

Lifescapes of India

Religions,
Customs,
and Laws
of India

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1. INDIA, THE LAND OF MANY RELIGIONS

As everybody knows, India is the country where two major religions of the world, namely Hinduism and Buddhism were born. The offshoots of Hinduism, in order of antiquity, namely, Jainism, Veerashaivism, and Sikhism were founded by Hindu dissidents who were not only dissatisfied with the old Vedic religion but also with the social system, that is, the Hindu caste system and its rigid rules. Gautama Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist religion, was also born a Hindu in the Kshatriya caste, but rebelled against the rigidity of the caste system and the complicated nature of the Vedic religion which the common man could not understand. In addition to the above six religions, Christianity and Islam which had their origins in the middle east countries Israel, Palestine and Saudi Arabia respectively, have fairly large number of followers in the country. The religion propounded by Zarathustra or Zoroaster Of Persia (Iran) is an important religion of India, and the followers, namely, the Parsis or Zoroastrians a very influential community in the big metropoli-

tan city of Bombay (Mumbai) and its surroundings.

India and its people cannot be understood without understanding its basic philosophies, because the intimacy of philosophy and life in India is so fundamental to the whole Indian point of view, and second, in order to enlarge the scope of philosophy and to broaden the horizons of philosophers by concentrating seriously on the important contributions that Indian philosophy and philosophers have made to philosophical knowledge and wisdom, or at least can make if the rest of the world can take these contributions seriously.

Understanding and misunderstanding, fact and fancy, truth and error, a tendency towards extremes, all these abound. Very often, a very confusing mixture of ideas exists, whenever one thinks of the big sub-continent India with its more than 1,000 million people. The ideas which have been much in evidence for centuries with reference to the greatest democratic nation in Asia and the Eastern world, especially by Western thinkers, are confusion, misunder-

standing, misrepresentation, bewilderment, and almost universal neglect.

Some Westerners have seen the source of fulfillment of their own selfish search of power and worldly riches, and these people have only indomitable spirit, to revive their proud traditions and heritage, and to take her place among the great peoples of the world, which it once held in culture and learning, in religion

misused her. Due to their behaviour towards the people of India, they have tried to destroy the spirit and mind of the people of India. But that spirit has refused to die, and now today, it is reasserting itself. The people of India have maintained their and in philosophy. One must understand India correctly. Superficial knowledge is not enough.

1.1 THE HINDU RELIGION

The Hindu religion which is based on the Vedas and the Upanishads, the four Vedas being the RigVeda, the Atharva Veda, the Sama Veda and the Yajur Veda, is very old may be as old as 2000 years B.C., and was probably put in writing at a later stage. The Vedas and the Upanishads deal with all aspects of life, including the concepts of religion, God, philosophy and human relations.

The Vedas and the Upanishads have been interpreted by many scholars through the ages. These ancient texts comprise of treatises on the concept of God or the Supreme soul (Brahma or Parabrahma) and the relationship of the individual to the supreme soul. These texts also give the ideas of “Dharma” which has a very wide meaning and it comprises religion, society and law. All of this taken together is called Sanatana Dharma.

It is quite befitting to call “Hinduism” by the name “Vedic Religion” or “Sanatana Dharma”

The Hindu religion does not mean a fixed set of dogmas, doctrines, creeds and rituals. There are several

variations of this religion, for example, the old Aryan Dharma, Brahmanism, the religion of the Vedanta, Jainism, Buddhism, Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Veerashaivism,, Sikhism, and the modern BrahmoSamaj, The Arya Samaj, the religion of Ramakrishna Parahansa, and so on. I have mentioned Jainism, Buddhism, Veerashaivism and Sikhism, because these religions are offshoots of Hinduism. All of them have both common and differing features. Many of their doctrines and rituals are different. All except Buddhism and Jainism owe allegiance to the Vedas in some form or other. Even Jainism and Buddhism originated in the atmosphere of Vedic thought.

Please remember that “religion” is an English word meaning “that which binds a man back or holds him on to the source from which he derived his being”. This meaning can be applied to every philosophy and practice, even to undiluted materialism in which man has to go back to his material origins. Somewhat corresponding to this word is “Yoga”, which means that which unites man

to the divine spirits. But most people translate the English word "Religion" to the Sanskrit word "Dharma" (or "Dhamma" in Pali as used by Buddhists) which means that which supports. In this sense, the word "Dharma" or "Dhamma" is philosophically understood as law, natural, ethical and legal. Natural law sustains nature, and the other laws sustain man and society. It may also mean "Duty".

One other fact is to remember is the fact that Indian religions have retained some of the most primitive forms of worship, giving them a symbolic value, and at the same time have developed the highest forms of religious thoughts and spiritual philosophy, culminating in a non-dualism (called "Advaita" in Sanskrit), and often called "Monism" which is the philosophy of Shankaracharya. This "Monism" is not only a philosophy but also a religion.

Another important idea to remember, is that according to the Indian tradition, it is not necessary for a philosophy to accept the reality of God in order to be called spiritual. Even Shankara's Brahman (meaning Absolute), the Madhyamika's Sunya (meaning "Void") are said to correspond to God in some way. The main "Sankhya", the early "Mimamsa", Jainism, and the schools of Buddhism argue against the reality of God. Yet they are great philosophies.

Not even belief in the "Atman" (meaning "Self") is an essential requirement. Most of the Buddhists reject the reality of the "Atman".

In all these philosophies, there is something deeply inward to man,

and it is called "Atman", "Brahman", "Sunya", and "Ishvara". The inward limit of man's consciousness is called by the above names. The outward consciousness is called "matter" consisting of five elements, namely, earth, water, air, fire and ether. This understanding of man with two aspects of consciousness is not alien and unacceptable to Western religion and philosophy.

None of these Indian religions mentioned above, is a revealed religion like Christianity or Islam, both of which have been revealed by a single founder. Though Buddha and Mahavira are founders of Buddhism and Jainism respectively, they did not claim that the truth was revealed to them. The reflective nature of Indian religions prevents the conflicts between Science and Religion, and there has been no development of dogmatics and theology in India.

None of the Indian religions is a tribal religion, because none of them insist on a particular ethical or social code, which was the original code of the tribe. However there are Indian tribes living in the forested and hilly regions of India who do practice their own tribal religions.

Christianity and Islam are called universal religions, because they accept converts. Though Hinduism does not accept converts, the modern forms of Hinduism like the Arya samaj, and ISCON (International Society of Krishna Consciousness) do accept converts.

If inward spirituality is the essential meaning of religion, then every religion in which every man and woman can realize God through his

own inwardness may be called universal. Conversion means conferring communal membership, but it does not mean conferring or initiation into inwardness. Truth, whether religious or scientific, is open to all. It is not the monopoly of an individual or group. In this sense, Hinduism is a Universal Religion.

Throughout history, there have

been many teachers who have been the interpreters of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Some of the famous ones are Sri Krishna, Sri Shankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Madhvacharya, Sri Vallabhacharya, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Chinmayananda.

1.1.1 SRI KRISHNA

Sri Krishna probably lived two or three thousand years ago, and his famous “Bhagavatgita” is the best commentator on the Vedanta religion and philosophy. His story is part of the famous epic “Mahabharata “. Sri Krishna is considered as one of the Avatars (incarnations) of God by all Hindus. He was the son of Vasudeva of the clan of Vrishnis and of Devaki and was born in Mathura on the banks of the Yamuna river. which is now in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Sri Krishna’s greatest message to the world is the immortal “Bhagavatgita “, or “Gita” for short, which he recounted to Arjuna at the time when the Kauravas and Pandavas were ranged in battle at Kurukshetra which is now in the present state of Haryana Some of his important sayings are :

Blessed are the pure in heart, for to them is given the knowledge of God.

As the rising sun dispels the darkness of night, so the knowledge of “self” drives away all delusions.

Blessed is human birth; even the dwellers in heaven desire this birth, for true knowledge and pure love may be attained only by a human.

The omnipresent God does not accept the virtue or vice of anybody. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance; because of this, beings get deluded.

Those whose ignorance has been destroyed by the knowledge of Atman (self), their knowledge, like the sun, manifests the highest Being.

Fixing their minds on Him, at one with Him, abiding in Him, realizing Him alone as the supreme goal, they reach a state from which there is no return, their sins having been destroyed by knowledge.

Atman (soul) is imperishable, and all is pervaded by it. No one can bring about the destruction of this immutable principle.

Atman is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval, and is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

Just as a person casts off old clothes and puts on new clothes, the Atman casts off worn out bodies, and enters into others that are new.

Seeing God every where, the Sage attains the Supreme Goal.

Meditate on the Oneness of the Self (Atman) with God, the one blissful existence.

This body which is created by the

Lord's attribute known as Maya, is verily the cause of transmigration. The knowledge of Atman or the Self serves to destroy this..

By means of discrimination, one should unite the soul to the Absolute Self which is in the body, and remove the idea of reality of the body.

When a man gives up completely all the desires of the mind. and delights in his Atman alone, then he is said to be a man of greatest wisdom.

He who is unattached, and who neither welcomes nor hates when he obtains good or evil is the wisest man.

When a person thinks deeply of sense objects, he feels an attachment for them. Attachment gives rise to desire and breeds anger, after which comes delusion.. This results in destruction of discrimination which perishes man. On the other hand, a man who has self control and has restraint with his senses, and is free from attachment to worldly objects, attains serenity of mind.

The person who lives completely free from all desires, and is devoid of the idea of ownership and egoism, attains peace

He who sees God abiding equally in all beings, he indeed sees.

If a meditating man constantly worships Me(God) through the path of devotion, all the desires of his heart are destroyed, because I reside in His heart.

Whatever is acquired through works, austerities, knowledge, dispassion, yoga, charity, or through any other good deeds, My devotee attains it all through devotion to Me.

The man who has no desires and

cares for no worldly things, attains devotion to me.

I look after the maintenance of the welfare of such ever-devout persons, who think of nothing else and worship me through devotion.

Many are the means described for the attainment of the highest good, such as love, performance of duty, self-control, truthfulness, sacrifice, gifts, austerity, charity, vows, observance of moral principles, and so on. But of all these, I can say that love is the highest love and devotion that makes one forgetful of everything else, love that unites the lover with Me. What a joy does one find through Me.

Love of Me, the blissful Atman! Once that joy is realized, all earthly pleasures fade into nothingness.

Let not your mind run after the things of the world, for they are empty as dreams. Give your mind to Me, devote yourself to Me, meditate on Me.

The mind of a man who thinks of sense objects, is attached to them, but the mind of one who remembers Me is merged in Me alone.

He who is unchanged by praise or blame, who is silent, content with whatever he has, firm of mind, and full of devotion, that man is dear to Me.

Whoever offers me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water with devotion, I accept that devout gift of the pure minded.

He who does My work, and looks on Me as the supreme goal, who is devoted to Me, who is without attachment and without hatred for any creature, he comes to Me.

The control of the mind is the highest Yoga, it is like the control of an unruly horse which must be made to obey its rider. Thus constantly concentrating on the mind, the Yogi with his mind controlled attains the peace culminating in final beattitude in the form of abiding in Me.

Supreme bliss comes to the Yogi whose mind is completely tranquil and whose passions are quieted, and who is free from strain and who has identified himself with Brahman.

Perform the prescribed duties, for action is superior to inaction; moreover, if you are inactive, even the maintenance of your body will be impossible.

Man attains the highest merit by performing action which is unattached.

Whatever the great man does, others copy; whatever he sets up as a standard, the world follows it.

Work becomes consecrated and purifying when it is done as service to Me. He who performs actions, dedicating them to God and giving up attachment, is not touched by sin, as a lotus leaf by water.

Renunciation and the performance of selfless action, both lead to the highest good.

No one becomes a Yogi without renouncing the desire for the fruit of action.

Sacrifice, gift and austerity purify the wise.

Faith in the Atman is "Sattvika", faith in work is "Rajasa", and faith in dishonesty is "Tamasa". But faith in service to Me is beyond all this.

"Om Tat Sat": this has been de-

clared to be the triple designation of "Brahman", the Lord Almighty. It means "This is the Truth".

The sayings of Sri Krishna given above represent many different aspects of life and the relationship of man to the Supreme Being. Here, the word "man" is used in the general sense, and it means both "man" and "woman". He was the most wonderful San-yasi (a person who has conquered all worldly desires), and the most wonderful man of the world. He was the best preacher of the Eternal Religion. He was the best commentator on the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Below is a prayer given by Suka:

O you God Supreme
I bow down to You
You are the Highest of the
Highest
Who can sing
Your infinite glory ?
You are the innermost
Ruler of every heart :
Your paths are mysterious;
Your ways are blessed,
You wipe away the
Tears of your devotees,
You destroy the wickedness
Of the world,
What sweetness is in
Remembering you !
You are the Lord supreme,
You are indeed the Vedas,
You are the Truth.
You are the goal of all disciplines,
Your lovers meditate on Your
Blissful form, and become lost
In the joy thereof,
Shower Your grace upon me,
O Lord, and in your mercy
Look upon me.
About the great teacher

1.1.2 SHANKARA or SRI SHANKARACHARYA

Swami Vivekananda says, "He who declared that he will come whenever virtue subsides, comes again, and up rose that young Brahmin of whom it has been declared that at the age of sixteen he had completed all his writings, and the marvellous boy Shankara rose." He was the greatest philosopher of all times and he was the greatest Hindu of his time. He was born in Keladi in Kerala in 788 A.D. Every page of Shankara's life scintillates with so much of spiritual wisdom, so much of logical subtlety and so much of philosophical profundity that everybody on the rugged path to the Highest Heaven will say, "The truest vision of the Supreme came". He went to the Vedic school, and in fulfilment of the mandate from his Guru to establish Advaita Vedanta as the meeting ground of all monistic and dualistic views, contrary though they appear to be, the young Shankara went to Varanasi in Uttara Pradesh, which was the ancient seat of Vedic religion and culture, and starting spreading the Gospel of Unity in Diversity. He held discussions with the learned leaders of various schools of thought, and he established the Supremacy of his system of thought. He went to Varanasi, Hardwar, Hrishikesh, Srinagar, Rudraprayag, Nandaprayag, Kama-rupa, and Gomukhi, and demonstrated that a knower of Nirguna Brahman (Brahman with no attributes) is not devoid of devotion to Sagu-na Brahman (Brahman with good attributes). He wrote commentaries on the Upanishads, the Bhagavat

Gita, and the Brahma Sutra. Many abnoxious cults had vitiated the Indian society then, and temples were in the hands of a coterie of corrupt priests dabbling in hideous forms of worship and animal sacrifice. Shankara with the help of a scriptural evidence and his dielectic skill, proved that these practices militated against the very spirit of the Vedas. He reformed and reinstated the worship of the five dieties, namely, Ganapati, Narayana, Surya (Sun), Shiva and Shakti, and demonstrated that image worship too had a place in the Vedanta philosophy.

Some of the important sayings of SHANKARA are as follows:

Just as a piece of rope is imagined to be a snake in the semi-darkness, and an oyster to be a piece of silver, so is the Atman determined to be the body by an ignorant person.

It is only because of ignorance that the Self appears to be finite. When ignorance is destroyed, the Self which does not admit of any multiplicity whatsoever, truly reveals itself, like the Sun when the cloud is removed.

Maya or Avidya (Ignorance) can be destroyed by the realization of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination about the rope.

As long as the man earns money, his relatives are attached to him. But when his aging body falters nearing the time of dissolution, none, not even his dearest kin, will come even to ask him how he fares.

Lust at the sight of a young woman springs from ignorance and delusion. Reason points out inwardly, time and again, that bodies are only the combination of flesh, blood, and fat.

Give up the curse of lust and wrath. Give up delusion and greed. Remember who you really are. Fools are they that are blind to the Self.

Be not attached to friend or foe, to son or kinsman, to peace or war. If you aspire for Vishnu's realm, look upon all things as of equal worth.

Control the self, restrain the breath, sift out the transient for the true. Repeat the name of the Lord and still the restless mind within.

When the mind becomes purified like a mirror, knowledge is revealed in it.

Objects of knowledge exist in the intellect as long as it is there, but they do not exist in the absence of the intellect.

Perfect knowledge, according to the Vedas, consists in the realization of the identity of the individual soul and Brahman.

One seeking knowledge should

meditate long upon Brahman for the attainment of the desired goal.

These sayings quoted above illustrate the high philosophy propounded by Shankara.

Some sayings from the VEDAS on "Harmony among human beings" are given below :

(1) Assemble, speak with each other, let your minds be united through mutual knowledge.

May the aim be common and the thoughts of these people be united. I lay before you a common purpose, and offer worship with your hearts united. Be of one mind so that you may live happily together.

(2) Let us have harmony with our people, and harmony with foreigners. Give us mutual knowledge and love. Let us have union of mind and union of purpose. Let us not fight against the divine spirit within us. Let not the din of battle rise amidst the many slain, nor the arrows of Indra who is the patron of warriors fly with the break of day

(3) Revered one, make me strong. May all beings look on me with friendly eyes. May we look on each other with friendly eyes.

1.1.3 RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

Now coming to more modern times, we shall now see what the great teacher RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA of the nineteenth century A.D. has to say about religion. He plunged into various paths of Hinduism, and also through the disciplines of Christianity and Islam, and tested the bliss by various ways of communion with God or the Supreme Being. Gadadhar Chat-

topadhyaya (later known as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa) was born in the village of Kamarpukur which is about seventy miles from the great city of Calcutta (Kolkata) in the state of West Bengal on February 18th, 1836. Ramakrishna was endowed with a yearning for the vision of God from his very childhood. He neglected his studies, and he sat with wandering monks and pilgrims, and

played religious dramas with young companions.

His family brought him to Calcutta to turn his mind to a useful education when he was seventeen years old. But Ramakrishna observed that all secular knowledge was mere material advancement, and he decided to devote himself solely to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge which would give him eternal peace.

He was called back to his village to become the priest of the temple of Kali (Shiva's consort) at Dakshineswar, which was built by Rani Rasmani, a wealthy and pious widow of Calcutta. As the worship of God was after his heart, he took to this new vocation with great enthusiasm. Gradually his worship developed into a burning desire to have a direct vision of the Divine Mother Kali. He prayed day and night, meditated, and wept bitterly, yearning for the vision of the Divine Mother.

He used to cry, "Oh Mother, another day is gone, and I have not realized Thee". He ate very little, and slept very little. Finally the vision of the Divine Mother came to him.

After that Ramakrishna engaged himself in hard spiritual practices, and realized God in following various paths of Hinduism and also through the disciplines of Christianity and Islam. He tasted the bliss of communion with God. After all these experiences, he declared, "I have found that it is the same God toward whom all are directing their steps".

While he was going through his spiritual ecstasies, rumour had reached Kamarpukur where his mother lived, that he had gone mad.

As a remedy, his mother and his brother got him married to Sri Sharada Devi. But what a marriage it was! Sri Ramakrishna literally worshipped Sharada Devi as the Divine Mother. Their union was on the spiritual plane only. He also taught her everything from housekeeping to the knowledge of Brahman (the Supreme God). He instructed her in all the practices of the spiritual life. Both of them became purer than purity itself. She was chastity incarnate.

Men and women from all walks of life and of different religions came to Ramakrishna for spiritual solace. Whoever came with earnestness felt his unbounded love, and got spiritually uplifted by his presence and by his words.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa passed away on 16th August 1886. Before that, he had trained a band of young men to carry on his spiritual mission. These men renounced the world after he passed away, and formed the monastic order called the Sri Ramakrishna Mission or "Sri Ramakrishna Mutt", which has the motto "For one's own salvation and also for the welfare of the world". This order was led by the most dynamic and brilliant of them, "Swami Vivekananda", and they have spread his message in India and abroad. Much later a woman's monastic order named "Shri Sharada Mutt" was formed in the 1950's and has centres in most of the important states of India. They are also involved in the same type of spiritual and social work based on Shri Ramakrishna's teachings.

Some of the important sayings of Ramakrishna are as follows :

You see many stars in the sky at night, but not when the sun rises. Can you therefore say that there are no stars in the heavens during the day. O man, because you cannot find God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

Many are the names of God and infinite the forms through which he may be approached. In whatever name and form you worship Him, you will realize Him through that.

