the Brahmans drew a line of demarcation between the two, the Grihya ceremonies, being performed by the married householder with no other purpose but for the benefit of his family. The Srauta-sūtras mean the whole body of the sūtras, the source of which can be traced to the Smṛiti, while those of the Smārta-sūtras have no such source. The main difference between the two lies, not in their matter, but in their age and their style of composition. The Kalpa-sūtras, composed by Aśvalāyana for the Hotri priests, were intended both for the Sākala-sākhā and Bāṣkala-sākhā and again they occasionally refer to the other Charanas. Both the Grihya and Sāmāyāchārika-sūtras are included under the common title of Smārta sūtras, in opposition to the Srauta-sūtras. The former derived their authority from Smṛiti, and the latter from the Śruti. The Sāmāyāchārika sūtras are sometimes called Dharma-sūtras, and seem to have been the source of the Dharma-sāstras. The Kalpa-sūtras are a complete system of ritualism, which have no other object in view than to arrange the whole method of the sacred ceremonial with all the precisions demanded for acts done in the presence of the deities and to their honor. It is not yet proved that the Kalpa-sūtras are part of the Vedas; and in fact it is impossible to prove it. The Kalpa-sūtras were composed contemporaneously with Pāṇini. We are here to observe once for all that there are ten Sūtras of the Sāma-veda, and these Sūtras do not all treat of the Kalpa or the ceremonial. The Kalpa-sūtras of the Taittirīya-saṁhitā represented or countenanced, more than other Kalpa-sūtras, the tenets and decisions of the Mīmāṃsā philosophers. During the time of the composition of these Sūtra works, the whole

system of social organisation was developed, and the distinction of cast was fully established. On examining the Sûtra works, and the Grihya-sûtras we find that women have no right to the use of the Vedas. Although women are debarred from reading the Vedas, yet from the same source we acquire the information that a husband in conjunction with his wife may perform sacrifices and other rites. During the time of sacrifices women are allowed to recite mantras as told by their husbands; but they are scrupulously and entirely denied the knowledge of God.

The sixth and last of the Vedāngas is Jyotisha. Works on astronomy were very scanty. The only copy we possess, is comparatively modern, and its literature is very meagre. Its main object is to offer such information about the heavenly bodies as are useful in fixing the days and hours of the Vaidik sacrifices, and not to teach astronomy. The division of the heavens into twenty-seven Nakshatras, a division which is the soul of the sacred calendar, and according to which all the Vaidik sacrifices were performed, is said not to have been indigenous to India, but borrowed from without. M. Biot published several articles in the *Journal des Savants*, in which he essayed to prove the Chinese origin of the Indian Nakshatras. He maintained that the number of the Nakshatras was originally 28, and afterwards reduced to 27. There occurs one allusion to these Nakshatras in the Veda,²² and the 27 divisions with their asterisms and presiding deities are spoken of in the Brāhmanas. But notwithstanding these facts it has been brought forward that the division of the heavens into 27 was borrowed from China. The originality of the Vedas is certainly destroyed, in case it is proved that even at that early age a foreign civilization exercised influence upon the growth of the

²² See Rig-veda, x.85, 2.

Hindu mind. M. Biot supported his favorite propositions with so much learning and skill that so ingenious a scholar as Prof. Lassen took his side and admitted the introduction of the Chinese *sieu* into northern India before the 14th century B. C.²³ In accordance with M. Biot's own statements the number of the Chinese *sieu* was only 24 and was not raised to the number of 28 till the year 1100 B. C. Astronomy, at least that portion of it, which bears relation to the Nakshatras or the twenty-seven lunar mansions of the Brahmans is closely connected with the Vaidik worship.

Vaidik sacrifices could not have been in any case performed without a knowledge of the lunar mansions. The Indian names of the months were derived from the names of the constellations, and the names of the constellations again were derived, for the most part, from the names of ancient Vaidik deities.²⁴ The exact time of the lunar festivals is fixed with such close accuracy, that the Hindus, at the time when those public sacrifices gained ground, must have been, in a high degree, proficient in astronomy. The growth of astronomical knowledge in India, is closely connected with the intellectual and especially the religious history of that country. The original division of the year into lunar months must have taken effect prior to the first separation of the great Aryan family. If we find the same names of the months in Sanskrit and Chinese, and if these names the Chinese Dictionary can not explain, surely the conclusion must be that they were borrowed by the Chinese from the Hindus, and not by the Hindus from the Chinese. The three winter months are designated in Chinese Pehoua, Mokué, and Pholkuna, the names correspond with the

²³ Indian Antiquities, p. 747.