No one can say with finality that God is only "this" and nothing else. He is formless. And yet He has forms. For the bhakta (devotee), He assumes forms. He is formless for the jnani (the intelligent one).

Muslims address Him as "Allah", Christians address Him as "God", some Hindus call Him as "Brahman", and some other Hindus call Him as "Kali", "Rama", "Krishna", "Vishnu", "Durga" and by many other names, and some Christians call Him as the "Father".

One who constantly thinks of God can know His forms and His attributes. God has attributes and then He has none. Only the man who lives under the tree knows that the chameleon can appear in various colours, and he knows that the animal has no colour sometimes.

The sun is many times larger than the earth, but distance makes it appear small. So the Lord is infinitely great, but being too far away from Him, we are incapable of comprehending His real greatness.

He is born in vain who does not attempt to realize God in this very life.

Bhakti is singleminded devotion to God. Through such devotion one's mind and soul merge in Him.

Prema means love for God that makes a man forget the world and also his body which is so dear to him.

What is Bhakti Yoga or the path of Bhakti? It is to keep the mind on God by chanting His name and glories. It is the easiest path to come to God.

Love is of three varieties, namely, unselfish, mutual, and selfish. Unselfish love is of the highest kind and it can enter His inner apartments.

The best devotee of God is he who sees after the realization of Brahman that God alone has become all living beings and the universe.

It is not possible to give up work altogether. Your very nature will lead you to it whether you like it or not. Therefore the scriptures ask you to work in a detached spirit, that is to say, not to crave for the work's results. To work in such a spirit of detachment is known as Karmayoga.

As far as earning money to carry on your worldly duties, you can perform them too, but only as much as you need for your living. You should be able to perform those duties in an unselfish manner. Do your work, but surrender the result to god.

If you become involved in too many activities, it may make you forget GOD. If you are completely absorbed in God, then you do not have to do all sorts of religious rites

He who can himself approach God with sincerity, earnest prayer, and deep longing, needs no Guru (religious teacher).

When going to a strange country,

one must listen to the advice of the guide who knows the way. In trying to reach God, one must implicitly follow the advice of on single Guru who knows the way to God.

All wish to be teachers. But who cares to be a disciple?

Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all—with wife and children, with father and mother – and serve them, Treat them as if they are very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.

Remain always strong and steadfast in thy own faith, but eschew all bigotry and intolerance.

There is nothing wrong in your being in the world. But you must direct your mind towards God. Do your duty with one hand and hold on to God with the other. After the duty is over, you will hold on to God with both hands.

God has put you in this world. What can you do about it ? Resign everything to Him. Surrender yourself at His feet. Then there will be no more confusion. Then you will realize that it is God who does everything. All depends on His will.

A man living in society should

protect himself from evil-minded people. He should not harm anybody in anticipation of harm likely to be done to him.

After the birth of one or two children, the husband and wife should live as brother and sister and talk of only God. Then both their minds will be drawn towards God, and the wife will be a help to the husband on the path of spirituality.

Money can only procure bread and butter. Do not consider it to be thy flesh and blood or thy sole end and aim.

All trouble and botheration come to an end When the “I” dies.

The darkness of centuries is dispersed as soon as a light is brought into a room.

There is no sin in disobeying one’s superiors for the sake of God.

Why should you be frightened ? Hold fast to God. If the world is like a forest of thorns, Put on shoes and walk on the thorns. Whom should you fear ?

God is the ocean of Mercy. Be His slave and take refuge in Him. He will show compassion.

1.1.4 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

This was the greatest disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who travelled to Europe and to the United States of America and toured all over India after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna at the end of the nineteenth century, has interpreted his message in his own manner to the changing world. Some of his sayings are given below :

The ideal Brahmin-ness is the one in which worldiness is altogether is absent and true wisdom is present in plenty. Every man in this country of India from the highest man to the lowest pariah has tottry to become the ideal Brahmin.

India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag

of destruction but with the flag of peace and love.

Lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your name, fame or position, nay even your lives and make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross. Bring all forces of good together. Do not care under what banner you march. Do not care what be your colour- green, blue or red – but mix all colours up and produce that intense glow of white, the colour of love. Work for the good of all, and the results will take care of themselves

Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendents of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and that millions have been starving for ages ? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud ? Does it make you restless and sleepless ? The first step to become a real patriot of your country or of the world, is to forget who you are

There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.

To me Mother's grace is a hundred thousand times more valuable than Father's.

The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses, must come first, and then only can real good come about for the country and for the world. Women must be in a position to solve their problems in their own way. No one else can or ought to do this. They are capable of doing it themselves.

Who are you to solve women's

problems ? Are you the Lord God, that you rule over every widow and every woman ? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.

Serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself. If the Lord grants that you can anyone one of His children; blessed you are; do not think too much about yourselves. Vow then to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of the three hundred millions going down and down every day.

Him I call a Mahatman whose heart bleeds for the poor; otherwise he is a duratman (bad man). Do you love your fellow beings ? Where should you go to seek God ? Why not worship them first.

It is character that pays everywhere, Give up jealousy and conceit. Learn to work unitedly for others. that is the great need of our country.

Have patience and be faithful unto death. do not fight amongst yourselves. Be perfectly pure in money dealings.

This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive..

Ask nothing; want nothing in return;. give what you have to give, it will come back to you – but do not think of that now.

India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men and not brutes.

The essential thing is renunciation - without renunciation none can pour out his whole heart in working for others.

Know that talking ill of others in

private is a sin, you must wholly avoid it.

You must express your sympathy with people of all sects.

Despondency is not religion, whatever it may be. By being pleasant always and smiling, it takes you nearer to God, nearer than any prayer.

If any body comes to you to speak ill of any of his brothers, refuse to listen to him in toto. Moreover, bear with everyone's shortcomings. forgive offences by the million.

The calmer we are and the less disturbed our nerves, the more shall we love and the better will our work be. You should work like a master but not like a slave.

Below is a poem composed by Swami Vivekananda:

IN SEARCH OF GOD

*O'er hill and dale and mountain range,
In temple, church, and mosque,
In Vedas, bible, Al Koran
I had searched for Thee in vain.
Like a child in the wildest forest lost
I have cried and cried alone,
"Where are Thou gone, my God, my love?"
The echo answered "gone". When holy
worship shakes the hand,
He stands between them too;
He pours the nectar in mother's kiss
And the baby's sweet "mama".
Thou wert my God with prophets old;
All creeds do come from Thee;
The Vedas, Bible and Koran bold
Sing Thee in harmony.*

You can see how the sayings of

the teachers of Hinduism have been influenced by the conditions of the country of their times. Sri Shankaracharya has definitely been influenced by the Christian and Muslim

religions which had penetrated the regions of Kerala at his time. The influence of these religions which were born in Israel and in South Arabia respectively, are more pronounced in the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and of Swami Vivekananda, who both lived in the nineteenth century A.D., when the British government in India were establishing their own system of education through the medium of the English language. According to the old Hindu scriptures, Bharatkhand (India) was at the centre of the universe, but by the nineteenth century A.D. the myth was destroyed and the people of India had contact with people from other far-off lands, and at least the more intelligent and more enlightened of them were influenced by intelligent thoughts from other

lands, and this made them slightly modify the older thoughts of their ancestors. So the inhabitants of this great country of ours are willing to adapt themselves to new ideas from their own land and from other lands. At the same time, throughout history, there are periods when their minds have gone in a retrograde manner, and they sometimes cling on to ideas which are archaic and which have no relevance to the times in which they are living in. Probably this is true of all human beings living in many different regions of this world of ours.

1.2 RELIGIONS WHICH ARE OFF-SHOOTS OF HINDUISM

The religions which are offshoots of Hinduism are Jainism, Buddhism, Veerashaivism, and Sikhism. These religions were founded by Hindu dissidents who were not only dissatis-

fied with the old Vedic religion but also with the social system, that is, the Hindu caste system and its rigid rules. The Hindu caste system will be discussed in a later chapter.

1.2.1 JAINISM

This is a very old religion which rejects the Vedas, but have their own sacred books. The Jain religion was a revolution against the the early Vedic practices of ritualistic ceremonialism with its animal and other sacrifices, and it takes a strong stand exclusively on chaste morals and philosophical truths. Jains were the first great ascetics, and they did some great work. "Don't injure any and do good to all that you can, and that is all the morality and ethics, and that is all the the work there is, and the rest is all nonsenseThrow it away". It is a most wonderful ideal; they simply bring out from that one great principle of non-injury and doing good.

Certain deified men, named Thirthankaras, of whom there are twenty four principal ones, are the chief objects of Jain reverence. The yatis form the religious order, and the lay people are called sravakas. Implicit belief in the doctrines of the religion is obligatory for both the yatis and the sravakas. There are two sects, the Digambaras who are clad with space, that is naked, and the Svetambaras, that is clad in white.

The original Purvas which were the religious books have been lost,

but the forty-five Agamas have been handed down. They were collected and committed to writing in the fifth and fourth century A.D. in the Ardha-Magadhi language in Pataliputra (the present Patna in Bihar state). Sanskrit was adopted in the eleventh century A.D.

Caste as observed by the Jains is a social and not a religious institution.

Parsvanatha and Mahavira, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth Thirthankaras, were historical persons, and Mahavira is supposed to be the real founder of Jainism.

Lord MAHAVIRA was born 2596 years ago in 599B.C. at Kundagrama in the kingdom of Vaishali, which is near Patna in Bihar state. His father was Siddhartha, and his mother's name was Trishala. Trishala saw fourteen auspicious dreams when the child was in the womb. He was named Vardhamana which means one who brings prosperity. He is however popularly known as Mahavira or the great hero., because he subdued his passions – the greatest conquest. As a young boy, Vardhamana was handsome, brave and fearless. He was liked by one and all. Once he was playing with children in a mango grove, when a snake curled

itself around the trunk of a tree nearby. Other boys fled, but Vardhamana coolly held the serpent by its hood and with a jerk threw it away like a piece of rope. According to the Svetambara tradition, Mahavira was married to Yashoda and had a daughter. But the Digambara tradition does not accept this view. From his childhood, he was very quiet, resolute and indifferent to worldly matters. Although he was surrounded by luxuries, he had a strong sense of detachment. At the age of thirty, after the passing away of his parents and with the consent of his elder brother, he renounced the world and became a Shramana or a wandering monk. He vowed to remain equanimous throughout his life. He did rigorous austerities, including prolonged fasts, for twelve and a half years till he achieved Kevala or Jnana (omniscience). Mahavira faced numerous hardships and indignities during this long Sanayasa (period of austerities) period, but he proved to be an incarnation of forbearance and forgiveness. After attaining omniscience, Shramana Bhagawan Mahavira began to preach, wandering from one place to the other on foot. On hearing his teachings, eleven eminent Brahminscholars led by Indrabhuti Gautama became his chief disciples, and formed the nucleus of the religious order which transmitted the teachings to the others. Lord Mahavira established a four-fold congregation of monks, nuns, laymen devotees, and laywomen devotees. In the Sangha so established, there was no difference between men and women, and both

were regarded equally. The women were also initiated as nuns, which was a great revolutionary step at that time. Mahavira went on preaching the religion of "Ahimsa" (non-violence), "Anekanta" (non-absolution) and "Aparigraha" (non-possession). At the age of seventy – two years, he gave up the body at Pavapuri in Bihar.

In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "What could have saved Indian society from the ponderous burden of omnifarious ceremonialism, with its animal and other sacrifices, which all but crushed the very life of it, except the Jain revolution which took its strong stand exclusively on chaste morals and philosophical truths"? Jains were the first great ascetics, and they did some great work.

According to them, "Don't injure anybody and do good to all that you can and that is all the morality and ethics, and that is all the work there is, and the rest is all nonsense...Throw it away". Below are given a few of his wise sayings :

Even the most insulated and powerful enemy does not cause so much harm as uncontrolled attachment and aversion do.

The essential nature of any substance is "Dharma" (Faith). Forgiveness is a very important characteristic of Dharma. Right faith, right conduct and right knowledge are the three jewels of Dharma. Giving protection to all living beings is also Dharma.

Supreme forgiveness, supreme humility, supreme straightforwardness, supreme truthfulness, supreme purity, supreme self-restraint, su-

preme austerity, supreme renunciation, supreme detachment, and supreme continence are the ten characteristics of Dharma.

His forbearance is perfect, who does not get excited with anger even when terribly afflicted by celestials, human beings and animals.

I forgive all living beings, may all living beings forgive me. I cherish friendliness towards all and harbour enmity towards none.

He truly commands respect who is always cautious not to insult others. A person who merely boasts but has no virtues cannot command respect.

Fight with your own self, what will you gain by fighting with others? One who conquers one's self by one's own self alone experiences supreme bliss.

Conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility, deceit by straightforwardness and greed by contentment.

One should meditate on one's soul after controlling one's diet, posture and sleep, and gaining knowledge by the grace of the preceptor, in accordance with the precepts of the Jina or the Thirthankara.

Right conduct is really what constitutes religion, which in turn, is

pointed out as equanimity. Equanimity is that state of the soul which is free from delusion and agitation..

The seven vices from which a householder should abstain are : 1. Sexual contact with a woman other than one's wife, 2. Gambling, 3. Taking intoxicants, 4. hunting, 5. Uttering harsh words, 6. Giving disproportionate punishment and 7. misapportion of other's property.

Ahimsa (non-violence) is the heart of all stages of life, the core of all sacred texts, and the sum and substance of all virtues and sorrows.

To get up at the arrival of an elder, to welcome him with folded hands, to offer him an honoured seat, to serve him with a feeling of reverence – these constitute humility.

Humility is of five kinds : humility in faith, in knowledge, in conduct, in penance, and in decorum or etiquette, These lead to liberation.

Nirvana (emancipation) is where there is neither suffering nor obstacle, neither birth nor death.

Nirvana is where there are neither sense organs, nor is there obstruction caused by others, nor infatuation, nor surprise, nor sleep, nor thirst, nor hunger, and that is emancipation.

1.2.2 BUDDHISM

Lord Buddha was born as the son of Suddhodana and Mayadevi at Lumbini near Kapilavastu in Bihar state. He was named Siddhartha, which means "He who has accomplished his purpose". A rishi or saintly man who visited the royal child prophesied that the supernatural signs indicate

that the newborn child will bring deliverance to the whole world. He, of course, warned the king that the boy might renounce the world any time if he should come across the diseased, the old and the dead. The king became alarmed, and got Siddhartha married at an early age and almost

imprisoned him in a pleasure garden, providing him with all kinds of enjoyment. As a chained elephant longs to see the wild forest, the prince became eager to see the world. For this visit, the streets were decorated, and the city bore a festive appearance. During this visit, Siddhartha came across an old man, a diseased person, a dead body and at last a sannyasin or a holy man. The sannyasin told him that the first three were not rare scenes, but the inevitable fate of all living beings, Siddhartha became very perturbed and plunged into deep thought.

When he came to the palace, he learns that his wife Yashoda has delivered a boy, who has been named Rahula. Instead of being happy, Siddhartha thought, "It is bondage heaped on bondage", and decided to renounce the world in search of truth. The decision was translated into action when one night he renounced everything to fulfil the object of his advent and became a recluse. He came to Uruvilva (Buddha Gaya) and sat there beneath a Bo tree under a vow to attain enlightenment. After six years of hard questioning, the much desired enlightenment dawned upon him and he became Bodhisattva, and started preaching his new gospel.

Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath near Varanasi in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Fulfilling the object of his enlightenment by preaching his great message for forty-five years, and establishing his well organized order of bikshus (monks), he passed away at Kushinara at the age of eighty on a Vai-

shaka Purnima (full moon day), which is known as the thrice-blessed day, because he was born on the same day eighty years ago, and he had also attained enlightenment on the same date forty – five years ago.

He is not only the "The Light of Asia", but also "The Light of the World". His contribution to the spiritual and cultural advancement of humanity is great beyond measure, and his life and teachings have influenced the daily lives and aspirations of millions of people all over the world.

Buddhism, the religion taught by the great teacher Buddha is historically the most important religion, because it was the tremendous religious movement that the world ever saw, the greatest spiritual wave to have ever burst upon human society.

May his teachings as given below in simple language enrich and enlighten our lives :

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS : Existence of sorrow; Cause of sorrow; Cessation of sorrow; Way which leads to the cessation of sorrow.

FIVE PRECEPTS

Take the precept to abstain from killing.

Take the precept to abstain from stealing.

Take the precept to abstain from adultery.

Take the precept to abstain from lying.

Take the precept to abstain from liquor.

EIGHT-FOLD PATH

Right understanding

(free from superstition and de-

lusion)
Right thought
(high and worthy of the intelligent)
Right speech
(Kindly open, truthful)
Right actions
(peaceful, honest, pure)
Right livelihood
(not bringing hurt or danger to living beings)
Right effort
(in self-training and in self-control)
Right mindfulness
(the active watchful mind)
Right concentration
(in deep meditation on the realities of life)
(4) PRECEPTS
Do not kill.
Do not steal.
Do not commit adultery.
Do not tell lies.

Do not slander.
Do not speak harshly.
Do not engage in idle talks.
Do not covert other's properties.
Do not show hatred.
Think righteously.
(5)ACTS OF MERIT
Give charity to the deserving.
Observe the precepts of morality.
Cultivate and develop good thoughts.
Render service and attend to others.
Honour and nurse parents and others.
Give a share of your merits to others.
Accept the merits that others give you.
Hear the doctrine of righteousness.
Preach the doctrine of righteousness.
Rectify your faults.

1.2.3 VEERASHAIVISM

About 1160 A.D., arose the well-known sect of Siva worshippers known as Veerashaivas or Lingayitas, mostly in the Kannada speaking areas of Karnataka, and to a certain extent in the Telugu speaking areas of Andhra Pradesh. Basaveshvara (literally meaning Bull) was the founder of the sect, and was regarded as the incarnation of Nandi which is the vehicle of Shiva. He was the son of an Aradhya brahmin, a native of Bagewadi in Belgaum district of Karnataka state. According to the legend, he refused to wear the brahmanical thread, because its investiture required the adoration of the sun. He went to Kalyana, the capital

of Bijjala, the founder of the dynasty of Kalachuries who ruled the country which covers approximately the northern part of the present Karnataka state. He became the prime minister of king Bijjala, and he founded the new sect called Veerashaivas or Lingayits.

Basava rejected the authority of the Vedas and the Brahmins, together with the observance of caste, pilgrimage and penance. He declared that all holiness consisted of regard for the guru (teacher), the linga or the symbol of the phallus, and the fellow religionist. The teacher or the confessor can be a man or a woman who is in the creed, who whispers the

sacred mantram(holy words) in the ear of the jangama or the worshipper; and hangs the lingam on the neck or binds it on the arm. A guru is forbidden to eat flesh, to chew betel nuts and betel leaves or to touch liquor, and wears a red ochre coloured robe. The sacred books of the sect are the Basava Purana and Chenna

Basava Purana.

They consist of tales and miraculous stories regarding their gurus and saints.

Some of the sayings of Basava and other gurus like the woman guru Akka Mahadevi are called "Vachanas".

1.2.4 SIKHISM

This religion was founded by Guru Nanak of the state of West Punjab of Pakistan. He was born on 15th April 1469 in a humble cottage at Talwandi in the district of Lahore.

The Pathans who were originally from Afghanistan were ruling many parts of North India, including the Punjab. The condition of the ordinary people was very unsatisfactory in all respects. Undue importance was given to rituals and very few cared for real spiritual life.

From his childhood, Nanak was of spiritual temperament, and his teachers and school masters were astonished to see his sincere devotion and inborn knowledge about spiritual matters. Every day after school, his father asked him to look after the cattle and to take them for grazing. While the cattle grazed, Nanak would be sitting under a tree absorbed in deep contemplation.

He was punished severely many times for neglecting his duty. But every time, he was miraculously saved by an invisible hand. Once his father gave him twenty rupees (the currency in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh) to do some "good, beneficial and truthful work". Nanak spent the entire amount in feeding

some sadhus (holy men) and felt immense satisfaction that he had obeyed his father's wishes in the true spirit.

Seeing his non-attachment to worldly things even at this tender age, people came to the conclusion that he was born to fulfil a divine purpose.

A few years later, he started his mission of spreading a new gospel to propagate divine love. He was opposed by the Pathan emperor, scholars, both Hindus and Muslims. But his spirituality, devotion and honesty of purpose soon silenced everybody. His critics became convinced of the sincerity of his purpose, and they became his followers. Nanak travelled extensively throughout India, and also travelled abroad and visited Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, Persia (Iran), and Kabul in Afghanistan, and other places. Wherever he went, he spread his catholic and universal message which was accepted with great regard by Hindus and Muslims alike. The main theme of his message was :

God is one, God is love, God is unity. The same God resides in the Hindu temple and in the Muslim mosque as well. All human beings

are equal in the eyes of God. They are born and they die in the same manner. Devotion to God and service to mankind, irrespective of caste, creed or colour are the duties of everyone.

He was regarded as a Sadguru or true spiritual leader by the time he was forty years old. His disciples came to be known as Sikhs. He taught through verses that came to him from heaven through divine inspiration and communion with God. The collection of most of his teachings is called Japji Sahib and the famous Guru Granth. These two holy books are literally worshipped by all Sikhs with devotion and sincerity.

Guru Nanak was loved and adored by both Hindus and Muslims. After he died in 1539, both the religious groups claimed to dispose of his body according to their respective customs. But when the shroud was removed next morning, there was only a heap of beautiful flowers, instead of the Guru's body.

Poet Nannihal Singh Layal has beautifully described him as;
Pure he was; purity he preached.
Lovely he was; so love he preached.
Humble he was; so humility he preached.
Divine he was; so divinity he preached.

*Apostle of peace and justice he was,
Incarnation of equality and purity he was,*

Devotion and Bhakti he pleaded of course.

Give Nanak's message to all.

That God above all is the Lord of all.

Sikhism accepted some of the the basic doctrines of Hinduism. The religion is strictly monotheistic, believing in nothing but the one Supreme God. He is absolute, all pervading and eternal. He is the Creator, the Cause of causes, without enmity, without hatred, both immanent in His creation and transcendent to it. The two basic postulates of Sikhism are that life is not sinful in its origin having emanated from a pure source, and remains pure in essence even in its existence. Sikhism says that no caste is high or low, no man is condemned a sinner or a sanctified being.

God is one, but He has innumerable forms. He is the creator of all, and He himself takes human form. He has no enemy and He is beyond death and free from rebirths. There is only One Being who is the Creator and the uncaused Cause of all. He has created the whole universe through His ever-acting will which is diffused throughout.

1.3 RELIGIONS WHICH CAME FROM OUTSIDE INDIA

1.3.1 CHRISTIANITY

This religion was founded by Jesus Christ 2001 years ago in the part of the world which is called Israel now.

After the passing away of Jesus Christ. St Thomas, one of his disciples arrived on the west coast of In-

dia in the region what is now called the state of Kerala at this time and could convert some of the local inhabitants to the faith of Jesus Christ. He travelled along the coast southwards up to KanyaKumari in Tamilnadu state, and then travelled north to the location where the big city of Chennai (Madras) stands. There, he was killed by an arrow shot accidentally by a Brahmin on a hillock which is now called the St.Thomas Mount. That is how the legend goes. These Christians of Kerala state who were converted by St.Thomas were for a long time known as St.Thomas Christians, and are now known as Syrian Christians, because for a long time they were influenced by the Syrian church, and the language used for worship was the Syriac language. At present, they use the Malayalam language which is the language spoken by the people of Kerala, as well as the English language.

Later on in the fifteenth century A.D., when the Portugese came to India as traders, a fairly large number of people on the west coast of India as well as some people in the state of West Bengal were converted to Roman Catholic Christians. Gradually the Roman Catholic missionaries spread out to other parts of India, and converted fairly large numbers in the states of Tamiladu, Karnataka Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and a few others in the rest of the country. The British, German, Danish and Dutch protestant missionaries converted some people all over the country, more in the southern states than in the north. However, the Christians form

only about two percent of India's population, and they are concentrated mostly in the urban areas, except in the State of Kerala where they are about twenty percent of the total population of the state. The Roman Catholics form about two-thirds of the total Christian population

JESUS or JESUS CHRIST was born to Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem in Judea, which is now in the country of Israel. After Joseph married Mary, an angel appeared before him in a dream and said "And she (MARY) will bring forth a son, and you will call him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins". Soon after his birth, some wise men came from the East and asked Herod, the king, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and have come to worship him". Herod became terribly afraid and ordered the massacre of all the new-born children, so that his enemy may be nipped in the bud.

Jesus was saved from the wrath of Herod as his father fled with him to Egypt. After the death of Herod, Jesus came to Galilee and then to Nazerath > He was baptised in the Jordan river by John the Baptist, and as soon as he was baptised, he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him and a voice from heaven was heard saying, "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased".

Till now, no light has been thrown on his life of spiritual practices, but it is said that after being baptised, he was not seen for about forty days. Afterwards, he was tempted in various ways by Satan, but he was al-

ways watchful and conscious of his divine mission. Satan could not do anything.

From that time onwards, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand". One by one, the twelve famous apostles were commissioned. Accompanied by them, Jesus went from village to village spreading his new Gospel, healing the sick, consoling the troubled, and even bringing back the dead to life. Hundreds of thousands gathered around him, showered their love and affection on him, and he was hailed as the King of the Jews. This aroused jealousy and hatred in the minds of the vested interests and they accused him, most unjustly and falsely in a false trial, and ultimately, and most inhumanly, crucified him to death.

But Jesus, as he was of divine origin, having only love and affection and compassion even at the time of crucifixion, prayed to God saying, "O Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do".

Jesus was an ideal preacher, the truest friend and guide of mankind and a repository of all rare virtues. His patience and meekness in suffering are like everlasting rocks which we may hold on to when tossed in the tempest of life. His poverty has sanctified the home of the poor, his love for the fallen and downtrodden fills the earth by innumerable works of benevolence and sympathy.

His unique suffering even in untold suffering sweetens our cup of woe. Christ was very liberal in his teachings, and never wished to force his opinions on others against their will, and he said "I am not come to

destroy, but to fulfil". Christ said that when one's heart is pure, one would see God and no one could stop. No church, no priest, nothing could keep a pure heart away from seeing God. His teachings are so noble and so liberal and so universal, because he was an incarnation of God.

May his words in the following pages collected from various sources enrich and enlighten our lives :

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteous' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you, when men shall revile you and shall say all manners of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt has lost its flavour, wherewith shall it be salted ? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on the hill cannot be hid

Men light a candle, and put it on a candlestick; and it gives light to all in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good work and glorify your Father in Heaven.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets : I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.

For verily I say, till heaven and earth pass one jet or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Whosoever therefore break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

COMMANDMENTS

And you shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, and this is the first commandment.

And the second is this : You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than this.

Do not kill. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness.

If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have, give to the poor and come and follow me. And you will have treasure in heaven.

HOW TO PRAY

When you pray, don't pray like the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corner of the streets, that they may be seen by others. Verily they have their reward,

Enter your closet, shut the door, and pray to your Father who sees you in secret and shall reward you openly.

Therefore pray : Our Father who is in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil; for yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

Take heed that you do not give alms making it a show; otherwise you will have no reward of your Father in Heaven.

But when you give alms, let your left hand not know what your right hand does. Your alms be in secret and your Father who sees it in secret shall reward you openly.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt them, and where thieves break through and see.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Don't worry thinking, what shall we eat ? Or what shall we drink or what shall we wear ? For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

1.3.2 ISLAM

Islam came to India soon after Prophet Muhammed preached his new Faith in Saudi Arabia in the early part of the seventh century A.D. Arabs were coming to India for centuries before this time as traders, travelling by boats and crossing the Arabian Sea and landing on the west coast of India. The early traders did not bring their women and so married some of the local women who were Hindus. One of these communities which arose as a result of these marriages are the present Moplas of Kerala, who are a prominent trading community of that state. The word Mopla means (son-in-law) in the Malayalam language which is spoken in Kerala state. Some of the trading Muslim communities of coastal Gujarat state, called the Khojas and Bohras also originated in the same manner. These early communities have still preserved some of the original social practices of the Hindus of that region, for example, the matriarchal system of Kerala by the Moplas.

The Arabs came as conquerors later on in the eighth century A.D. and had conquered what is now a Province of Pakistan, namely Sind, in the eighth century A.D. But they had to withdraw after a short time.

It was the invasions of Muhammed of Ghazni in Afghanistan, which finally brought hordes and hordes of Muslims into Northwest India, mainly the Punjab who came to conquer and plunder the wealthy country of India, after 1000 A.D. He was followed by Muhammed of Ghori also in Afghani-

stan, who also was a plunderer. Finally Kutubuddin, one of the generals of Mumammed of Ghori proclaimed himself King of Delhi and his successors ruled from 1206 to 1526. During these years, they spread themselves southwards, and converted many people to their faith of Islam.

Today, the followers of Islam called the Muslims form about fifteen percent of the population of India, and they are a little more concentrated in the urban areas than in the rural areas, except in the disputed state of Kashmir where they are in a strong majority.

The founder of Islam was MUHAMMED who was born in 570 A.D. in Mecca in Saudi Arabia. At that time, the country was in a religious unrest. The Arab nomadic tribes were mainly idol worshippers, worshipping stars and stones and fetishes. There were many Jewish colonies which had been established after the destruction of Jerusalem five hundred years earlier. The chief of these sects were the Nestorians and the Iryans and the Saballions; but many other forms of religious practices were existing at that time. There were also people called Hanifs who did not attach themselves to any of these religious groups.

Even before the time of Muhammed, the people were eager for an urgent need for moral reform. In fact, they were expecting a new Messiah to appear and found a new religion. In fact, the ground had been prepared for a great social and religious revolution.

The time was ripe when the man appeared in the form of MUHAMMED. His father had died before he was born, and he lost his mother at the age of six years. He was brought up by his uncle Abu Talib, who though not a believer in the Prophet's mission, remained Muhammed's best friend throughout his life.

At the age of twenty-five years, the uncle helped Muhammed to obtain the job of a camel driver with a rich widow named Khadija, and Muhammed took charge of her caravan carrying merchandise to Syria. Pleased with his successful management, Khadija married Muhammed, and thus, Muhammed became a very rich man. After his marriage, he did not pay much attention to his business, and he started spending a good deal of his time in lonely meditation.

He was forty years old, when Muhammed received his first divine 'revelation' in the solitude of the mountains near Mecca, from which time onward, he felt he had a mission in life, mainly to uplift his people from the depth of moral degradation and debased idolatry. He proclaimed that God had inspired him to be His messenger to mankind! He communicated this revelation to none but his immediate relatives and to a faithful friend Abu Baqar. He was haunted for a long time by the divinity of his mission. His close friends and his partner in life put heart and courage in him, so that he cast off his fear, and he slowly became convinced that he had a mission and a duty to perform. He started denouncing idolatry and superstitious practices, he was

bitterly persecuted by the people of Mecca, and he suffered many indignities. However he persevered in his divine mission. His own uncle begged him to stop his attempt to convert the people of Mecca, but Muhammed said "Though they give me the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to bring me back from my undertaking, I will not wait till the Lord carry this cause of mine to victory, or till I die for it"

The number of his followers grew slowly, and in four years only forty people embraced Islam. Due to the persistent prosecution of the people of Mecca, he migrated to Madina where he made many more converts. The Muslim era or Hijra dates from the day he fled from Mecca to Madina. The people of Madina were friendly with him and his followers increased in numbers, and he was recognized as the ruler of that city and of powerful tribes. Missionaries were sent to all parts of Arabia and to neighbouring countries including Egypt and Persia. A year later, he returned to Mecca and celebrated the pilgrimage in peace in this city which belonged to his enemies earlier. He ended his strenuous life in the year 632 A.D. (11A.H. of the Hijra era). His parting words were "Each man must work out his own salvation". Though Muhammed is no more, his divine influence continues wherever Islam lives.

ISLAM

"What is Islam?" I asked Prophet Muhammed. He said "Abstinence and obedience". Then I asked him what was most excellent in man. He said, "An amiable disposition".

“Which is the most excellent Hijra?” he said “Abandoning that which God disapproves of”. “I ask you, Prophet by the glory of the Lord (to say) with what has God sent you to us ?” The prophet said, “With Islam”. I said “What are the commandments of Islam?” He said, “That you say, I submit myself to God the Most High, and I am solely His; and that you be steadfast in prayer and give alms”.

I said “O Prophet of God, tell me a word about Islam that may be enough for me, and I may not have to ask any one about it after you”. The Prophet said, “Say you, I believe in God, and then keep straight on”.

A man said, “O Prophet of God. which is the best part of Islam?” He said, “That you give food to the hungry, and extend greetings to all whom you know and whom you know not”.

Monopoly is unlawful in Islam.

The distinctive virtue of Islam is modesty.

Whoso walks with a wrongdoer that he may strengthen him knowing all the while that he is a wrong doer, has departed from Islam.

Islam is purity of speech and hospitality.

Death is a favour to a Muslim. Remember and speak well of your dead, and refrain speaking ill of them.

The greatest enemies of God are those who are entered into Islam, and do acts of infidelity, and who without cause, shed the blood of men.

Charity is a duty unto every Muslim. He who has not the means thereto, let him do a good act or abstain from a evil one. That is his charity.

When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; commit not fornication; be chaste; have no impure desires; withhold your hand from striking and from taking that which is unlawful and bad. The best of God’s servants are those who, when seen, remind one of God; And the worst of God’s servants are those who carry tales about to do mischief and separate friends, and seek for the defects of the good.

He who believes in one God and the life beyond, let him not injure his neighbours.

A true Muslim is thankful to God in prosperity, and is resigned to His Will in his adversity.

Whoever desires the world and his riches should do so in lawful manner in order to withhold himself from begging, and for a livelihood for his family, and for being kind to his neighbour.

He is not of us who is not affectionate to the little ones and does not respect the reputation of the old; and he is not of us who does not order that which is lawful, and prohibit that is unlawful.

That person is not a perfect Muslim who eats his fill and leaves his neighbours hungry.

The exercise of religious duties will not atone for the fault of an abusive tongue. A man cannot be a Muslim till his heart and tongue are soft.

God is gracious to him who earns his living by his own labour and not by begging.

Adore God as you would if you see Him; if you see Him not, He sees you.

The faithful are those who perform their trust and fail not in their

word, and keep their pledges.

He dies not who gives life to learning.

Go in quest of knowledge even unto China, that is, even unto the

edge of the earth.

Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

He who knows his own self knows God.

2. *STORIES OF RELIGIOUS TEACHERS*

2.1. SHIVA AS AN OUTCASTE CONFRONTS SHANKARACHARYA

The great Acharya was surrounded by disciples at Varanasi, shone like the sun. like the heavenly Kalpataru (sacred tree) amidst its flowers, and like Indra girdled by his thousand eyes. The following incident happened at this time on one summer noon. The rays of the midday sun, a prototype of the third eye of Shiva on his forehead, were like sparks of fire, as they struck the granite slabs and scattered around. The great magician, the Sun, was creating here and there pools of water on the parched sands, while simultaneously spreading out carpets of peacock feathers of various hues on crystalline pavements. To shield themselves from the heat of the sun, the swans had hidden themselves amidst the cluster of lotuses, the swarms of fish had all migrated to the midstream, and the peacocks had betaken themselves to caves, and the other birds to the hollows on the trees. At this time. the great Shankaracharya, wishing to do his midday rites, walked with his

disciples to the river Ganga at Varanasi, whose waters looked discoloured by the pollen of lotus flowers. On the way, he came across a hunter, an outcaste, approaching him with his pack of four dogs. The Acharya's disciples ordered him to move away to some distance and give them way.

However, the hunter asked, "You are always going about preaching that the Vedas teach the non-dual Brahman to be the only reality and that He is immutable and unpollutable. If this is so, how has this sense of difference overtaken you ? There are hundreds of Sanyasins going about, and indulging in high sounding philosophical talk, donning the ochre robe and exhibiting the other insignias of holy life like the water pot and the staff. But not even a ray of knowledge having found entrance into their hearts, their holy exterior serves only to dupe householders. You asked me to move aside and make way for you. To whom were your words addressed, O learned sir ?

The body which comes from the same source and performs the same functions in the case of both a Brahmana (Brahmin) and an outcaste. The Atman, the witnessing Consciousness, is the same in all unaffected by anything that is of the body. How does such differences as “This is a Brahmana, this is an outcaste” arise in non-dual experience ? O revered teacher, is the sun changed in the least if it reflects in a liquor pot or in the holy Ganga? How can you indulge in a false statement such as, “Being a Brahmana I am pure, and you dog eater, must therefore give way for me.”

After hearing the hunter, the great Sannyasin noted for his truthfulness and unblemished life, spoke to the man as follows “ All that you have said is true. You are indeed, one of the noblest of men. Your words of wisdom make me abandon the idea that you are an outcaste. In this world, many hear about the truth of the Vedanta; many contemplate on them; and many meditate on the Atman. A person who sees the whole world as Atman only, whose mind is unshakably established in that conviction – is worthy of worship, irrespective of whether he is a Brahmana or an outcaste by birth. I am the same Pure Consciousness which shines alike in MahaVishnu as also in flies. All objective phenomena are false. He who is established in this Consciousness is my Guru worthy of respect, even if he is an outcaste by

birth. A man established in such an awareness is, indeed, a Guru to me”

Scarcely had the Acharya finished speaking, when the outcaste disappeared from sight, and in his place appeared Lord Shiva with the crescent moon in His matted locks and the four Vedas accompanying Him. Shankaracharya was moved by joy, awe and devotion, and he began to glorify Shiva with a hymn of praise, “I am Thy servant when I am conscious of myself as the body. I am Thy part, O Three-eyed one, when the awareness of Jiva (life) dawns on me. When the Atman Consciousness becomes established, I recognize myself as one with Thee. Such indeed is the teaching of all scriptures, by realizing which all the dullness of ignorance within and without is eradicated; to contain which there is no receptacle; to burnish which there is no grinding stone; to excavate which there is no mine; and to attain which the all renouncing monks make great efforts in solitude – to that Being, the crest jewel of all Shastras (treatises), my Salutations ! The Shastra is of no use unless it is accompanied by the teacher’s grace. Grace is useless unless it generates “awakening”; and “awakening” is purposeless unless it gives the knowledge of the Supreme Truth. To the Supreme Truth, who is not different from myself and who fills the understanding and wondrous rapture, my salutations !”

2.2. THE WIFE OF RAMANUJACHARYA

More than eight hundred years ago, Ramanujacharya, the great Hindu teacher who established the school of Vedantic thought known as Visishta Dvaita, lived incognito in a village named Saligrama in Mysore district of the present state of Karnataka, which is near another village called Mirle. Saligrama had a grandeur of its own during the time of the Hoysalas who reigned at Dorasamudra in the present Hassan district of Karnataka. The village and its streets, the tank and the wet paddy fields and garden below it, the Hindu temple and the Jain basti (pilgrim rest-house), and the great ponds in front and the stone shelter opposite : over all this there is a history of a of eight hundred years.

The Acharya (teacher) was born at Peramburdur which is near the big metropolitan city of Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu. He spent his youth in Kanchipuram nearby, and received consecration as the Head of the Shrivaisnava community at Srirangam in the southern part of Tamil Nadu. When his enemies tried to harm him in Srirangam, he had come away as a refugee to the country of the Hoysalas which was in the present state of Karnataka.

This land of the Hoysalas was a privileged land, and had given shelter to other religious groups earlier in history. When a great famine had occurred in the lands of the north more than a thousand years ago, a group of Jain ascetics had come here and taken shelter under the Hoysalas.

When the king of Srirangam became cruel. Ramanuja came here like a child which runs from an angry father to a kind uncle, and spent his time in this safety. There is a temple here on the outskirts of the town, having an image of Narasimha (lion-headed man, one of the incarnations of Vishnu) which the Acharya had worshipped. The people of the town and surroundings still worship at the temple. In a shrine at the temple is an image of the Acharya himself, so lifelike that you feel it is a person sitting and not an image.

In front of the temple are two ponds, in one of which, the people say, the Acharya used to wash his feet, and in the other he used to bathe.