²⁴ Whitney's *Sûrya-siddhânta*, p. 203.

three Indian months Paushya, Mâgha, and Phâlguna. These Indian months received their names from the corresponding Nakshatras, Pushya, Maghâ, and Phâlguni. Shall we infer, then, that the Hindus borrowed idea of the lunar Nakshatras from the Chinese, or that the Chinese borrowed from the Hindus? The Nakshatras were indeed suggested to the Hindus by the moon's siderial revolution; and their number was originally 27 and not 28. The *Sieu* were originally 24 in number, and they were afterwards raised to 28. It must be observed here that there is no trace found of a like change in India. The *Sieu* throughout are but single stars,²⁵ while the *Târâs* are clusters of stars. An Indian religion was imported into China; Indian festivals were celebrated in that country, and an Indian calendar was adopted by the Chinese. The attempt to identify the Chinese *Sieu* with the Hindu Nakshatras, or 27 lunar mansions, is decidedly futile.

Most of the Vedângas were composed by Saunaka and by his pupils, Kâtyâyana and A'svalâyana. We obtain some information about Kâtyâyana from the Kathâ-sarit-sâgara, the encyclopædia of legends of Soma-deva Bhatta of Kashmri. But after all, we are to reject it as an episode in the story of a ghost. Soma-deva composed it for the entertainment of the grandmother of Srîharsa-deva, King of Kashmir, who ascended the throne of that country in 1059, and reigned, according to Abulfazel, only 12 years; and consequently it must have been written between 1059 and 1071, or a few years earlier. The Kathâ-sarit-sâgara is supposed by many to be the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology.

²⁵ Whitney's *Sûrya-Siddhânta*, p. 207.

§6. ORIGIN AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PRATISAKHYAS

The Prâtisâkhyas were designated under the title of the Charanas, because they were the property of the readers of certain Sâkhâs. They are really a sub-division of the Pârshada books. The Pârshad is another title frequently applied to the Prâtisâkhyas. The existing representatives of the Prâtisâkhyas, in all probability, are posterior to Pânini,²⁶ and most of their rules are intended to supply deficiencies in the Sûtras of that grammarian. The Prâtisâkhyas are nothing else than "theological and mystical dreams." There is no doubt that they were written for practical purposes, and their style is free from combrous ornaments and unnecessary subtleties. Their object is to teach rather than to entertain. A great number of authors are referred to in the Prâtisâkhyas, whose opinions, with general precepts, are found in them. Though we do not possess the works of these earlier authors, yet we may fairly assume that their favorite doctrines were treasured up originally in the shape of Prâtisâkhyas. These writings contain rules on accent, on Sandhi, on the permutation of sounds, on the lengthening of the vowels in the Vedas, on pronunciation, on the various pâthas of the Vedas, &c., The Kuladharmas could not be called Prâtisâkhyas, but they might claim the title of Charana or Pârshada.

The rules of the Prâtisâkhyas were by no means intended for written literature, they were merely a guide in the instruction of pupils who had to learn the text of the Vedas by heart. According to the representation of the Prâtisâkhyas there are three modes of writing the Vedas, viz., the Sanhitâ-pâtha, the Pada-pâtha, and the Krama-pâtha. The Sanhitâ-pâtha means the mode of

²⁶ Goldstücker's Pânini, p. 183ff.

writing with observance of the rules of permutations ; the Pada-pâtha separates single words. And the Krama-pâtha is two-fold viz., the Varna-krama and Pada-krama. The Varna-krama always doubles the first consonant of a group of consonants, and the Pada-krama takes two words of the sentence together, and always reiterates the second of them with a following one. Of all the Prâtisâkhyas of the numerous Vaidik Sanhitâs, the Prâtisâkhya belonging to the Sâkala-sâkhâ is by far the most complete.

CHAPTER IV.

§1. THE ANUKRAMANIS.