Ramanuja was born into poverty, but recognized early as a boy of great gifts, and noted for his earnestness and learning. He became the leader of the school of thought which was so successful later on, and which he taught to thousands and illumined their lives.

Ramanuja was led to renounce the life of a householder by the foolish conduct of his wife. When he wished to honour one of his teachers, his wife prepared the food and served the teacher, cleaned the place where he had eaten, and because he was of a lower caste, she had taken her bath. The Acharya used to show great respect to the women in the teacher's family, but his wife had some differences with them at the common well, and had used bad words in talking to them.

The Acharya once came home late at night. His wife was sleeping then, but then the Acharya renounced the status of a householder, and became an ascetic. This way, he punished his wife. The Acharya was a man, to whom only his learning was important, and to him it was important to serve his religion. Should he have not been a little more tolerant and forgiving of his wife who was an ignorant woman ?

When the husband became an ascetic, his wife returned to the home of her parents. All this had happened in his native land, before Ramanuja had fled to the Hoysala country to escape his enemies in Srirangam.

Leaving his native country, Ramanuja safely reached by the way of Satyamangala, the land of the Hoysalas. The disciples of Ramanuja looked for a place that would be suitable for an ascetic and also be safe from any pursuer from Srirangam in the Chola country. Saligrama seemed to be the best place, and his disciples left one man to serve Ramanuja, and the others scattered themselves in the surrounding villages. Within a fortnight, the people of Saligrama found out what a great man was Ramanuja, and showed him all respect, and one of the residents of Saligrama started serving him, and the man from the Chola country felt that his master was safe, and he also went home.

The resident of Saligrama who did the service of the Acharya is known as the devotee of the north, and he was a Brahmin of the Bhagavata Tradition. He was a scholar in Sanskrit, and he had gone to Kanchi and

Srirangam and other centers of learning and had completed his studies in Vedanta. He had inherited the worship of Narasimha in the temple by heredity. When he saw that the ascetic Ramanuja had come to stay in the temple, he started serving the Acharya, and finding that he belonged to the same tradition as himself, he begged him to accept him as a disciple. The Acharya agreed, but the devotee could not find out who his teacher was. What would he gain by knowing the identity of his teacher? It was clear that he was a great man, and that was enough for the devotee. The devotee's respect and admiration grew day by day. The Acharya told him that he was eighty years old. The Acharya mostly attended to his own needs. The disciple would bring him in the afternoon one meal which he had prepared himself, and which he had placed before God for consecration. A cup of milk was enough at night. The rest of his time was spent in his ablutions and in repeating endless amounts of sacred texts.

The devotee was about forty years old, and had a wife and a son. After taking permission from the teacher, the devotee brought his wife Shyamalamba and his son Ramachandra also to serve the teacher.

Two years passed away. By this time, all of them came to know the identity of the teacher. The story of the teacher's life was communicated to the devotee and his wife under vows of secrecy. During this time, the Acharya mentioned that his wife did not understand him, and she had always done what he did not like.

One day, when the Acharya was bathing in the pond in front of the temple, it seemed that a woman was peeping at him from behind a peepul tree nearby. When she saw that the Acharya saw her, she hid herself behind the tree.

That night, the disciple was speaking to the teacher, and told him that a woman from the southern country had arrived at his house, accompanied by an old lady. They were both on a pilgrimage to all the holy shrines in this part of the country. The old lady had fallen ill, and they were told to seek help from the devotee. His wife Shyamalamba agreed to keep both of them till the old lady was better and ready to leave for other places of pilgrimage.

Next day, the Acharya learnt that two of his disciples in Tondanur were ill, and had a fever that looked like an epidemic. He went to Tondanur with the devotee, and spent a day with his disciples, and then returned to Saligrama. The same day when he arrived, the Acharya caught fever. For three days, the Acharya ignored the fever, and continued his daily life as usual. On the fourth day, there was a shooting pain in the limbs and high fever. He sat against the wall with his feet stretched out, and he resisted when Shyamalamba tried to massage the legs. But the devotee who was Shyamalamba's husband told him, "Is it not proper for your daughter and son-in-law to massage your feet and legs in pain?" The whole day, the lady and her son Ramachandra pressed his feet and legs. The fever continued and the shooting pain increased. Shyama-

lamba's husband spent the whole day and night in the worship of Narasimha, praying for the recovery of the teacher.

One night, Shyamalamba must have fallen asleep, while she was massaging the feet of the Acharya. She got up all of a sudden, and heard the Acharya crying out, "Who is it? Who is it?". She saw someone walking away from the Acharya, in the faint light of a little lamp. She asked the Acharya what had happened and why he cried out, but he did not reply, but lay down in peace again, repeating the names of God. When she went to her husband and told him about the incident, he only said that one of the Alwars might have come to look after the Acharya. Shyamalamba was glad to hear this, because she realized how dear the Acharya was near to the Powers of Heaven.

Next day, by God's grace, the teacher was much better, and he took a little food. When she went home, Shyamalamba found that the lady who was her guest, was lying down on her bed with fever. Shyamalamba gave her some medicine and some food, and then came back to the temple to take care of the teacher. The teacher was telling her husband of a dream he had the previous night. He was telling him that he felt that somebody else other than Shyamalamba was pressing his feet in his dream. But Shyamalamba did not tell them that she had seen somebody else walking away from him when she woke up from her sleep. By some miracle, the teacher was able to resume his routine the very next day.

After a few days, the lady who

had come from the southern country and who was Shyamalamba's guest became worse and passed away. Before she died, she begged Shyamalamba's husband to perform her obsequies, and he did it as his duty. When Shyamalamba came to the Acharya next day, she was very perturbed, and wished to speak to the teacher, but could not because of her grief. The day after that, her husband also seemed to be perturbed, but Shyamalamba was more calm and told the Acharya that the lady from the southern country had told her that she was the Acharya's wife before he became an ascetic. This information produced no change in the look on the teacher's face. He only ut-

tered God's name. Shyamalamba said to the teacher "The Acharya's wife told me to pray for pardon at his feet, and I promised to do so. I beg that the Acharya should vouchsafe that pardon".

The Acharya only said "Very well, mother, I have forgiven. For each one of us, a course of life is prescribed. Each one of us have to go in the way prescribed and reach his or her destination". The Acharya called Ramachandra and asked him to repeat the verses of prayer to Narasimha. Ramachandra said in his sweet voice, "O God, hold me by thy hand and save me". The Acharya, Shyamalamba and her husband heard the verses with much pleasure.

2.3. ANDAL, THE REMARKABLE WOMAN WHO WOULD MARRY NONE BUT THE LORD

Between the fifth and ninth centuries A.D., many saints called Alvars revitalized the Indian religious milieu in Tamilnadu which is the Tamil speaking area of South India. They sparked a renewal of devotional worship throughout the area. Travelling from place to place, from temple to temple, from holy site to holy site, they composed exceedingly beautiful poetry in praise of their Divine Beloved Lord Vishnu, as an expression of love for Him. Their poetry was both impassioned and philosophical, attracting all classes of people to their faith. In doing so, they developed a new religious heritage of intensely emotional Bhakti, or love of the Divine, whose impact is still felt today in Indian religious life.

Andal, whose life and poetry are

celebrated every December-January, is the most important contributor to this heritage. The life of Andal is remarkable in its romantic simplicity. A devout Brahmin named Vishnucitta lived in Srivilliputtur, a small town near Madurai in Tamilnadu. His daily duties included procuring flowers for the worship of the Lord at the local temple. One morning, as he went about his duties, he discovered a baby girl lying under a Tulsi (basil) plant in the flower garden. Having no family of his own, he felt it was God's grace that gave him this child, and named her "Kodhai", and he raised her as his own daughter. The word "Kodhai" means "Gift of Mother Earth".

Kodhai grew up in an atmosphere of love and devotion. Vishnucitta

sang songs to her about his beloved Krishna, but also taught her all the stories and philosophy he knew. He also shared with her his love of Tamil poetry. The daughter learnt the love that her father had for his beloved Lord, which intensified in her. Before long, she was passionately in love with Lord Krishna. Even as a child, Kodhai made up her mind to marry none but the Lord of Brindavana, and refused to think of any human being in similar terms. She imagined what it would be like to be his bride, playing the role of His beloved, and enjoying His presence. Unknown to her father, she adorned herself with the flower garland he prepared for the Lord at the temple. After admiring her reflection and thinking of herself as His real bride, she would put the garland back for her father to take to the temple and offer her to the Lord.

One day, Vishnucitta noticed a strand of Kodhai's hair on one of the garlands. Shocked and saddened by this desecration of what was meant only for the Lord, he scolded Kodhai for her misuse of the garland and discarded it. He carefully prepared a new one and offered it to the Lord, begging His pardon all the while. That night, the Lord appeared to Vishnucitta in his dream and asked him why he discarded Kodhai's garland instead of offering it to Him. He told Vishnucitta that He missed the scent of Kodhai's body in the flowers, and that He preferred them that way. Would he please continue to give the garlands once worn by Kodhai? Overcome with emotion, Vishnucitta awoke and cried tears of both

joy and remorse. It dawned on him that his daughter was someone whose love of God was so intense and pure that even he had not comprehended its extent. Her spiritual greatness was such that the Lord Himself wished to share her presence. From this day on, she became known as "Andal", the girl who ruled over the Lord.

Andal blossomed into a beautiful young woman, as she came of marriageable age. When asked to marry, she stubbornly refused, saying that she would only marry Sri Ranganatha, the Lord at the great temple town of Srirangam (near Tiruchirappalli). Vishnucitta despaired, wondering what was to become of his daughter.. One night, Lord Ranganatha appeared in his dream and asked that Andal be sent to Him in all her wedding finery. Simultaneously, the Lord appeared before the priests at Srirangam and asked them to prepare for the coming of Andal. Vishnucitta once again was filled with both joy and sadness. He made all the wedding preparations and arranged for Andal's journey in a palanquin to Srirangam.

Andal waited with excited anticipation as the wedding party approached Lord Ranganatha's shrine. As they entered the temple, she jumped out of the palanquin, unable to restrain herself any longer. Running into the temple sanctum, she embraced Lord Ranganatha and disappeared in a blaze of glory, having joined her Lord. She was only fifteen years old at that time.

Andal is now one of the best loved poet-saints of the Tamil people. Pious

tradition reckons her to be the veritable descendent of Bhumi Devi (Mother Earth) in bodily form to show to humanity the way to His lotus feet. She is present in all Shri vaishnava temples in India and elsewhere, next to her Lord, as she always desired.

The story of Andal as presented above is undoubtedly historically true in most important respects. Today, the tulasi garden in which she was found is preserved in Srivilliputtur. Vishnucitta's house, adjacent to Lord Vishnu's temple, has been converted into a temple in honour of Andal, and it contains the well in which she admired her reflection while wearing the Lord's garlands.

Most of all, Andal is remembered for her poetry, in which she often strikes autobiographical notes about her love for the Lord. She describes herself as a young girl, still not fully mature, pining away for Him. She beseeches her friends, the god of love, and even animals for help in her quest to attain Him. Finally, she describes her good fortune of being the daughter of Vishnucitta, the best of the devout, who lives in Srivilliputtur, and adores the Lord.

Andal composed two poetical works in her short life. Both are in Tamil and are unique in their literary and philosophical, religious and artistic content. Her contribution is even more remarkable considering that she was a teenager when she composed these poems., and at a time when there is no other record of Tamil women composing poetry. Andal's

verses display a literary and religious maturity far beyond her years.

Her first work is the Tiruppavai, a poem of thirty verses in which Andal imagines herself to be a cowherd girl during the incarnation of Lord Krishna. She yearns to serve Him and achieve happiness not just in this birth but for all eternity, and describes what religious vow she and the other cowgirls will take for this purpose.

The second is the Nachiyar Tirumozhi, a poem of 143 verses, literally meaning "Sacred Sayings"

The impact of these works on the daily religious life of the Tamilians has been tremendous, just like the Ramayana. People never get tired of listening to the Tiruppavai. The poems are recited by men, women and children of all ages in TamilNadu. There are translations in other Indian languages like Kannada, Telugu, Hindi and English.

Vishnucitta is also known as "Perialwar" or the "Great Alwar". The only other woman close to Andal's time was Karaikkal Ammaiyar, a Tamil devotee who lived between the 5th and 6th centuries.

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3. THE CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

The caste system among the Hindus of India is very old and probably is as old as two thousand five hundred years or more. The system was based on occupation or trade. The highest caste in the ladder is the Brahmin caste, which consisted of the learned people like teachers, people who were well versed in the Vedas and the Upanishads which are the sacred texts on which the Hindu religion is based, and the priests who perform the religious ceremonies.

The second highest caste is the Kshatriya caste, which consisted of the rulers of the country and also the warriors and soldiers who protected the country from the enemies. The Brahmins taught them enough learning to do their jobs well, but not intricacies and complexities of the religious texts.

The third caste is the Vaishya caste to which belonged the merchants, traders, artisans and so on. This group was also given enough learning by the Brahmins to carry out their trades.

The fourth caste are the Sudras who are the farmers, agricultural workers and so on. Some of them are literate and some illiterate.

The fifth caste called Panchamas consisted of landless labourers and those who did the menial jobs like cleaning the latrines or privies, disposal of garbage, and so on. This caste probably consisted of the people who did not cooperate with the conquerers, who came down as hordes of foreigners from the mountain passes like the Khyber and Bolan passes in the high Hindu Kush mountains in the North Western corner of the country. This country was approximately the undivided India before 1947, and consists of the present Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Some of them might have been the original inhabitants of the vast forests and mountains which covered a large part of the country many years ago.

In the earlier days, the above mentioned castes were not strictly watertight compartments, so that a person could cross over from one caste to another, depending on his capabilities and aptitudes.

Gradually, over hundreds of years, each caste developed many subcastes. Each subcaste specialised in some special occupation, or were a group of people who migrated from a

different region of the country and wished to keep to their own customs, or differed in their opinions and wished to form their own subcaste,

and so on and so on for various other reasons.

3.1. THE HINDU CASTE SYSTEM IN KARNATAKA

In the year 1876 A.D., according to a detailed census operation carried out by the Government of Mysore,

Hindus formed 93.84 %, Jains formed 0.27%, Muslims formed 5.11%, Christians formed 0.77 percent, and other religions like Parsies, Sikhs and so on formed the remaining part of the population.

This picture remained almost the same till 1947, when India became independent, and the country was partitioned into India and Pakistan. After this date, there was some movement of the population from states like the Punjab to other regions of the country. Also in the 1950's, the larger Karnataka State was formed consisting of the regions where the Kannada language is spoken. This probably slightly increased the number of Sikhs who came from the Punjab, but the percentages were not altered very much. After more than fifty years of independence, India's population has almost trebled, and now has crossed the billion mark, and is now the second most populous country in the world, the first country being China.

In 1876, the census enumerated about 66 castes and subcastes among the Hindus, the larger ones being

Wokkaliga (or Vokkaliga), Holeyya, Lingayita, Kuruba, Madiga, Beda, Brahmana (or Brahmin), Golla, Banajiga, and Wodda, in order of number of people.

The same castes have continued till today, the number of people in each caste having increased by leaps and bounds due to better medical facilities, and lack of family planning facilities. Over the last few decades, the better educated of the country, whichever religion or caste they belong to, have learned to limit their families. This gives a ray of hope that some of India's problems will find some suitable solutions.

Each of the five major castes have several subcastes, the total number of castes running into hundreds.

Marriages between a young man and a young woman is usually arranged by the parents and close relatives within the same subcaste. This is done by taking into consideration the educational levels, the economic levels, the looks including the heights, widths and colour of the skin, and most importantly the matching of the horoscopes, the stars under which he or she is born, and the gotras of the two families.

The gotras are the names of the sages of long ago, from whom the father of the boy or girl was descended, and it is entirely in the male line. Until the girl marries, she belongs to the gotra of her father, and after her marriage, she assumes the gotra of her husband. All the higher castes have gotras, and these include Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas. Some of the important gotras are

Bharadwaja, Kashyapa, Vishwamitra, Vasishta, Srivatsa, Atreya, Kaushika, Kaundinya, Harita, Gautama, Jamadagni, Angirasa, Vadhula, Sandilya, Maudgalya., Maunabhar-gava, Gargyayana, Sathamarsana, etc. etc. A man and a woman of the same gotra are not supposed to marry. The other castes have also gotras and some of the gotras may be

different from the ones mentioned above.

Since I was born in a Brahmin family, and since I know a little more about Brahmins than about the other castes, I shall now write more about the Brahmins of Karnataka State, and in particular, of the old Mysore State.

3.2 THE BRAHMINS OF KARNATAKA

The Brahmins are the highest caste in the Hindu caste system. In addition to the gotra of a Brahmin, there is the Sakha, the particular branch or school of the Veda which each Brahmin professes to follow.

Hence they are divided into Rigvedis, Yajurvedis and Samavedis.

The Brahmins are divided into three main sects, namely, the Smarthas, the Madhvas, and the Shrivaisnavas. The Smarthas are the largest in number, followed by the Madhvas, and then come the Shrivaisnavas. These sects are the followers of the three great teachers of Hinduism (the Vedic religion), Shankaracharya, Madvacharya and Ramanujacharya, respectively.

In the middle of the fifth century B.C., Gautama Buddha of the Sakya clan who ruled in the part of India which is now in the present state of Bihar in North India, abandoned his royal home, became a mendicant and finally attained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree in South Bihar at a place called Gaya. He continued his efforts for forty-five long years from this time on to his death, by which he entered Nirvana, all the while preaching the teaching of wisdom and com-

passion. His preachings came to be known as Buddhism, one of the great world religions.

During the time of Ashoka, the third ruler of the Maurya dynasty which ruled North India, who ruled from 268 to 232 B.C., the teachings of Gautama Buddha spread throughout India and beyond the boundaries of the country. Ashoka was involved in a war against the kingdom of Kalinga (the present Orissa in the eastern part of the country). The disastrous conditions caused by this war changed the attitudes of Emperor Ashoka, and his character changed completely, and he became an earnest devotee of Gautama Buddha and his teaching of wisdom and compassion. Later Buddha's teachings spread to Ceylon (Srilanka), Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Vietnam, China and Japan, and these countries became Buddhist, and are remaining so even today. Buddhism travelled north to Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet and central Asia including Afghanistan. Today Tibet is the stronghold of Buddhism, and the Dalai Lama is the spiritual head of Buddhism.

In India, Buddhism held sway all

over the country till the middle of the eighth century A.D., when it had become rather belligerent and Buddhist scholars were abusing the Vedic scholars like Kumarila Bhatta.

With his scholarship, Kumarila Bhatta ground the Buddhist scholars in oil mills, meaning that he

thrashed them in debates completely. This made the people who believed in the Vedic religion (Hindu religion), open their eyes and minds so that they could think more clearly about their religion and try to interpret the Vedas in a more satisfactory manner.

3.2.1 SHRI SHANKARACHARYA

The first great scholar who did this was born in Keladi in the present state of Kerala, which is the southern most state of India in 788 A.D. He was consecrated as a Sannyasi (or ascetic) at the young age of eight years by a great ascetic named Govinda Yogi. Shankaracharya's whole life was spent in controversy with the scholars of several sects including Buddhists, Jains and others like Muslims and Christians. The Christians were already there in the region now called Kerala, being followers of St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ, who had arrived in this part of India in the early part of the first century A.D.

The Muslim religion Islam was founded by the prophet Mohamed in the seventh century A.D. in the region called Saudi Arabia at the present time. The Arabs who became his followers, had been good sailors and used to cross the Arabian Sea for hundreds of years and had come to the west coast of India, including the coast of Kerala. Some of them settled down in Kerala and married the local women, whom they converted to Islam. This Muslim community became known as the Moplahs of Kerala. The word Mopla is a corrupted form of Mapillai which means son-in-law in

the Malayalam language which is spoken in the Kerala region.

SANKARACHARYA travelled all over India and argued with scholars wherever he went. He went upto the Himalayas to Badrinath and Srinagar, visited Ayodhya in the present state of Uttar Pradesh, Gaya in Bihar, Jagannath-Puri in Orissa, Shrishaila in Andhra Pradesh, and finally came to Shringeri in Karnataka State..He finally established a mutt or hermitage at Shringeri and made a temple for Sharada (goddess of learning) at that place. This mutt is the headquarters of the followers of Shankaracharya, who are called SMARTHAS even today.

Shankaracharya wrote commentaries on the Upanishads, Vedanta Sutras and on the Bhagavadgita, and many others. He is the most celebrated of all the commentators, and his works are countless. All his writings are in Sanskrit. The sect founded by him, namely the Smarthas are the most unsectarian, allowing in fact all other objects of worship as manifestations of Shiva or Mahadeva.

The Vedantic system advocated by Shankara is pantheistic, and is based on the doctrine of Advaita, which means non-dualism,

whose meaning is that the Universe is not distinct from the Supreme Being. The important tenet of his followers is that they recognise Brahma Para Brahma as the only really existing being, who is the sole cause and supreme ruler of the Universe..Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu of the Hindu pantheon, cannot be identified with Brahma Para Brahma. To know the Supreme Being Brahma Para Brahma is the ultimate good.,and the attainment of complete wisdom results in Mukti (or libera-

tion or salvation). However the common man or woman cannot elevate their minds to the contemplation of this Supreme and only Being;, he or she may contemplate on inferior deities like Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Surya, Sakti, Ganesha, Bhairava and so on. Krishna is an incarnation of Vishnu, Surya is the Sun God, Sakti is Shiva's wife in the form of strength (also known as Kali, Durga and so on), Ganesha is the elephant-headed son of Shiva.

3.2.2 RAMANUJACHARYA

The founder of the Shrivaisnava sect, lived in the twelfth century A.D., and was born at Sri Peramudur near Madras (now renamed Chennai), and studied at Conjeevaram. He retired to the island of Srirangam which is at the parting of the rivers Kaveri and Coleroon, where he meditated and perfected his religious thinking. The chief religious tenet of Ramanuja is that Vishnu is Brahma, and is the cause and creator of all. Although his theory maintains that Vishnu and the universe are one, it denies that the deity has no form or quality, but on the other hand is endowed with all good qualities and with a two-fold form, namely the supreme spirit Paramatma or cause, and the gross one, the effect of which is the universe or matter. This doctrine is called the Visishtadvaita, or doctrine of unity with tributes.

Besides the primary and secondary forms as the creator and creation, the deity Vishnu has assumed different forms at different times for the benefit of his creatures, and

these are called His Avataras or Incarnations. Some of these important Avataras are Rama, Krishna, Buddha and so on.

Ramanuja travelled all over South India, preaching his theory and converting people from all sections of society, including Jains and people from all different castes of the Hindu society. One important convert of his was Vishnuvardhana who was the king of the Hoysala dynasty which was ruling the area which later became Mysore State. This king gave him full protection to settle down in Melkote, where Ramanuja established a mutt, whose head is called the Parakalaswami. He also established a mutt at Ahobala near Srirangam. He converted many Shiva temples to Vishnu temples, and this made him an enemy of the Chola king Karikala Chola who was a staunch Shivaite and who ruled the country around Srirangam. This was the reason why he fled to the Mysore country.

The followers of Ramanuja are

called Shrivaisnavas, and they are found today in the states of Tamiladu, Karnataka Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.

The followers of Shankaracharya are not only found in all the four southern states, namely, Kerala,

Tamiladu, Karnataka Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, but also in Maharashtra, and in Bengal and Assam who are devoted to Kali and Durga, who are the wives of Shiva, and represent Shakti or Strength.

3.2.3 MADHVACHARYA

The Founder of the Madhva sect of Brahmins, was born in Udipi in South Canara district of Karnataka state 1199 A.D. Just like Ramanujacharya, he was born a Smartha, but was converted to the Vaishnava faith. He started a religious movement which effected a compromise between the worship of Vishnu and Shiva. He set up shalagrams (a rounded stone representing Vishnu) at Udipi, Madhyatala and Subrahmanya. He also set up an image of Krishna at Udipi. Udipi is the chief seat of this sect. He lived in Udipi for many years and wrote a number of treatises. Later on, he went on a long tour, in which he triumphed over many teachers, and finally went to Badarikashrama at Badrinath in the Himalayas. He established eight temples of Vishnu having different forms all near Udipi, each one presided over by a Guru (or teacher). Each of these eight Gurus take their turn to officiate at the chief mutt (monastery) at Udipi for two years. Other Madhva mutts were established at Sosale in Mysore district, and at Holenarasipur in Hassan district.

Madhvacharya taught the creed of Dvaita or Duality, which says that Jivatma (or the principle of life) is distinct from Paramatma or the Supreme Being. According to him, life is

eternal, dependent on the Supreme, but is not identical with him. He rejected the doctrine of Moksha, which means the absorption into the universal spirit and loss of independent existence after death.

The 1941 census was the last census carried out in India by the British Indian Government, in which the Hindu castes and subcastes were enumerated. After the independence of India in 1947, the census has not taken the data on caste or subcaste, but only considered the religion of the person. Only the number of the fifth caste, namely, the Panchamas or what is now called the Scheduled castes, and the number of the tribal people living in forest and hill areas, and who are called the Scheduled tribes have been counted. The combined population of the above two groups of people is about 25 percent of the total population. The reason for counting these two classes of people, is to see that they get the reservations and scholarships, etc for their education, and also other privileges so that their economic and educational status improves, because they are the most neglected and backward section of Indian society. Hence there is no statistics regarding the number of people in the different castes.

As a rough guess, the Brahmins

of Karnataka may be around 4 to 5 percent of the total population of the state today.

The Brahmins of India, in general belong to the Pancha Gauda (the five tribes north of the the Vindhya mountains), or to the Pancha Dravida (the five tribes south of these mountains). The five Pancha Gauda tribes are Kanyakubja, Saraswata, Gauda, Maithila, and Utkala, while the five Pancha Dravida tribes are Karnataka or Kannada, Andhra or Telugu, Dravida or Tamil, Maharashtra or Mahrati, and Gurjara or Gujerati.

In Karnataka state, people belonging to all the above tribes are present in the State of Karnataka, though the most prominent are the Kannada, Telugu and Tamil speaking groups. Out of these three groups, the Kannada speaking Brahmins are the largest in number. All of them belong to one of three main sects, namely Smarthas, Madhvas and Shri vaishnavas. All of them belong to the groups of Vaidikas who devote themselves entirely to religion, or Laukikas who are engaged in worldly affairs. Different members of the same family may be either Vaidikas or Laukikas. The Vaidikas usually pass on their duties

to their children, so that the profession remains usually hereditary. Nowadays, due to rising cost of living, and due to the fact that the priestly group of Vaidikas cannot earn enough by keeping to their profession only, some of them try to earn more by engaging themselves in some other profession, and engaging themselves in their priestly profession only part time. Whether you are a Vaidika or a Laukika, depends also on your temperament and inclination.

Due to higher education among Brahmin women, women are in all the educated professions in fairly large numbers, and they are probably in larger numbers than men in professions like teaching, nursing and so on even in rural areas where educational level is lower than in urban areas. So they also belong to the group of Laukikas among the Brahmins. This picture is true even in the other castes where women are getting educated more and more. However, women have not entered the Vaidika group, though Hindus accept women as Gurus or religious teachers, and both men and women go in large numbers to such Gurus to learn from them and to seek their blessing.

3.3 THE BRAHMIN SUBCASTES OR SUBGROUPS OF KARNATAKA

The three main sects, namely the Smarthas, the Madhvas, and the Shri vaishnavas of Karnataka are again divided into subgroups, which are also called subcastes, which may be around seventy or eighty in

number. These subgroups probably originated from the areas they originally came from, or for some other reason..

These subgroups included under Smartha and Madhva, are, in alpha-

betical order, AdiShaiva,, Aravattu wokkalu,, Aruvelu, Aruvelu niyogi, Ashtasahasra, Badaganad, Bhagavata sampradaya, Bodhayana, Brihacharana, Chitpavan, Desastha, Devalaka, Shivaradhya, Dravida, Gauda Saraswata, Hale Karnataka, Havyaka, Hoysala Karnataka, Kamalalur, Kamme (Babbur, Kannada, Ulcha, and Vijayapura), Kandavara, Karade, Kasalnad, Katyayana, Kavarga, Kilnad, Konkanastha, Kota, Kotishwara, Kushasthala, Madhva, Mulikinad, Nambudri, Nandavaivida, Niyogi, Panchagrama, Praknad, Prathamashake, Sahavasi, Sanketi, Sarvarya, Saraswatha, Sirnad, Sisuvarga, Shivalli, Sukla Yajusakhe, Teleghanya, Tulava, Uttaradi, Vadama, Vadhyama, Vangipuram, Veginad, Velnad.

Some of the above groups which are larger in number are Badagnad, Desastha, Kamme (Babbur, Kannada and Ulcha), Mulikinad, Hoysala Karnataka, Dravida, Hale Karnataka, and Madhva. The Badagnad came from the northern districts and they speak Kannada; they are both Smarthas and Madhvas.. The Desasthas are immigrants from the state of Maharashtra, they speak Mahratti, and they are both Smarthas and Madhvas. The Babboor Kamme are all Smarthas, and they speak Kannada; there is a story that they came from Kashmir. I shall talk more about the Babboor Kammes later on, because I was born in a Babboor Kamme family. The Mulkinad came from the Andhra country, and they speak Telugu. The Jagat-guru' or the religious head of the Sringeri Mutt, which is the head-

quarters of the Smarthas, is usually selected from a Mulkinad family. The Hoysala Karnataka speak Kannada, and their ancestors were supposed to have been the priests and advisors of the Hoysala dynasty which ruled the region of Karnataka from the 11th to the fourteenth century A.D. The Dravida, Brihacharana and Pericharana are all immigrants from Tamilnadu, and they speak Tamil. The Hale Karnataka or Hale Kannada are mostly confined to the Mysore district, they speak Kannada and are Smarthas. The Mulkinad, Hoysala Karnataka, the Dravida, Brihacharana and Pericharana are also Smarthas.

The Sanketi are originally from Shencottai which is on the border of Tamilnadu and Kerala, and they speak a corrupt form of Tamil which is mixed with Kannada. They have two branches, the Kaushika and the Bettadapura, and they very rarely intermarry. They originally had settled in Mysore and Hassan districts. The Sanketi show reverence to a prophetess named Nachamma, who was their leader when they migrated from Shencottai. The Sirnad have two divisions, namely, the Hale Sirnad who are Smarthas, and the Hosa Sirnad who are Madhvas..Both the divisions speak Kannada, and are originally from Sira in Tumkur district. The Vengipuram and the Velnad are both Telugu speaking Smarthas.

The ShriVaishnavas have also have several subdivisions or subcastes, and they are in alphabetical order :- Bhattacharya, Embar, Hebbur, Hemmigevar, Kadambiyar,

Kandade, Kilnatar, Mandyattar, Maradurar, Metukunteyar, Morasanad, Muncholi, Nallanchakravarti, Prativadibhayankarattar, Someshandal, Thirumaleyar. The Bhattaryacharya are Tengale and generally Vaidikas, and they speak Telugu and Tamil. The Embale are Tengales and are originally from SrirSangam in Tamilnadu, and speak Tamil. Though they thought that the Hebbar were from Tamilnadu, recently there is a finding that they were originally Jains of Hassan district who were converted by Ramanujacharya. The word Hebbar is Kannada and it means the Brahmin headman of a village. They are both Tengale and Vadagale, and they speak a very corrupt form of Tamil. The Hemmigeayar are mostly Vaidikas and Vadagale, and speak Tamil, and they had earlier settled at Hemmige near Talkad in Mysore district, and lands were granted by the king of Mysore to their ancestor several hundreds of years ago, recognizing his scholarship. The Mandyattar are supposed to be immigrants from a village called Mandyam near The famous temple town of Tirupati in the state of Andhra pradesh, and speak Tamil. Tirupati is probably the Hindu temple in India which attracts the maximum number of pilgrims, and today the crowds are controlled by the temple staff, and each pilgrim in the the line ia allowed only a minute to take darshan (to see and receive blessings from the presiding diety Lord Sri Venkateshvara). Many of the temples built by Indian Hindus in the United States of America have Lord Sri Venkatesvara as

the presiding diety. The preists officiating at these temples dedicated to this diety are usually Sri Vaishnava brahmins. The Mandyattar Srivaishnava brahmins were originally settled in Mandya and Melukote situated in Mandya district of the present Karnataka state. This town of Mandya was named after Mandyam near Tirupati. The Maradurar were settled in Maddur in Mandya district, and they are Tengale and speak Tamil. The Metukunteyar speak Tamil and Telugu and are disciples of Parakala Swami of Melukote.

The Nallanchakravarti are Vadagale, originally from Conjeevaram in Tamilnadu, and were originally Vaidikas, and speak Tamil. The Prativadibhayankarattar, the word meaning terrifyfiers of opponent disputants, are Tengale, and were originally Vaidikas andfrom Srirangam in Tamilnadu. The Tirumaleyar are descendents of Koti kanyadana Tatacharya, whose name means that he had given away a million virgins in marriage, and a son of the guru (or teacher) of Sri Ramanujacharya. They are all Vadagale, and were originally mostly Vaidikas From Conjeevaram in Tamilnadu, and speak Tamil.

The temple servants who are Brahmins and are all Vaidikas, and called pujaris, were usually considered to have degraded themselves, and were considered to be of lower status than the other Brahmins, to whichever subgroup they belong to.

3.4. THE ORIGIN OF SOME SUBCASTES OR SUBGROUPS OR JATHIS

3.4.1 The Mulkinadu Subcaste or Jathi among the Smartha Brahmins of South India

The word “Jathi” is used in many Indian languages for the word “caste”, “subcaste” or group, and it means “the group in which you are born”.. In whatever manner a caste or subcaste has originated, after some time, a man or woman could belong to it only if you are born in the group, that is if both his or her parents belonged to the group. So unless a person is born into a group, he could not belong to it. If a woman of one “Jathi” married a man of another “Jathi” which was of higher rank than hers, then sometimes she was considered as belonging to the higher group and her children could belong to the father’s higher group. This was probably true even if the woman married into a lower Jathi, and then her children would belong to the lower group. In spite of the Hindu Civil Code in India having been changed drastically to make it very modern to be like the codes in more modern societies, some of the old customs are still followed to a very large extent all over the country, and the society has not quite accepted the new laws. Probably, the people in general feel more comfortable in a society and its practices to which they were accustomed to for a very long time. Some young people revolt and break these

age-old customs, and their parents and the elders of their group may or may not accept it. But most young people accept the beliefs and customs of their elders.

The Word “Jathi” can be used in a very general sense also, for example, the Christian Jathi, or Muslim Jathi.

The Mulkinadu subcaste of the Smartha Brahmins of South India is an important subcaste whose members are scattered in many places of the three southern states of Andhra, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. This subcaste is also important, because by tradition, the Sadguru (Chief religious Head) of the very important Sringeri Mutt in Karnataka state established by Sri Shankaracharya whose followers are the Smarthas, has always been selected from the Mulkinadu subcaste for hundreds of years.

From historical inscriptions and written records, it has been found that the origin of the Mulkinadu community can be traced to the tenth century A.D. The taluks of Kadapa, Pulivendala, Proddaturu of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh can be thought of as the original places where this community resided at that time. Even today, these places have many Mulikanadu families.

Most of these families are Vaidika Smartha Brahmins.

During the first and second centuries A.D., the area to the south of the Vindhya mountains was called Mulka, and it belonged to the Western Satavahana dynasty. After the reign of Vasishtaputra Satakarni of this dynasty, due to disturbed conditions in this region, some of the people in this area moved southwards towards Kadapa and Nellore areas of the present Andhra Pradesh. On the way towards the south, some of them probably settled down in the present Mehboobnagar district and this area is even now called the Mulka area.

Some of these Mulkinadu people must have slowly migrated to other areas of Andhra Pradesh, and to some areas of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. In normal good times, the people of any group did not wish to migrate from their settled areas where they possessed agricultural land which would give them a regular income and they also could practice their professions without any hindrance. In addition to agriculture, the people of this Mulkinadu community were the traditional priests of the Smartha brahmins. Due to this fact, many of them were Sanskrit scholars in the Vedas and the Upanishads, and also very well versed in the scholarship in their own language Telugu.

When there were wars, famine or any other disturbance in the areas of their settlement, then some of the groups would have tried to migrate to other better and safer areas. This is how the Mulkinadu people are scattered in many parts of South In-

dia. This is true of many other communities like the Tamil speaking Srivaishnava Brahmin subcastes, the agricultural business castes like the Telugu speaking Reddys and Naidus, the business caste of Telugu speaking Shettys in Karnataka, Chettys in Andhra Pradesh, and Chettiars of Tamilnadu., and so on. However in some of the areas where there were not many disturbances, some of the communities have stayed there for a very long time and did not try to migrate elsewhere.

After the fall of the Vijayanagar empire, more movement of the Mulkinadu people took place towards the southern regions like the Kannada speaking areas of the old Mysore state and the southern parts of the Tamil speaking areas of Tamilnadu.

Wherever they settled down, this Telugu speaking Mulkinadu subgroup of Smartha Brahmins were mostly Vaidikas, that is, they were very well versed in the ancient Sanskrit scriptures like the Vedas and Upanishads, and naturally they became teachers of the scriptures, priests in the Shiva as well as Vishnu temples, and also family priests of many Smartha families in their neighbourhoods who speak Kannada in the Kannada speaking regions, and Tamil in the Tamil speaking regions. Though their mother tongue was Telugu, they learnt the local languages very well, not only to speak, but also to read and write. In fact, some of them became scholars in the local languages. In fact, their Telugu language became a little influenced by these local languages like Kannada and Tamil

in these regions. Because of their high scholarship in Sanskrit and the in the religious scriptures, some of them were patronized by the local Maharajas or Palegars (Rulers of small territories who showed allegiance to the bigger Maharajas). They were also prominent teachers in the schools which taught the religious scriptures to young men who were trained to be priests.

Some of the great scholars in this Mulkinadu group were granted lands by the local rulers, and that gave them a good position in society and extra income. They got the land cultivated by employing labour from the lower castes like the untouchables. They also leased some of their lands to the traditional farmers like the Vokkaligas, Reddys and Naidus who settled on these lands and cultivated them and made their living.

Since most of the Mulkinadu people were scattered in villages, they did not take up so fast the English education which came in the middle of the nineteenth century all over South India, unlike other Brahmin subcastes like some of the subcastes of Shrivaiishnava Brahmins, and some of the other Smartha subcastes like the Kannada speaking Babboorkammes, Hoysala Karnatakas and others of the old Mysore State, or the Tamil speaking Smarthas of Tamilnadu, or the Madhva subcastes of South India who were not the priestly subcastes, because they very proud of their Vedic learning and their hold over the religious practices of not only other Brahmins but also of the lower castes. These other subcastes got into the lower and higher

ranks of the Government service in the nineteenth Century and the early twentieth century. However, the Mulkinadu men were the teachers of Sanskrit at a higher level in the schools and also some of the highly respected Sanskrit and Vedic scholars in the royal palaces of the Maharaja of Mysore. The priestly scholars among the Shrivaiishnava and Madhva Brahmins also held such positions under the Maharajas of Mysore.

However, a Mulkinadu Brahmin, the late Sir M. Vishveshvaria, who took to English education in the early days, may be called one of the great Indians who contributed to the advancement and to the industrial and technical growth of India during the first half of the twentieth century, and was the first recipient of the famous award of "Bharat Ratna", the highest award given to any Indian by the Government of India. After him, other Mulkinadu Brahmins of Karnataka have distinguished themselves in not only Sanskrit and Kannada literary work, but also as very good journalists, good Ayurvedic pandits (Medical men of the Hindu system of medicine), good Government officers, excellent scientists, excellent engineers, and also as very good musicians in the classical Karnatic style. Over the last fifty years or so, many women of this subcaste have also made a name in all these fields.