There is another class of Sûtra works called the Anukramanîs. The Anukramanî to the Rig-veda is by far the most perfect. It is called the Sarvânukramanî ; it specifies the first words of each hymn, the number of verses, the name and family of the author, the name of the deity to whom it is addressed, and the metre of every verse. Before this was completed there had been separate indices for each of the subjects. It is said to have been composed by Kâtyâyana. Shadagurusishya, in his Vedârthadipikâ, states that there were five other Anukramanîs of Saunaka long before the Sarvânukramanî was composed. We have then, on the whole, seven Anukramanîs to the Rig-veda. The Brihaddevatâ being very voluminous, is not reckoned at all among the body of the Anukramanîs. The Brihaddevatâ of Saunaka, composed in epic metre, contains an enumeration of the gods invoked in the hymns of the Rig-veda ; and it further supplies much valuable, mythological information about the character of the deities of the Vedas. It is not unreasonable to suppose, judging from the style of composition of the Brihaddevatâ, that it was recast by a later writer. Dr Kuhn infers from a passage in Shadagurusishya's commentary, that not Saunaka, but A'svalâyana, was the author of the Brihaddevatâ. This inference, however, is not established by sufficient evidence.

The Rig-veda hymns are arranged according to two methods, the one considering the material bulk, the other the authorship of the hymns. According to the former the whole Sanhitâ consists of 8 Ashtakas ; these, again, are divided into 64 Adhyâyas ; these into 2006 Vargas ; and the Vargas into Riks, the actual number of which is

10,417 and some say to have amounted to 10,616 or 10,622. According to the other method, the Sanhitâ is divided into 10 Mandalas ; the Mandalas into 85 Anuvâkas, these into 1017 hymns, besides eleven spurious ones, called Vâ lakhilyas. The number of Padas, or words, in this Sanhitâ is stated as being 153,826. The Nirukta mentions the Rig-veda in several places, and always with the designation of Dasatyya, the ten parts. And the same mode of designation is found in the Prâtisâkhyasûtras. Another instance of the systematic arrangement of the Mandalas is contained in the A'prî hymns, and there are only ten A'prî-suktas in the Rig-veda. These Suktas consist properly of eleven verses, each of which is addressed to a separate deity, and they were evidently, composed for sacrificial purposes. The chief object of the A'prî hymns and the motive which guided the priest to choose from among themselves according to the family to which his client belonged, are not so easy to explain. It is probable that the A'prî hymns were songs of reconciliation. Saunaka has given different names of metres in an Anukramanî. There are three Anukramanîs to the Yajush. The Sâman has two different Anukramanîs. For the Atharvan, there is only one Anukramanî, and it is called the Brihatsarvânukramanî. The style of composition and the object of the different Anukramanîs distinctly prove that they were framed at the close of the Vaidik age.

§2. THE PARISISHTAS.

There is a class of works commonly designated Parisishtas. They have Vaidik rituals and sacrifices for their subject matter. It is said that most of the Parisishtas are the productions of Saunaka, &c. The Parisishtas represent a distinct period of Hindu literature, and they are

evidently later than the Sûtras. Such literary works as the Parisishtas must be considered the last outskirts of Vaidik literature. But still they are Vaidik in character. The Parisishtas, on the whole, are indited in simple and felicitous diction. They were originally eighteen in number, but that number has been now considerably exceeded. The Charnavyûha, though itself a Parisishta, supports this statement. There are a number of Parisishtas to each of the Vedas. For the Rig-veda there are only three; for the Sâma-veda the number is only six; and according to the Charanavyûha there exist eighteen Parisishtas of the Yajur-veda. But Prof. Weber reckons them in round numbers seventy-four. The object of the Parisishtas is to supply deficiencies in the Sûtras. They treat every thing in a popular and superficial manner. None of them were written probably before the middle of the third century B. C. Though the Parisishtas are not held in the same estimation as other Vaidik works, yet they contain very interesting indications of the progress and decay of Hindu thought.

§3. THE ORIGIN OF BUDDHISM.