Sir M. Vishveshvaria was born on 27th August 1860 at a village called Muddenahalli in Chickballapur Taluk of Kolar district in the old Mysore State. He walked to Bangalore City about 30 miles away to study in

the Wesleyan Mission High School and later on in the Central College where he obtained his B.A. degree. Then he went to Pune (now in Maharashtra) with a Mysore Government scholarship to obtain his degree in Civil Engineering, and he stood first in the final examination. He worked in the old Bombay Presidency, and was very well known as a very good engineer, obtaining very good experience in irrigation and drinking water projects and also in building dams. Later on, he worked as a sanitary engineer in Sind (now in Pakistan) in the Bombay Presidency, he being the first Indian to hold that position. Till now only British engineers held that position. He got elected to the Society of Civil Engineers in London at the same time. He also became a member of the Bombay University senate. He was responsible for the underground drainage system of the city of Poona, when Gopala Krishna Gokhale was a member of the Municipal Council of Pune. Though he was married three times, unfortunately, he could not have a married life, and remained single. At this time, the British Government awarded him the Kaisari Hind medal for his very meritorious service. In 1898, he was sent to Japan to visit the industries there. Before he retired from the Bombay Presidency government service, he was sent to Europe and the U.S.A. to visit the industries in those countries. He also gave advice on the construction of the underground drainage systems for the cities of Pune, Hyderabad, Dhulia, Aden (in Arabia) and Mysore. He was respon-

sible for the construction of the artificial reservoir for the city of Hyderabad which beautified the city. After he retired from the Bombay Presidency in 1907, he was appointed as the Chief Engineer of the old Mysore State. He tried to build up the industries in Mysore State and got the railway lines running through Mysore State transferred to the Mysore State Railways.

In 1912, Sir M. Vishveshvariah was appointed as the Dewan of Mysore State by the Maharaja of Mysore. During his time from 1912 to 1918 as Dewan of the state, he was responsible for the Krishnasagara dam across the Kaveri river near Mysore City, the railway line between Mysore City and Arsikere, the establishment of the State Bank of Mysore, the School of Mechanical Engineering in Bangalore, the establishment of Mysore University, the starting of the Soap And Sandalwood Oil Factories and of the Bhadravati Iron and Steel works. Due to all these works, the Mysore State came to be called a Model State in India. He resigned from the Dewan-ship in 1918, but remained as Chairman of the Bhadravati Iron and Steel works for six years to improve it to increase its profits. The award of two lakhs of rupees to him as an honorarium to him by this Company was used by him for the establishment of the Jayachamarajendra Technical Institute in Bangalore in 1943. In 1949 after India obtained independence, he prepared a plan for the industrialization of villages, and submitted it to the Government of India. From the time The Indian Institute

of Science was established in Bangalore in 1969, Vishveshvaria was a member of its Governing Council and retired from it in 1947. He was also an adviser to the Tata Iron and Steel Works in Jamshedpur from 1927 to 1955.

When you consider all this, Vishveshvaria's name cannot be forgotten from the industrial picture of India, and especially of the old Mysore State (now part of Karnataka State). His most important wish was the development and good of the country. The British Government gave him the awards of C.I.E. and K.C.I.E. in 1911 and in 1915 respectively. The Mysore University and many other Universities in the country gave him honorary doctorates. In 1955, he was awarded the Khairon Gold Medal., and in the same year, the Government of India awarded the Bharat Ratna, the highest award given by the Government. In 1960, his centenary was celebrated all over India. He left this world on 14th April 1962.

Vishveshvaria was an unusual Indian and was well known for his discipline, exemplary behaviour and having only the good of his country in his heart. He is even known as the great engineer statesman of India. He has written several books in English. Some of them are : (i) Constructing India (1920) (ii) Rural industrialization in India (1931) (iii) Unemployment in India; Its causes and Cure (1932) (iv) Planned economy for India (1934) (v) Nation Building : a five year plan for the provinces (1937) (vi) District Development Scheme (1939) (vii) Prosperity through Industry (1942) (viii) Village

Industrialization (1945) (ix) Memoirs of my working life (1951) (x) A brief memoir of my complete working life (1959).

One of the three great composers of classical Karnatak music was Sri Tyagaraja who was born on 4th May 1767 at Tiruvarur in Tanjavur district of the present Tamilnadu State. His father was Ramabrahma and mother was Seethamma belonging to the Mulkinadu Jathi. Their ancestors had migrated from the village of Kakarla of Karnool district of the present Andhra Pradesh. His great grandfather Panchanada Brahmam and his grandfather Giriraja Brahmam were pandits (scholars) in the royal court of Tanjavur, and had composed some Vedantic musical compositions. His father was a Sanskrit scholar and a Ramabhakta (person who worships and adores Sri Rama). For his excellent discourses on the Ramayana, the Raja of Tanjavuru honoured him. He had settled down in the town of Tiruvayyar. Tyagaraja had two elder brothers.

After his Upanayan or the sacred thread ceremony when he was initiated into the Gayatri mantra and the Ramataraka mantra in 1774, the sage Ramakrishnananda initiated him into Ramashadakshari. His father taught him Sanskrit and Telugu languages. Tyagaraja studied in the school known as the Jagali shala which was founded by Govinda Dikshit who was a minister to the Raja named Achuta Nayaka. He learnt the Valmiki Ramayana at that time. His father took him to the palace when he went there to recite the Ramayana, and Tyagaraja started reciting

the stanzas of the Ramayana.

There was an atmosphere of music in their home His mother's father named Kalahasti Ayya could play very well on the Vina, a stringed musical instrument. In this house of his mother's father, Tyagaraja used to hear the compositions of Purandara Dasa who had lived a few hundred years earlier in the area which is now North Karnataka, and is known as the father of Classical Karnatic Music. He also heard the devotional songs of Jayadeva who was a famous composer of earlier years in the area now called Orrissa. On the whole, the young boy Tyagaraja grew up in an atmosphere of great classical music.. He started composing devotional songs in his mother tongue Telugu at a very early age, and used to write them on the walls of the house. His father sent him to the great musician of that time named Sonti Venkataramania who lived there. Tyagaraja also read and tried to understand the treatises which existed at that time.

Tyagaraja was married to a girl named Parvati in 1784 when he was eighteen years old. His parents and his wife all died within a few years. Then he was married to Kamamma who was the younger sister of Parvati. He had only one daughter named Sitalakshmi. After his death, he recited 96 crore times the Ramashadakshari, and it is said that Sri Rama appeared to him after this.

Tyagaraja took care of himself and his family with the income he had from some ancestral land. He always entertained scholars, musicians and bards in his house. He also gave music lessons free to his pupils. Some of his famous students were Venkataramana Bhagavadar, Venkata Subbaiyar, Krishna Bhagavatar, Sundara Bhagavatar, and Vina Kuppier.

Tyagaraja has composed many beautiful compositions on Sri Rama in several ragas (tunes) all in his mother tongue Telugu. These compositions are sung by many talented South Indian musicians of today all over India and abroad. The late Thomas Higgins from the United States of America became an expert singer of his compositions.

Though Tyagaraja travelled to several sacred spots like Kanchi, Tirupati, Srirangam and Madurai, he lived most of the time in his home in Tiruvayyar. After his wife died, he passed away in 1848, while listening to his students singing songs on Sri Rama, and he prayed to Sri Rama before his last breath. After 60 years, the great singer Nagarathnamma of Bangalore built a magnificent hall in his name in Tiruvayyar in 1908. Every year, a Tyagaraja music festival is held in this hall till today. They hold Tyagaraja festivals in many parts of India every year.

3.4.2 The Gaud Saraswat and Chitrapur Saraswat Jathis of the West Coast of India

When one says you belong to a “Jathi” in India, it means that you are born in that group. It is a more general word than the “caste”, The word “caste” is from the word “casta” which is Portugese and means “breed” or “kind”. The two words are almost equivalent, but “Jathi” is more general, because it can be used for non-Hindu groups, while “caste” is used for only Hindu groups. For example, we use the words “Christian jati”, “Moslem jati”, “Parsi jati”, “Anglo-Indian jati” and so on. If a Christian changes his religion to become a Hindu, then he belongs to the Hindu jati, and so on. In fact, almost all the people of India belong to one jati or the other. The only exceptions are those who proclaim that they do not belong to any jathi, though they were born in a particular jati. Such people sometimes say that they belong to the “jati” called “mankind” or “womankind” or even “animalkind”. Even such broadminded people exist in India today and they have existed throughout history.

Whether we call a subgroup in India “Jathi” or “caste” or “subcaste”, even the characteristics of these “Jathis” have changed from day to day, and it is still changing. Sometimes, one jathi is split up into two or more jathis, and sometimes a new jathi comes into existence.

One of the jathis that split up into two, is the Gowda Saraswat jathi

which split up into the Gowda Saraswat and the Chitrapur Mutt Saraswat jathis during the late eighteenth and th nineteenth centuries.

Virtually, every jati including Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Moslem and tribal jathis of the West Coast stretching from the Gulf of Cambay in Gujerat State to Kanyakumari at the southern tip in Tamilnadu has a myth associating their origin with some legendary stories.

The myths of the origin of the different Brahmin jathis are always associated with the axe-wielding young Brahmin Parashurama whose revenge of his father’s murder killed every Kshatriya warrior and king of India. After this bloody deed, this young Brahmin, considered as an incarnation or “Avatar” of Vishnu sought a land where he could obtain purification. The “Sahyadri Khanda” of the “Skanda Purana” says that he obtained a promise from the sea that it would recede whatever distance he might throw his axe from the crest of the Western Ghats or “Sahyadri Mountains” as it is called in Indian languages. He then settled Brahmins from North India on this emergent land. Mayura Varma, a king of the Kadamba dynasty erected agraharams (settlements for Brahmins who were Gavdos and Karhade Brahmins.

The Gaud Saraswat Brahmins (GSB) were one of the groups who

claim to have migrated from Kashmir and Punjab, and belonged to the North Indian group of Saraswat Brahmins, who settled down in the area around Goa and south of Goa around the tenth century A.D., soon after the invasions of Muhammed of Ghori and Muhammed of Ghanzi into Punjab and Delhi, to avoid conversion into Islam.

At the same time or earlier, there were other Brahmin subgroups or jathis in the West Coast, and their names Havyakas, Kotas, and Shivalis. Some of them were Smarthas and followers of Sri Shankaracharya, and some of them became Madhvas or followers of Sri Madhvacharya. All these jathis exist even today.

The GSBs believe that their ancestors were Brahmins of the Yajur Veda and Sama Veda.

The other Brahmin jathis who were earlier arrivals from other parts of North India like Ujjain, questioned the competence of the GSBs to perform all the six duties (Shatkarma) reserved for Brahmins. They allowed them to study the Vedas, but not teach them; give alms to Brahmins, but not accept them; and have sacrifices performed by other Brahmin jathis but not perform them themselves. While these Brahmins did not eat fish or meat, the GSBs ate fish. Most of the GSBs settled down near Goa and owned land probably given to them as inams (presents) by the local rulers. Somehow they managed to obtain the best of these rice lands, and they got the actual work done by the people of the Sudra (agricultural) jathis of the area.

When the Portuguese made their

settlements in and around Goa, and started ruling that area under Portuguese law, the GSB Brahmins were the most important landowners. The other subcastes were outside the Portuguese ruled area and had settled down in the hills and valleys of the Western Ghats and were mostly cultivators of the cash crop, the areca nut palm.

The GSBs had their own temples where the priests belonged to the other Brahmin subcastes or jathis of that region. The GSB family deities remained mostly Shaivite, though there was a little Vaishnavite influence. Also they had their teachers or Gurus centred around their monastic headquarters or "Mathas". These Mathas are a speciality of peninsular India and are modeled on the Buddhist viharas which were centers of religious instruction. The original Guru of the GSBs was Sri Gaudapadacharya who had influenced the famous Sri Shankaracharya. Later on, under the influence of Sri Madhwacharya of Udipi in the present Karnataka state, some of them became partly Vaishnavites. A large section of them are still followers of Sri Shankaracharya, and worship Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, Surya and Ganesha.

Goa was under the sovereignty of the Vijayanagar kingdom before the sixteenth century. In the fourteenth century, the Bahmani Muslim rulers of the Deccan had raided Goa a few times. In the fifteenth century, the Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur tried to control the coastal areas of the west, to control the maritime commerce of the Arabian sea. So there were some

minor wars and disturbances and internal conflicts between the better-off and the worse-off people of the area. Also in spite of the green and lush appearance of the Goa countryside, there was not enough food grown in the area. Also in the sixteenth century, the Portugese tried to convert the people to Christianity, and even introduced the Inquisition in 1560. Among the Brahmins, it was the GSBs who got converted to Roman Catholicism first, and some did it to get the favour of the Portugese. These converts kept their original names and customs and also their language Konkani. Konkani is a language derived from Sanskrit, and not a dialect of Mahrati as is sometimes misunderstood. The other languages of the west coast south of Goa are Kannada and Tulu which are Dravidian languages. Many of the GSBs migrated towards the south to Karwar, Honavar, Kundapur, Bantwal, Udipi and Mangalore. Some of them came under the influence of Sri Madhvacharya and became partly Vaishnaivite. Others remained Smarthas or followers of Sri Shankaracharya. A large number of the GSBs engaged themselves in trade and commerce and were known as Konkanis.

After the battle of Talikote when the Vijayanagar kings were defeated by Muslim rulers of the Deccan in 1564 AD, the Naiks of the Western Ghats who were Veerashaivas swayed their power over the coastal areas.

By the early eighteenth century, conflicts over rites and procedure between the Vaishnava GSBs and the

Smartha GSBs, divided them into two groups. The Smartha GSBs finally came to be called Saraswats, while the Vaishnava GSBs came to be called Gouda Saraswats. The Saraswats slowly detached themselves from the Goa GSBs and also the GSBs of the areas south of Goa. They had their own Gurus, the Gurus of Gaudapadacharya Matha, and many of them settled themselves in and around the town of Gokarn (A coastal town in present Karnataka in the district of Canara). The men of this Saraswat Jathi found employment as revenue accountants called Shanbogs, and they were settled in the villages of Chandavar, Mallapur, Ankola, Shirali, Heble, Sirur, Baidur, Kundapur, Gangolli, Basrur, Hattiangadi, Kandlur, Hemmadi and Amlaki and others along the 200 mile long West Coast. Some of the Swamis (or Gurus) went to Kashi (Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh) to get higher learning in the Vedas, but when they came back, the GSBs did not recognize them. They got themselves attached to the Shankaracharya of Sringeri Matha in Chikmagalur district of the present Karnataka state. This group of Smarthas came to be known as Bhanaps.

After the defeat of Tipu Sultan of Mysore by the British in 1799, the Mysore plateau remained under the Hindu Wodeyar Maharajas, while the coastal areas of the districts of North Canara and South Canara came under British rule under the Madras Presidency. The Gaud Saraswat and Saraswat Bhanaps got their lands cultivated by depressed classes or Panchamas and by slaves,

and the land records were erratic and not reliable. The East India Company which ruled the Madras Presidency brought English educated Kannada speaking Brahmins who were usually Kannada Madhva or Mahratti Madhvas and Smarthas who also knew Hindvi (or Hindu-stani) as lower administrative officers to work under the higher rank British officers to take care of the administration of the Canara district which at that time consisted of both North and South Canara districts. In 1817. One Saraswat named Dhareswar Nanapat was recruited to the administrative service, and slowly other Saraswat young men also joined. The same time, some Christians who were from families converted by the Portugese in earlier years also joined. These local men could be recruited on lower salaries than the Kannada and Mahrati speaking Brahmins from other parts of the Madras Presidency. and they were also less honest than those from other areas. Very soon, other Kannada and Tulu speaking Brahmins were also included. The reason that other castes and subgroups were not recruited was that they were not as well educated as the Brahmins and the Christians. This policy was followed in all parts of India during the nineteenth century and the early twentieth centuries.

In this process of recruitment to Government service, the Goud Saraswats were not so prominent, because they were more prosperous in trade and business.

Formal English education came in 1830 when many Christian schools

were opened in Mangalore, and Saraswat boys started attending them. But a few boys got converted to Christianity, and that upset the Saraswat jathi elders. So the Saraswat boys started going to the Canara school started by the Goud Saraswat Konkani in Mangalore.

The Swamis of Chitrapur Matha were very active in building religious linkages among the Saraswats. From 1785 to 1864, three Gurus, Shrimat Keshavashrama, Shrimat Vamanashrama and Shrimat Krishnashrama were very active in strengthening the Matha and defined its core of disciples among the Saraswat Jathi. As Smarthas, they worshipped Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesha,

And they wore the Smartha caste marks of three horizontal ash lines on the forehead. In 1858, Krisnashrama swami chose a shishya (disciple) named Nagar Kalappa and gave him the title Pandurangashram Swami who later on became an extreme ascetic, and ruled the jathi with a very strict and iron hand and brought in strict discipline to the Matha. In 1863, the British Government established demi-official public committees to religious endowments and institutions, and the Chitrapur Matha also came under this system.

By this time, Canara district was divided into two, North Canara going to Bombay Presidency, and South Canara remaining in Madras Presidency. South Canara was better developed than North Canara which was neglected by Bombay Presidency. Mangalore remained the district headquarters and had progressed very much due to trade in

rice and other commodities. Honavar was a good port in North Canara district and was earlier the seat of the district court, but later on Karwar was made the district headquarters of this district.

On the whole, South Canara was more prosperous and progressive than North Canara, but the Saraswats of Chitrapur Matha were the best educated people in both the districts and in 1870, they held about 37.5 % of all Government appointments in this area, though they were only 0.4 percent of the population. This was true of other areas of British India those days, where most of the Government posts were held by some of the subcastes of the Brahmins., and in North India they were also held by the Kayasta caste or Jathi.

The Saraswats formed about 90% of the school going children in 1884-85 in South Canara district. They, with the Mangalore Catholics shared the achievement of a secular elite status and they dominated the professions and public service in this district in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At official parties, some Saraswats started drinking whisky and soda with the British officers, though they were forbidden to do this by their Swamis, but they could restore their purity by bathing and change of clothes. They also learnt to shake hands with the British which was also taboo, but very soon it was accepted by the Jathi. At the same time, the new Hindu movements like the Arya Samaj., the Brahma Samaj headed by Keshab Chandra Sen and Raja Rammohan

Roy of Bengal, and the Prarthana Samaj of Bombay invaded Mangalore, and it was the Saraswats who were first exposed to these new movements South Canara district.

In the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, the members of one caste and religion as a rule kept perfectly aloof from that of all others and did not interfere with each other's religion and customs. The interests of the poorer and lower castes were not consulted at all and ignored by the higher castes. This was true all over the country.

The earlier Roman Catholics who were converted by the Portuguese were more interested in trade and commerce, and were not interested in converting Hindu jathis to Christians.,but the Protestant Basel Mission from Switzerland started a school in 1833 in Mangalore to teach English, Kannada and Arithmetic, and in addition taught Protestant Christianity. Some of the Saraswat boys who attended this school got converted to Protestant Christians, and this displeased the Saraswat community and they withdrew their children from this school. But several low class agriculturalists and Billavas who are toddy tappers got converted by the Basel Mission. The richer agriculturalists like the Bunts did not send their boys to school. At this time, girls' education was completely neglected.

The Saraswat boys who got converted to Christians were excommunicated by their Swami, and their fathers performed the funerals of these boys. This happened in all high castes those days, and this happens

even now in orthodox communities. A girls' school was opened later on in the nineteenth century and Saraswat girls were the first Hindu girls to go there. In fact the Saraswat girls were one of the earliest to go to Madras colleges in the beginning of the twentieth century and became the early women graduates of that University.

When Canara district was split into two, the Saraswats of North Canara first went to Karwar, Hubli and Dharwar in the Bombay Presidency for better opportunities and later on to Bombay city in large numbers.

The Chitrapur Matha was endowed and it prospered. But the educated Saraswats started questioning the rigidity of the rules of the Matha, especially those who migrated to the big cities of Madras and Bombay. They discussed questions like widow remarriage and the abolition of Prayaschitta (Purification after going by sea to a foreign country which was imposed by the Swamis). In the early part of the twentieth century, the Chitrapur Saraswat Jathi was one of the jathis which developed most modern views on such matters. There are other jathis in Karnataka like the Brahmin subjathis of the old Mysore State who are also very broad minded on these matters. Now edu-

cated Indians are going in such large numbers to foreign countries, that some of these old beliefs have almost disappeared among such people. It still exists in remote rural parts of the country where modern education has not spread.