In former times the Vedas were the only source of knowledge and of truth to the Hindus. No one then ventured to carry on any controversy, or hold or spread any doctrine unwarranted by them, it being universally assumed that all doctrine must be based on, and all controversy must end in, what was taught by the Vedas. It was considered the height of atheism to speak one word against them. Thus it was that the supreme and unerring authority of the Vedas having been established, all theological controversy was at once nipped in the bud. On the other hand, the study of the Vedas became gradually extinct, the understanding and the explaining of their meanings

became a hard task, the aims and objects of the *yajnas*, enjoined in them, were lost, and all religious works came to be encrusted with external ceremonies. In every country where religion becomes so dead and lifeless, religious changes begin to creep in. So did it fare with Indian society. First of all, Sâkya, a man of uncommon wisdom and courage, the founder of Buddhism, opposed them, exposed the futility and the unreasonableness of such of their doctrines as the killing of animals, and proved the human authorship of the Vedas. Men were surprised at the first starting of these novel theories of Sâkya. They had long ago relinquished the use of reason under the despotic government of the Vedas, but now again they entered the field of religious investigation, laid open by Sâkya with renewed earnestness.

The doctrines of such a man naturally began to spread with the rapidity of fire borne by driving winds, and India became a spacious field for the waging of religious wars. Thus, within a short period, the Buddhists waxed very strong in this country; in the reign of Asoka, king of Magadha, the greater portion of it was converted to the religion of Sâkya. The Brahmans again roused themselves and determined upon putting down the victorious heretics. With this view they went into every part of the country, stirred up the dormant spirit of the Hindu kings, and fell to religious debates with the Buddhists. In this momentous religious warfare, Sankara A'chârya, who flourished in the 8th or 9th century,¹ played a most conspicuous and glorious part. He alone, as a hermit, visited every part of India, defeated the Buddhists, one and all, with the sharpened

¹ See Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays*, i. p. 332.

acuteness of his intellect, his extraordinary wisdom and knowledge of the Vedas, and finally carried the palm of universal conquest. Thus, being borne down in debate by the Brahmans, and persecuted by kings, the Buddhists left India to spread their religion in other countries.² But though the Buddhists were themselves expelled from the country, their doctrines did not all follow them out of it ; on the contrary, these doctrines began, day by day, to strike deep root. And the doctrine of Sâkya was a refuge even for Brahmans, who were unable to overcome the extreme difficulties of their own complicated system.³ The transcendental doctrine of Nirvâna, or total annihilation, which Sâkya had proclaimed, was carefully picked up and nursed by the Hindu philosophers. Buddhism if examined by its own canonical works, cannot be freed from the charge of Nihilism. Sâkya himself not a Nihilist, was apparently an atheist. He does not gainsay either the existence of gods or that of God ; but he denounces the former, and seems to be ignorant of the latter. If Nirvâna was not complete annihilation, it at any rate according to him, was absorption into a Divine essence. It was a relapse into that Being which is nothing but itself. The original meaning of Nirvâna we can best know from the etymology of this technical term. Even a tyro in Sanskrit knows that Nirvâna means 'blowing out' and not absorption. The human soul when it reaches the acme of its full perfection, is blown out,⁴ to use the phraseology of the Buddhists, like a lamp ; it is not however absorbed, as the Brahmans express, like a drop in the ocean. We cannot at

² M. Troyer, *Râdjatarangini*, ii. p. 399

³ Burnouf's *History of Indian Buddhism*, p. 196.

⁴ See *Amâra-kosha*, s. v.

all events accept the term Nirvâna in the sense of an apotheosis of the human soul as it is taught in the Vedânta philosophy. It admits of question whether the term Nirvâna was coined by Sâkya. Not merely different schools, but one and the same among the Buddhists appear to propound different theories as to the orthodox lexicography of this term.

The religion of the Vedas is an absurd system : Buddhism is equally absurd, but more philosophic. Buddhism was a revolt against the oppressive domination of the Brahmanic hierarchy. The devotion of the Buddhist ascetic was more disinterested. The Brahmanic idea of perfection was of an egotistical character. The meek spirit of Buddhism contrasts strongly with the haughtiness and arrogance of Brahmanism. We do not mean, however, to write the history of Buddhism, and we must therefore be satisfied with having given above a short account of the changes which occurred just after the Vaidik period.

§4. THE KNOWLEDGE OF WRITING IN ANCIENT INDIA.