Coming back to the larger jathi of the Goud Saraswats, though they took up to modern education at a little later period, they have become leaders in many fields, especially in banking and trade. They are now equal to the Saraswats in their scholarly achievements, and are great contributors to the whole country in the field of banking.

One of the famous women of the Saraswat jathi was the late Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, who worked with Mahatma Gandhi for India's independence, and after independence was responsible for the revival of all handicraft industries all over India. She was a child widow who got educated and married the late Harindranath Chattopadhyaya who was a very talented actor and musician, and who was the brother of the famous late English poetess Sarojini Naidu who was called the Nightingale of India and who was also in the freedom struggle with Mahatma Gandhi.

3.4.2 The Origin of the Jathi of the Kodavas or Coorgis

Kodagu or Coorg is a very small district of Karnataka State situated in the high mountains of the Western Ghats. It is covered with dense monsoon forests, and the Kaveri river which is the most important river of South Karnataka has its source at a place called Talakaveri in this dis-

trict. This district receives very heavy rain during both the South west and the North east monsoons. As it is high mountains about 4000 feet above sea level, it is rather cold and damp in the rainy season, and the summer months of March, April and May are very pleasant. It is a

very pleasant place for holidays during these summer months. Its biggest town is Madikeri (Mercara) which is the district headquarters.

If the HDI (Human Development Index) which is not only growth in income, wealth or consumption but the expansion of human capabilities, is considered in the State of Karnataka, the districts of Kogadu and its neighbouring district of South Canara on the West Coast rank number 1 among all the districts. Though the people belonging to the Kodava Jathi are a small minority in the district, they are a very important Jathi which might have contributed to the human development in the district.

Now let us see how this Kodava Jathi originated. There are several guesses on this matter by many important personalities of the Jathi. I have been impressed by the reasoning of the late Mr Channira Mudaysa Kushalappa who was a retired forest officer. This district having been a dense forest area was for a long period not very thickly populated. The history of our country and our people has been obtained by the writings of foreign travellers like the Greeks, the Chinese, the Muslims and the Europeans. Somehow though the people of India had a very high type of civilization and culture and their languages have been very developed for thousands of years, there is not much historical records written in the Indian languages by Indians. Because Kodagu was not very accessible for foreign travellers, none of them have mentioned this area. Also inscriptions on rocks and other places which the archeologists have found in other

parts of India including Karnataka have not been found extensively in Kodagu.

More than a thousand years ago, there were several dynasties ruling over South India like the Pandyas, Cholas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Cheras and so on. They were now and then fighting with each other, trying to conquer each other's territories, in the midst of which many people were dislocated and displaced. Some of these people probably wished to move to a secluded place like the thickly forested area of Kodagu. It is natural to think that they were the people from the adjoining areas of the northern part of the present state of Kerala, the Mysore and Hassan and South Canara districts of the present districts of Karnataka. Having made this guess, Mr Kushalappa examines the Kodava language which the Kodava people speak today. This is a language which consists of many Malayalam and distorted Malayalam words, Tulu and distorted Tulu words, Tamil and distorted Tamil words, Kannada and distorted Kannada words, and a few Telugu and distorted Telugu words.

The people belonging to the Kodava Jathi are more in the southern part of the district which is adjacent to the northern part of Kerala. Mr Kushalappa finds more words similar to Malayalam words in the Kodava language. He has also examined the family names of the people of his Jathi, and has found them resemble or derived from Malayalam names. Similarly there are names from South Canara and Mysore and Hassan districts, but less in number. In

doing this exercise, he has found a number of Brahmin or the priestly castes of Kerala, and the names of agricultural castes from the districts of South Canara, Mysore and Hassan. Since there were very few original people in the Kodagu area more than thousand years ago with the exceptions of the original aboriginal forest tribes who did not particularly belong to any of the Hindu castes or subcastes, the immigrants from the Brahmin subcastes of Kerala became the priestly class.

The two important deities that the Kodavas worship even today are Aiyappa and Powodi, the male and the female. Powodi is a distorted form of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva, and Aiyappa represents Harihara which is a diety which is both Shiva and Vishnu. The Kodavas go to the Hindu temples and the Brahmin priests do the worship for them. Their favourable temples are Shiva temples. One of them is the Onkreshwara temple in Madikeri. They also worship the river Kaveri at its source Talakaveri, and it is a very important part of their religious practices.

Some of their social practices are rather different from those of the other Hindu castes. For example, their marriage ceremony is not a religious ceremony as in other Hindu castes and subcastes or jathis, presided over by a Brahmin priest or by several priests, but is a contract called Sambandam which is similar to that of the Malayali Hindus. Though Malayali Hindus worship Sri Rama and Sri Krishna which are avatars or incarnations of Lord

Vishnu, the Kodavas do not worship these deities. It is possible that the Malayalis who escaped from their homes into the Coorg forests, must have come there long before the Aryan Brahmins came to their areas at which time the worship of Sri Rama and of Sri Krishna came to Kerala. The worship of Aiyappa and of Parvati or Bhagavati belongs to a much earlier time, and is very important even today for the Kodavas and the Malayali Hindus.

The Kodavas do not observe the festivals observed by other Hindu castes and subcastes. Their two important festivals are Huthri and Keilpodhu. Being cultivators and hunters, the festival of Huthri or Puthari is very important because at this festival, they offer the first grains of rice crop to God, and eating the rice of this new crop. This is very similar to the most important festival of Onam of the Malayali Hindus. After this offering to God of the first new rice, they assembled and danced in joy in anticipation of the harvesting of the new crop. The other important festival Keilpodhu celebrates the beginning of the hunting season which comes after the season of the transplanting of the rice plants. On this Keilpodhu day, they bring out their weapons used for hunting, clean them, and decorate them with sandalwood paste and flowers, and then worship them.

In the temples of Aiyappa and Povvadi (Parvati or Bhagavati) built by the Kodavas, the immigrant Brahmin priests of South Canara district conduct the poojas (worship). The Kodavas came to Kodagu may be

more than a thousand years ago and not many priests came with them, and that is why their important ceremonies in the family such as the one held when a child is born or the funeral ceremonies done when a person dies are very different from the ceremonies done by other Hindu castes and subcastes, and are not presided over by Brahmins.

On the whole, the Kodavas came to this forested and mountainous land and evolved their own style of living and adapted themselves to the environment. Their dress also suited the wet cold climate. The dhoti of the hotter Kerala or Tamilnadu was not suitable, and so their Kuppasam for men which is a long loose garment from shoulders to feet and made of thick rough cloth and tied by a sash was a suitable dress for the climate, and with a curved knife at the waist. The woman's dress is a sari, but with pleats at the back instead of in front as in other parts of India, and the loose end tied into a knot was evolved probably due to the fact that it is more comfortable while working in the paddy fields. The head scarf is to protect the woman's head. The man also has a turban for his head dress to protect against the weather.

Probably in the early days, the Kodavas had only one caste, but as time went on, they also have sub-castes like Peggades, Airies, Kollas, Gollas, Bannas, Mabyas, and so on. These Kodava's subcastes got evolved in time by allotting certain tasks to certain groups of people in the community. And just as in other Hindu subcastes, intermarriage between different Kodava subcastes began to be prohibited.

The Kodavas are a group of people of South India who have served in the armed forces, distinguishing themselves as good soldiers, airmen and sailors. The first two Commanders in Chief of independent India were two Kodavas, General Cariappa and General Thimmiah. The Kodavas are not only agriculturists and horticulturists, but have distinguished themselves in all outdoor sports. They are in all learned professions, and the women are well educated and have worked well in many fields including politics. The Jathi of Kodavas can be proud of themselves as a very forward looking community of not only Karnataka but also of India.

3.4.4 The Parsees

The Parsees are an ethno-religious minority living on the west coast of India, some in the coastal towns Navsari, Broach, Cambay and others of Gujerat State, and mostly in the big metropolis of Bombay (now called Mumbai) of Maharashtra State. Though it is a very small community, it occupies a very impor-

tant position in India's very recent history. Their role in the economic, social and political spheres in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries makes them one of the most important minorities in India.

The Parsees originally came from Persia (the present day Iran) more than 1200 years ago to escape con-

version to Islam. Their religion is Zoroastrianism which was founded by Zoroaster (also known as Zarathushtra) who probably lived about 600 B.C. according to ancient Persian traditions. What is known from the rock-cut inscriptions in inaccessible mountains and on the oral traditions from generation to generation about Mazdayasna and its revival by Zarathushtra is enough to convince us that in Mazdayasna, the ancient Persians (Iranians) possessed a storehouse of mysticism, philosophy, and morals and ethics. The Mazdayasna cult of ancient Iran was very closely akin to the Vedic religion of India. In fact, the most ancient Iranian scriptures called Gathas (or songs) were written in the Avesta language which is much closer to Rig Vedic Sanskrit than Rig Vedic Sanskrit is to modern Sanskrit. Mazdayasna in Avesta, literally means God-worship. The word Ahura Mazda is used in Avesta for God. The word "Mazda" can be transposed into Sanskrit as "Mahada" which means "The Great Giver" or the "Great Creator". Mazdayasna, as revived by Zarathushtra, provided inspiration for the Jewish, Christian and Islamic scriptures. It is interesting to note how the great religions of this earth are related through Mazdayasna which is a very old religion.

Zarathushtra was born in Rae in north Iran and he travelled all over Iran propagating Mazdayasna and finally settled down in Balkh now in Afghanistan under the patronage of King Vishtasp. He attained martyrdom there at the age of seventy-

seven while fighting in self-defence against the Turanian hordes who desecrated the fire temple while he was offering prayers.

Though Zarathushtra never claimed to have performed miracles, well intentioned admirers credit him with the performance of miracles. After the Arab invasion of Iran in the seventh century A.D., Iranian culture and civilization would have been completely wiped out, but for the inspired efforts of Iranian revivalist poets like Rudaki, Daqiqi, Firdausi, Sadi, Haafiz, Nizaami, Omar Khayyam and others.

Zarathushtra's message to humanity is as follows:

Belief in Ahura Mazda

Immortality of the soul; that is life after death

Fire as the symbol of divinity

The significance of good and evil

Life is an eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil.

There is a holy triad of

HUMATA (Religious thoughts), HUUKTA (Righteous words) and HUVARSHTA (Righteous deed)

Mazdayasna is a dynamic and progressive religion undergoing constant evolution.

Zarathushtra focused his attention almost exclusively on man's behaviour and its moral drives, largely disregarding the ritualism of the worship of God.

The ancient Iranian culture reached its zenith under the Achaemenides (550-330 A.D.). In this first ancient universal empire, stretching from Greece to North India, and from Central Asia to Egypt,

the foundations for the Iranian polity were laid. The tolerance practiced by the Achaemenidian rulers toward other religions, without which such an empire could not have been maintained, did not grant Zoroaster's religion any kind of a privileged position. Later on, under the Sassanians, the religion of Zoroaster became a state religion.

Rites in the Zoroastrian religion are less important than ethical dimensions. Man can only attain salvation through his behaviour, not so much however, through prayers and rites of atonement.

The Parsees living in India today are the descendents of Zoroastrian refugees from Iran (Persia) who came to India after the conquest of Iran by the Arabs who Islamized the people of Iran. Earlier even in Puranic times, people from Persia had come to India and got integrated with the indigenous population. The "Parasikas" are mentioned even in the Mahabharata. The Pallava dynasty who ruled parts of South India in the early days were also originally from Persia. The period during which they came to India could be the eighth century A.D. They probably landed first at Diu or at Sanjan on the west coast which are in the present state of Gujerat. When the Parsees came to the King of Sanjan, he allowed them to stay if they obeyed the following conditions :

The high priest of the Parsees should explain their religion to the king.

The Parsees should have to give up their native Parsi language and adopt the language of this land, that is, Gujerati.

The women should give up their traditional garb and wear the customary dress (that is, the sari) of the land.

The men should lay down their arms.

The Parsees should hold their wedding processions only in the dark at night time.

The Parsees agreed to all these conditions strictly, and limited themselves to non-political professions like trade and handicrafts. However they strictly preserved their own religion. Gujerati became the native language of the community, and the sari became the traditional garment of the Parsee women. The Parsees became very adaptive of the customs of the land. Even today, the Parsees are loyal to the rulers or the respective government, and have been so from the time they arrived in India. This adaptability of the Parsee community to the customs of the land to which they came about 1200 years ago, while keeping to the traditions of their religion, has been their asset and very commendable.

When the great Mughal emperor Akbar conquered Gujerat in 1573, he became interested in the Parsees living there and held religious conversations with Dastur Meherji Rana, who was invited to represent the Parsees at his court in Fatehpur Sikri between 1576 and 1579. After 1682, Akbar and part of his court became followers of a syncretistic monotheism (tauhid-id-illahi) developed by himself and assimilating Sufism and Zoroastrianism.

Since the sixteenth century, Surat which was the most important sea-

port on the west coast of India, and the center of trade for both the Mughal empire and the European trading companies, had been attracting the Parsees, and finally in the 17th and 18th centuries, became the largest Parsee settlement. Having a minority role in Indian society, the Parsees had the necessary flexibility in commerce with foreigners, and this resulted in the European merchants preferring to transact their business through Parsee agents and brokers. One of the most influential brokers was Rustam Manock (1635-1721), who was a broker for the Portuguese and a political representative in Surat for the Portuguese Viceroy residing in Goa. He was at the same time a broker for the East India Company. He was also a representative of the Parsees in Surat, and in 1679, he procured for them an exemption from the poll tax imposed by Emperor Aurangzeb. His son, Nowroji Rustam Manock was, in 1724, the first Parsee who went to England, which he did in order to represent a petition before the Company's court of Directors.

The Parsees became experts in mediation functions. Close contact with the Europeans gave the Parsees the know-how of European trade and business organization, which laid the foundations for their subsequent economic and social progress under the rule of the English.

After the Portuguese gave Bombay to the British, Surat lost its importance to Bombay. The largest migration of the Parsees to Bombay took place, when the British were developing Bombay as a trading cen-

ter. The British encouraged more Parsees to come to Bombay from other towns of Gujerat as well as from Surat. In 1673, the British gave a piece of land on Malabar Hill to the Parsees to establish their first Dakhma Tower (Tower of Silence), where they could place the dead bodies. The biggest influx of Parsees to Bombay took place in the 19th century. Also slowly, many Parsees went to other parts of India as merchants or found positions in native states. In 1971, there were 91,266 Parsees in India, 70% of whom resided in Bombay. In Pakistan, there were 5202 Parsees in 1961, and there were 18000 Zoroastrians in Iran in 1960. There might have been about 5000 parsees scattered all over the world in Europe, America, Africa and the Far East, so that there might have been about 120,000 Parsees in the whole world in 1970.

A great number of Parsee family names point to places in Gujerat, like Bharucha, Bulsara, Billimoria, Bhawnagri, Anklesaria, Khambatta, Rajkotwala, Sanjana, Pithawala, Udvadia, Damania, Sachinwala, Mandviwala, etc.

From 1750, Bombay attracted more and more Parsees out of the small towns and rural regions of Gujerat into the center of economic and political power. The 1931 Census has mentioned "trade" as the traditional occupation of the Parsees, similar to the way in which a number of Hindu castes practice traditional occupations. However, the Parsees were not bound to traditional occupations alone like the Hindu castes, and so very soon took the opportunity of

learning other means of earning, and entered many other occupations. For example, they were the group in Bombay who went into higher education, and entered higher professions and government posts. So in the Bombay Presidency, when the British government started recruiting Indians in the white collar administrative posts, the Parsees were first to be recruited, in addition to Brahmins. So the occupations of the Parsees were priests, banking, wholesale trade, brokers, money-changers, auctioneers, real estate dealers, government service, lawyers, military, police, watchmen, and postmen.

The occupational diversity within the Parsee community is partially reflected in the surnames which the Parsees had been giving themselves since the 9th century. The new surnames are partially of Gujarati and of English origin, for example, Unwalla (wool dealer), Kapadia (cloth dealer), Merchant, Jhaveri (jeweler), Motiwala (pearl dealer), Biscuitwala, Gunwalla, Shroff (cashier), Batliwala (sale of bottles), Dubash (shipping agent), Davar (judge), Master, Dastur (priest), Commisariat, Doctor, Engineer, Contractor, etc. etc. They became the most anglicized of all Indians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the exception of Anglo Indians who were descended from English and other Europeans from the father's side.

With the opening of Bombay University in 1857, the Parsees' advantage in higher education led them into higher academic and technical professions. On the whole, Parsees, in spite of very small numbers, were

very prominent in Bombay Presidency, especially in Bombay city, in almost all trade and educated professions.

The Parsees who had migrated to India had no fixed written code of laws at their disposal which would have determined the internal organization and order of the community. As they did not have their own autonomous political organizations, they were actually subject to the jurisdiction of their respective ruler, as far as criminal law was concerned. However, the regulation of internal civil and religious disputes was left to the Parsees themselves, and this administration of justice lay in the hands of the clergy for centuries. When they arrived in India at Sanjan on the west coast of Gujerat, a Dastur (priest) as leader or speaker of the group of refugees had negotiated with the Prince Jadi Rana, and thereby made the settlement of Parsees in India possible, the leading role of the priests was undisputed. In Iran, the Dasturs held the highest offices, and it was natural that they should do so in India also. Slowly, as time went by, the hold of the Dasturs on the community became less, and the leadership shifted to wealthy merchants, who as brokers, became the speakers of the community due to their contacts with nawabs who were the rulers of Gujerat and also with the European trading companies. A Parsee layman named Modi in Surat was officially recognized by the British government as the leader of the Parsees in the 19th century. In Nausari, a Panchayat was formed by the Parsees in 1642, similar to the

traditional Hindu panchayats, and it consisted of priests as well as laymen, and this had no parallel in the Parsee-Iranian traditions. A panchayat was established in Bombay in 1673 or in 1728. The five founding members of the Parsi Panchayat in Bombay were Dawar Banaji Limji (the builder of Bombay's first Tower of Silence in 1672), Heerji Watcha Modi, and the three sons of Rustam Maneck from Surat. In 1778, this Panchayat was recognized by the British government. While religious disputes were settled by the priests in Navsari, civil disputes were decided before the Parsee Panchayat, whose decisions were considered irreversible. In extreme cases, excommunication was pronounced, and for lesser mistakes, fines, exclusion from Parsee festivities were given, and sometimes public beatings were given. The Panchayat had its greatest authority in the second half of the eighteenth century. The controversy between the priests and the laity on mixed marriages arose and the Panchayat sided with the lay men in 1777.

Thus, slowly the Parsees who were exposed to English education (a few of them had visited England also) thought of changing their ideas to become more broad-minded and modern. They wanted to purify Parsee customs of Hindu and Islamic influences, for example, child marriages, bigamy. and even visits to Hindu temples and mosques were prohibited and punished. This was their attempt in social reform. One of their greatest leaders Dadabhoy Naoroji was responsible for the pre-

dominantly middle class movement among the Bombay Parsees that set in fully around the middle of the 19th century, which set up the Parsee educational system, promoted emancipation of women, strived for religious reforms, and made first attempts of political participation. The leaders who supported Dadabhoy Naoroji were Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy, Naoroji Furdoonjee, Sohrabjee Shapurjee Bengalee, Rustomjee Cama, Maneckjee Cursetjee, Dasabhoy Framjee Karaka. A government Commission was set up in 1861, and the Parsee Marriage and Divorce Act, and the Parsee succession Act were passed in 1865. In the succession act the son received twice as much as the widow, and the daughter half as much as the widow. Now, today after independence, the Indian Civil Code has completely changed the picture, where the widow, son and daughter receive equal portions.

As the Parsee panchayat ceased to exist as the highest and most important organ of the community after 1830. what was left to the Panchayat was the administration of charitable foundations and public welfare activities which are still in its hands today. The Panchayat has been administering schools, special training schools (technical institutes, schools for nurses, industrial institutes, commercial schools), hospitals, housing projects, homes for the aged, sanatoria, orphanages, student dormitories, kindergartens, etc. It gives credit to small Parsee businessmen, scholarships for further academic education, aid to widows and for religious family festivals of poor Parsees.

There is hardly a second Indian community which has such a comprehensive public welfare system, at its disposal.