There is one more circumstance in connexion with the subject to which I wish to allude, before I close, and it has reference to the introduction of writing into ancient India. The greater portion of the vast ancient literature of India existed in oral tradition only, and was never reduced to writing. No man of any intelligence can easily imagine a civilized people unacquainted with the art of writing. If we are to understand that Hindu civilization could exist without a knowledge of writing, then it is needless to make reference to the arts, sciences, measures, and coins mentioned by Pânini in his Sûtras. From a certain rule of Pânini's Grammar (iv. 1. 49,) we are convinced of the fact that he knew writing was practised in

Persia in his own time. Pânini was a native of Gândhâra. Kâtyâyana and Patanjali define *Yavanânî* as meaning "the writing of the Yavans." The word Yavan occurs in Homer as *Ἰάβες*, which is no doubt connected with the Hebrew *Yâvân*. In later times it denotes especially the Arabs, but in earlier times it was exclusively applied to the Greeks as is evident from an example quoted in the commentary of Pânini's Sûtras, "*Yavanâh sayânâ bhunjate*" which alludes, no doubt, to Greek customs. Both Weber⁶ and Müller⁶ give a quite different meaning of the word *Yavanânî*. M. Reinaud has given cogent reasons to prove that *Yavanânî* means the writing of the Greeks.

Prof. Müller says that in the Grammar of Pânini there is not a single word which shows that the Hindus knew the art of writing even when that learned work was composed. This assertion is a most novel and startling one, in as much as it is hard to conceive that a grammar, like that of Pânini, could be elaborated as it is now, without the advantage of written letters and signs in the days of the author. Kâtyâyana and Patanjali, not merely presuppose a knowledge of writing in Pânini, but affirm that the use he has made of writing was one of the chief tools which assisted him in building up the technical structure of his work. Any person, that has ever looked into Pânini, must know that written accents were indispensable for his terminology. Pânini not unfrequently refers in his Sûtras to the Grammarians who preceded him, which circumstance strengthens the argument in favor of the fact that writing was known even before Pânini's time. The word *lipikara* occurs in the Sûtras of Pânini, which can be adduced, in all fairness, to prove

⁶ Indische Studien, i. p. 144 ; *Ibid*, iv. p. 89.

⁶ History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 521.

that the greatest Grammarian of India was acquainted with the art of writing. The root 'likh' to write (aksharavinyāse) in his Dhātupāṭha is also conclusive on the point. He moreover teaches the formation of the word *lipikara* (iii. 2,21). *Pātala*, the name of a division in Sanskrit works, is a farther proof that writing was known in ancient India.

The authors of the Sūtra works are found to apply the term *pātala* to the short chapters of their works. *Pātala* means covering, and a kind of creeping plant. It is, however, wholly absurd to suppose that chapters can be so called in a traditional work. It is only possible in a written one. *Pātala* is almost synonymous with *liber* and *βιβλος*. "There is no word," says Müller, "for book, paper, ink, writing, &c., in any Sanskrit work of genuine antiquity." ⁷ This assertion of Müller clearly shows that he has overlooked some words which might have, on the contrary, removed all his doubts. He should have known that the object of the Vaidik hymns is not to tell us that the Aryans had reed and ink. It is most difficult to suppose that the human mind could ever be capable of composing in prose, volumes after volumes, on rituals, long series of commentaries, and elaborate works on theology, grammar, and lexicography, without any help of written letters. According to Wolf, prose composition is an evident and safe proof of a written literature as poetry without being committed to paper, could be easily composed and transmitted from one generation to another traditionally ; but to compose any thing in prose is impossible without the help of writing ; and still more impossible to transmit it from one generation to another and preserve it in its entirety traditionally.⁸ There are undoubtedly

⁷ History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 512.

⁸ Wolf, Prolegomena. lxx-lxxiii.

records of astronomical observations which could not have been taken without the knowledge of numerical figures. We cannot help believing by the exact definition of words, which appear in Pânini, such as *Varna*, *kâra*, *kânda*, *patra*, *sûtra*, *adhyâya*, *grantha* &c., that the use of written letters was not unknown or uncultivated in ancient India. The meaning of the word *grantha* is to string together, signifying the old method of stringing together a number of palm leaves, which formed the chief material of books, just as in German a volume is called Band, from its being 'bound' ; Prof. Weber holds that Pânini was perfectly acquainted with the art of writing, and the word *grantha*, which is frequently used by Pânini, alludes, according to its etymology, indisputably to written texts.⁹ It answers etymologically to the Latin *textus* as opposed to a traditional work. But Bohtlingk and Roth say, on the contrary, that the *grantha* refers merely to composition. Indeed, it may mean a literary composition. *Varna* applies to a written sign and *kâra* to the uttered sound. *Akshara* means 'syllable' ; and may sometimes therefore coincide in value with *kâra* and *varna*. The commentary of Kâtâyâna, Patanjali and Kaiyyata proves that Pânini's manner of defining an *adhikâra*, or heading rule, would have been impossible without writing. Here I will draw the attention of the Readers to two words ; and first to the word *ûrdhva*. It is used adverbially in the sense of 'after.'¹⁰ It seems to me that the metaphorical sense of the word was first applied to passages in written books. And *udaya* is synonymous with *ûrdhva*. Pânini speaks of *repha*. Even Kâtâyâna arguing from its root, concludes that it is nothing else than *ra* itself ; and the letter *repha* is found to be used in the

• Indische Studien, iv. p. 89.

10 See Manu, ix. 77.

Prâtisâkhyas. The use of *repha* is also a proof of that Pânini was not ignorant of writing. *Grantha* occurs four times in the texts of Pânini, and it is evident, beyond doubt, that *grantha* must mean a written or bound book. *Pustaka* is a Sânskirit word, and the derivation of the word may be traced to the root *pusta*. This root occurs in the Dhâtupâtha. In ancient times barks and leaves of particular trees were used as writing materials for want of paper. The *Bhûrjja-patra* and the palm leaves were especially preferred. And to this day *Bhûrjja-patra* and palm leaves are used for writing purposes. In Egypt this custom was also prevalent, and the very word paper is derived from '*papyrus*' which means the bark of a reed. I believe the use of paper was first introduced into India by the Mahometans.

The Srauta-sûtras and the Prâtisâkhyas of the different Vedas afford numerous statements which cannot be explained without admitting a knowledge of letters in the authors of those ancient works. Since there is not one single allusion in the Vaidik hymns to any thing connected with writing, there are no such words as, writing, reading, paper or pen in them. But this can never be a conclusive proof of the ignorance of the art of writing in ancient India. How were the gigantic works of ancient times divided into chapters and sections without any help of writing? How without a knowledge of numerals, were the cattle marked on their ears in order to make them recognisable? Pânini has a sûtra (vi. 3 115) in which he says that the owners of cattle were at his time in the habit of marking their beasts on the ears, with signs of a *svâstika*, or magic figure of prosperity, a ladle, a pearl, &c., and also eight and five, which certainly point to a knowledge of written letters or numerals at that period. Similarly the use of *lopa*,

to express 'elision',¹¹ as opposed to the visibility of a letter points to language as existing in a written and not exclusively spoken form. It is impossible that an author could speak of a thing visible, literally or metaphorically, unless it were referable to his sense of sight. A letter which has undergone the effect of *lopa*, must, therefore, previously to its *lopa*, have been a visible or written letter to him. In the Grihya-sûtras rules are given to be observed by Brahmans from the commencement of their existence to the last day of their life; but there does not appear a single word on the subject of their learning to write. There is, however, a sûtra 'patrai vedam pradâya vâchayet;' by which we must understand that here Veda means nothing else than Veda in the written form. Every one must now understand that Pânini was as proficient in writing as the cowherds of his time. It will not be rash to hold that the Vedas were preserved in writing at or before Pânini's time. And it could be shown that Pânini must have seen written Vaidik texts.¹² Now it is obvious that the ancient Hindus must have been acquainted with the art of writing. No question can be raised against the fact that the Hindus were acquainted with the art of writing before the time of Alexander, and the expressions of *likhita* and *likhâpita*,¹³ occur in the inscriptions of Priyadarsi, which are, no doubt, of the third century B. C. However, I shall not exceed a reasonable limit by assigning the 13th century B. C., for the origin of writing in India.

¹¹ Pânini, i. 1, 60 : Adarsanam *lopa*h.

¹² Pânini. iv. 4. 73 and vii. 1, 76 : Chhandasya *lopa*h.

¹³ See Manu, viii. 168.