This system of public welfare activities was founded without government assistance or intervention, only by the Parsees' own initiative. The charity system has been made possible because a comparatively large number of wealthy community members as potential donors the compactness of the community and a relatively small number of members

the Parsees, as a minority, from the beginning dependent on self-help with regard to establishing community institutions and could at no time expect help for their religious and social functions and problems.

The attitude of the Parsees that wealth is fundamentally positive, and that it brings certain social obligations along with it.

The following saying from the Gatha Ushtavad which is one of the Zoroastrian religious books can be quoted:

“If a man gives a hungry man a bread, which is much, all the good work which he performs through that society, becomes as it were his own as if done by his own hand”.

As soon as Parsees in Surat had come to wealth, they won high reputation as charitable donors of rest-houses (called Dharmashalas), builders of bridges and fountains.

It is not only the Parsees, but many other Hindu and Jain sub-castes or jathis have done similar works in many parts of India, sometimes for their own jathi but also for all Hindus. People have built

Dharmashalas, have made arrangements for pilgrims to holy temples, have started Vedic schools to teach the Vedas to young pupils, small schools in small towns and villages to teach reading, writing and basic religious knowledge, and so on. The Muslim community also have their programs of charity, and their WAQF boards take care of the social and religious problems of their people all over the country. The work of the Parsees looks more significant, because of their small population and it is concentrated in the big city of Bombay (now called Mumbai) and in some cities of Gujerat.

Some of the important Parsee donors during the 19th century who gave big donations for hospitals, schools, libraries and University buildings were Sir Dinshaw Manockjee Patit, Sir Jeejeebhoy, and Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney.

Parsee patronage was not particularly limited to their own community. One important example of cosmopolitan Parsee generosity is the N.M Wadia Foundation whose generosity has been given to earthquake victims in Japan and for people suffering from cancer in England. The most important are the different foundations of the Tata family, the largest industrial concern in India which started the first Steel industry in Asia, the Tata Iron and Steel Works in Jamshedpur in the present Jharkhand State. Different foundations of the Tata family have established :

The oldest and the largest science and technological research Institute in India, namely, the Indian Institute

of Science in 1909 in Bangalore in Karnataka State.

After 1910, Ratan Tata enabled the excavations in Pataliputra (present Patna in Bihar State).

In 1932, Sir Dorabji J. Tata endowed a fund for research in blood diseases, which led to research projects in Copenhagen, New York and Paris.

In 1936, Sir Dorabji Tata founded the "Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work" now called the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Bombay.

In 1945, The Tata family endowed the "Tata Institute of Fundamental Research" in Bombay, which is today a leading Science research institute of India.

The Tatas managed the first Indian international airservices Air India.

The Tata Consultancy Services is one of the most important ones in India today

Jamsetjee Nusserwanji Tata was born in Nausari in a clerical family and had made his fortune during the Abyssinian war as a supplier of the British Indian Army, and building on this, as a textile manufacturer in Nagpur and Bombay (Mumbai) both in the present Maharashtra State. He was the first Indian to recognize the importance and implications of the industrial revolution on India. He initiated the building up of an Indian iron and steel industry, producing electric energy for economic purposes and promoting technical education for Indians. Although he died even before he could accomplish any of these objectives, his sons carried out

his wishes. He was also very close to the Indian National Congress, through his personal contacts with Dadabhai Naoraji and D.E. Watcha. He had founded an Indian mercantile shipping company to take care of Indian exports to Europe, but the British P&O shipping company used dumping rates to ruin that company so that they controlled the Indian-European sea traffic. Tata's far reaching goal of economic and political economy did not please the British rulers, and they did not confer the title of "Sir" on him as they did to the earlier Parsee leaders. Tata also supported the Swadeshi movement and renamed his cotton mill in Bombay as "Swadeshi Mill". Tata was certainly a very great Indian of the nineteenth Century.

Another great Parsee of whom India can be proud of is the late Dr Homi Jamshed Bhabha, who initiated the applications of Nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in India, and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre of Bombay has been named after him, and he was a great grand son of the great J.N. Tata. The world well known music conductor of Western classical music is Zubin Mehta, who is a Parsee.

Parsees had a much higher standard of living during the nineteenth century than the Hindus and Muslims of India. This higher standard has led the Parsees to a middle class crisis when the community has lost its social, educational and economic lead and had to compete with the upcoming Hindus and Muslims. A large number of Parsees have become dependent upon the Panchayat after

they were no longer in a position to maintain their standards of living with their incomes. The danger of becoming a community of educated paupers has still not been overcome today. In spite of all this, the Parsees have contributed and are still contributing to the industrial picture of India in a big way, and there are very intelligent Parsees in the legal profession and in other educated professions.

There is no conversion in Zoroastrianism. With a high percentage of people well educated and with an Anglified way of living, young Parsees have been marrying outside the Parsee jathi. A non-Parsee man or woman who marries a Parsee woman or man cannot be taken into the folds of the Parsee community. This is resulting in a slight decrease in their

population. Some of the older Parsees are a little worried about it, but the Parsee clergy is still very much against conversion. If you compare this phenomenon with similar phenomena in other highly educated jathis of Hindu subcastes like the Brahmin subcastes, the educated Hindu subcastes have accepted the phenomenon very well and accept the daughter-in-law or son-in-law from another subcaste into their group happily. If this phenomenon spreads to all other subgroups or jathis in India, it will be a great boon to the country, because then, the society will become better united and strive for the betterment of society in the whole country. It is quite correct to call the Parsee community a "Jathi", because you can be a Parsee only if you are born in the Parsee "Jathi."

3.4.5 Indian Christian Community or Indian Christian Jathi.

Christianity came to India nearly 2000 years ago soon after Christ with the coming of St. Thomas and his converting some people of the present state of Kerala and Tamilnadu, and his dying at St. Thomas Mount in the present big metropolis of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. There is the big Santhome Roman Catholic Church in Chennai to commemorate his memory. The Christian population of India is about 2% of its total population, and about 75% of it is Roman Catholic, and the rest are Protestant. The distribution of Christians in India is not uniform, it being in the southernmost state of Kerala about 25% of the state's population. In the small state of Goa on the west coast,

it is also about 25% of the population. It is about 60% in the North Eastern states of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura. In Tamilnadu, it may be about 5% of the population, and in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra, it may be 2% of the population. In the rest of India which may be called North India, they exist in very small numbers.

The Christians in Kerala are one of the oldest Christians in the world, dating back to the first century A.D., being converted by St. Thomas. There is a controversy about the exact dates, but definitely there is historical evidence that Christians existed in the southern part of the west coast which is now in the state of Kerala at

least in the first few centuries A.D.

The Syrian Christians of the present state of Kerala have the traditional belief that St. Thomas, after visiting Socotra (an island in the Arabian Sea off the north east coast of Africa), landed at Cranganore (Kodungaluru) on the Periyar estuary north of Cochin (called Kochi now), in about 52 A.D. He is said to have preached to the Jews settled there, and made converts among them and among their neighbours. Travelling in the southward direction along the west coast, he founded Christian churches at Malankara (near Cranganore), Palayur, Parur, Gokamangalam, Niranam, Chayal and Quilon (now called Kollum), in four of which Syrian churches still exist. He is also said to have ordained presbyters from four Brahmin families called Shankarapuri, Pakalomattam, Kalli and Kaliankal. After this he went over to the east coast and to have travelled eastwards across the Bay of Bengal to Malacca and went further eastwards to China, and finally returned to Mylapore (now a suburb of the big city of Chennai) on the east coast of India. Here at Mylapore, the Brahmins did not like his preachings, and they raised a rioting against him, and he was killed by a spear in about 72 A.D.

This was the tradition found among the Christians of Kerala by the Portugese, when they arrived in this part of India and settled there in the sixteenth century. The Portugese written accounts seem to be the earliest written accounts of these earliest Syrian Christians of India. The

Portugese captain Vasco Da Gama reached Calicut (now called Kozhikode) in 1498, and was the first Portugese who reached the west coast of India.

About two hundred years earlier, the Venetian traveler named Marco Polo, who was in South India in 1288 and again in 1292, was shown at a small town the tomb of St. Thomas. This town was probably Mylapore, and it was a place of pilgrimage of both Christians and Muslims. Later on, European travellers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also refer to this church of St. Thomas, among them the Italian Nicolo de Conti who became one of the early missionaries in the area of Tamilnadu. Earlier, a Bishop of Tours named Gregory mentions that in 598 A.D. he had seen this St. Thomas Church at Mylapore.

In the early centuries A.D., the Persian empire extended from Egypt and Syria to Iran and north west and western part of India. The Christianity which he went to all these parts of the Persian empire was called the Syrian church and they used the Syriac language for worship. The Syrian church might have existed in North West India which later on became converted to Islam. Also some of the Syrian leaders of the Christian religion probably came by sea to the west coast of South India, preached their religion and converted the people there. In this part of India, Islam was not propagated by force as in North West and North India, and there were tolerant Hindu rulers who supported these Syrian Christian missionaries, and so more people got

converted, and they have remained Syrian Christians till today. Islam came to this part of the Kerala west coastal region, through the Arab traders who were frequent visitors there, and who intermarried with local women and became known as "Mapillas" or "Respected Sons-in-law" of the region. The Bishops of the Syrian Christian churches in Kerala were appointed by the head of the Syrian Christian Church in Antioch, and they were Syrians or Persians. A similar Christian community belonging to the Syrian or the Persian church also existed in the early centuries A.D. in Ceylon or what is known as Sri Lanka. The center of this church was actually in Mesopotamia which was a part of the Persian empire, and it was a Syriac church, the language Syriac being spoken in East Syria or in Mesopotamia.

In the second century A.D., the whole region was in the Roman empire, but in the third and the fourth centuries, the Persians defeated the Romans and Mesopotamia came under Persian rule. Because Zoroastrianism was the religion of the Persians, Christians under their rule suffered because of their connection with Rome, and hence the Patriarch proclaimed himself independent of Rome, and he became the Patriarch of the Eastern Christian Church. During the fifth century, Mesopotamia became the refuge of a number of bishops expelled from the Roman empire because they supported the teachings of Nestorius. Nestorianism became the official doctrine of the church of the East centred in Me-

sopotamia, and it was this religion which was propagated in the countries to the east of Mesopotamia, including India.

The Syrian church of Kerala has traditions of an immigration of influential people from East Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, in 345 A.D. who settled in Coringalore and was given official permission from the king Shiramon Pirumal. Thomas of Jerusalem came to Kerala later on to find out how these Christians were faring. He found out that they had received certain privileges from the Raja there, inscribed on copper plates, and had built a church and a town, which is now the Christian quarters of Cranganore. Some of the Syrian community intermarried with the Indians, but a small percent of them did not. Even today, the two groups do not intermarry.

In 823 A.D. two Syrian fathers Mar Sapor and Mar Parut, with the illustrious Sabrisho came to India and reached Kullam or Quilon, and asked king Shakirbirti for a piece of land on which they could build a church, who gave them what they desired. They built a church and a town in the district of Kullam, to which Syrian Bishops and Metropolitan could come and visit. Mar is the Syriac title of bishops. This party settled near Kullam or Quilon, and there are five copper plates recording various grants to these Syrian Christians Three of these are at the Jacobite Seminary at Kottayam, and two at the Marthoma church at Tiruvalla. They are written in Tamil-Malayalam, and two of them in Pahlavi(Persian) and Arabic, and the

signatures of the witnesses are in Hebrew, because they were Jews. These inscriptions mention the gift of lands as well as the assigning of certain Hindu castes to work as slaves to this Christian community. Some monuments have also been found at Kottayam in Kerala, at St. Thomas Mount in Chennai, and at some other places in Kerala, which are in the form of a crossed stone standing on a pedestal, surmounted by a descending dove, the whole enclosed by an arch containing an inscription in Pahlavi. which has been translated as "My Lord Christ, have mercy upon Afras, son of Chaharbukht the Syrian, who cut this". The crosses are dated in the seventh or eighth centuries A.D.

All these are solid evidence that Christian churches existed near Mylapore and in Kerala, composed of members who were Syrians and connected with Persia.

With the Islamization of the Persian empire, slowly the Christian community in this area suffered and declined in numbers, with the exception of a small Christian community in Mesopotamia and in the area called Malabar (now called Kerala). The Syrian Christian community in Kerala did not suffer from Muslim onslaughts, because the Muslim invasions of India from the northwest did not penetrate this region very much. The Hindu Rajas of Kerala gave protection to this Christian community in their kingdoms between the ninth and sixteenth centuries. These Syrian Christians of Kerala became prosperous traders and land owners, and were considered by

the Rajas and other Hindus as equal to the higher Hindu castes of this region. Even untouchability was observed by the Syrian Christians, similar to the high caste Hindus.

From the late thirteenth century onwards, emissaries of the Roman church and lay European travellers started coming to India. The wars of the Crusades had brought Europeans into closer contact with the countries of Asia. The growth of the Mongol power in the thirteenth century in Central Asia and in Eastern Europe alarmed the people of Europe. At this time, the Pope in Rome was not only the head of the European Christian church, but also claimed universal authority in matters both spiritual and temporal. The Popes sent embassies to the Mongol Khans, and the ambassadors were friars (brethren) who were members of the mendicant orders founded by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. These brethren had a strong faith in their religion and a spirit of renunciation to undertake long and difficult journeys in 1291 into the heart of Asia and to China, and some of them passed through India, and visited the church of St. Thomas at Mylapore and heard about the Syrian Christians of Kerala (Malabar). Another mission came to India in 1321, and landed at Thaná on the west coast in the present state of Maharashtra, and found some families of Nestorian Christians there. There was a quarrel between those friars and the local people who were Muslims, and one of the friars named Thomas was provoked to say that Mohamud was the son of perdition and was in hell. The

Muslims got provoked and bound the friars hand and foot and made them stand in the hot sun, and then subjected them to ordeal by fire. Then they were expelled from that place, and during the night they were put to death by armed men. One of the survivors named Jordan returned to Europe after baptizing more than one hundred and thirty people. Another Franciscan friar named John de Marignoli visited Quilon (Kullam) and has reported that the Syrian Christians are prosperous in the pepper trade. In 1490, a deputation of Syrian Christians of India came to Mar Simeon who was the Patriarch of the East, and requested him to send two bishops to India. In 1504, it was reported to the Patriarch that there were about 30,000 Syrian Christians in Malabar (Kerala) in towns named Cranganore, Palayur and at Quilon(Kullam).

By this time the Portugese had reached India, and Vasco da Gama had landed at Calicut in 1498, and met the Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut who gave the Portugese permission to trade with his kingdom. The Portugese found in the sixteenth century a very prosperous Syrian Christian community in Malabar (Kerala). These Christians were authorized to ride on elephants, and they were very close to the king. The Portugese traders were opposed by the earlier Arab traders. But the Portugese established many trading stations along the west coast. The Portugese were not content with trade only, but also wished to establish a permanent position for themselves in Asia for themselves. In 1510, Goa was cap-

tured by the Portugese from the Sultan of Bijapur, and also Malacca in the present Malaysia, and Ormuz which was an island at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. Goa became the capital of the Portugese possessions in Asia. From Goa, Portugese possessions spread northwards and southwards from Daman(in present state of Gujerat), Bassein, Salsette, and Bombay(now called Mumbai) all in Maharashtra, Cannanore, Cranganore, Cochin and Quilon (in Kerala), and Tuticorin, Nagapatam and Mylapore (in Tamilnadu). The Portugese Governor Albuquerque encouraged marriages between Portugese men and Indian women who were baptized before the marriage. A large Indo-Portugese population grew up in all of these Portugese possessions along the west and east coasts of India. The kings of Portugal were very eager to spread Roman Catholicism wherever their traders went. The traders always travelled with Catholic priests. Together with the organizing of the Portugese administration at Goa, churches, convents and Christian charitable institutions were built. In 1534, a Portugese Bishop was sent to Goa, who became the Head of a Christian ecclesiastical organization in India and beyond. Pope Leo X granted to the King of Portugal and his successors in 1514 the right of ecclesiastical patronage in the lands conquered or to be conquered in Africa and Asia.

Up to 1542, the priests were Franciscans and some Dominicans. But the work of conversion was carried out under the auspices of the government. Hindu temples and

Muslim mosques were destroyed, and the worship of Hindus and the Muslims was forbidden. Many people were converted, and sometimes a whole caste like the Paravas who were the traditional caste of pearl-fishers on the south-east coast of India opposite the island of Sri Lanka, was converted..

When they arrived in the west coast of Malabar (Kerala), the Portuguese certainly had dealings with the Syrian Christians regarding the pepper trade. The relations between the Portuguese and the Syrian Christians were quite friendly in the early years. This situation continued for many years.

By 1540, the Portuguese had established themselves firmly on the west coast of South India with their headquarters at Goa and also at some places on the east coast of South India. Many conversions had taken place, resulting in a fairly large number of Indian and Indo-Portuguese Christians, whom King John III of Portugal thought were of unsatisfactory quality. He appealed to the Pope in Rome to send priests to be sent to India. The first man to be chosen was the famous St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), who was a Spaniard belonging to a noble family, and who belonged to the Society of Jesus which he had founded in 1534 with the famous St. Ignatius Loyola who was also a Spaniard. They were called Jesuits and pledged themselves to live in celibacy and poverty. This society of Jesus was approved of by the Pope in 1540. In 1541, Francis Xavier and another priest Paul de Camerino sailed from Lisbon, the

capital of Portugal, and with them was the new Viceroy De Sousa, and due to unfavourable winds, it took them thirteen months to reach India. The overcrowding on board (there were about seven hundred people on the ship), and due to food and water not being fresh, there were plenty of sick people. Francis Xavier spent a great part of the voyage taking care of the sick, preparing the dying for death and burying the dead. By the time he landed at Goa, he was already reputed to be a saint.

Goa was by this time was a fairly well settled city, with a bishop, clergy, churches and a hospital. But the Portuguese were worldly and loose living, and the Indo Portuguese resulting from mixed marriages and otherwise, were ill disciplined and ill instructed. After paying his respects to the Bishop, Francis Xavier devoted himself to visiting the sick in the hospitals and prisons, and gathered together children and others in the churches for elementary teaching. He would go about the streets ringing a bell and shouting "Faithful Christians, friends of Jesus Christ, send your sons and daughters, and your slaves of both sexes to the Holy Teaching for the love of God". After five months, Xavier went to work among the Paravas on the south eastern coast opposite Sri Lanka in the district of Tinnevely of the present Tamilnadu State. After baptizing many children and preaching to the people here, he arrived at Tuticorin and, he sought men who knew Portuguese and Tamil. and got the Portuguese prayers into Tamil. He learnt the prayers as well as the

Creed, The Commandments, the Paternoster(Lord's prayer}, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina and the Confession in Tamil by heart. He went around, ringing his bell to collect children and adults, teaching all these prayers in Tamil. At the end, he made all of the people say in Tamil,"Holy Mary, mother of Jesus Christ,obtain for us grace from Thy Holy Son to enable us to keep the First Commandment". He travelled in all parts of Tamilnadu and Kerala converting the people to Christianity.

Then Xavier went by sea to the East Indies (what is now Indonesia), Malaya (now called Malaysia), and then to Japan in 1549, and preached and converted as many people as possible. He came back after two and a half years, and gathered other priests and priests and went to many places in Kerala and tried to convert the Syrian Christians into Roman Catholics. He also set right the church organisation in Goa.

In 1552, Xavier went to China, and tried to go to Canton by river, and fell ill and died there. His body was taken to Malacca in Malaya and buried there. Five months later,the body was taken to Goa and buried there, where his shrine is still there.

St. Francis Xavier died after only ten years after his first landing in India. He was canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622. He established Christian missions in India, Indonesia and in Japan. He can be compared toSt.Paul in his zeal his pioneering zeal in converting many nations to Christianity.

Christianity imported from Europe into India became an affair of

the Portugese, the Indo-Portugese and the large numbers of lowcaste Indians who became Christians largely for the sake of Portugese protection. The high castes among the Hindus who had their culture in the Sanatana Dharma or the Vedic teachings, were hardly touched at all, indeed they were alienated. Christianity seemed to them the religion of the Europeans and their hangers-on, and this idea has not changed even today, because the philosophy of the old Vedic or Hindu religion is in principle very broadminded and is not dogmatic.In fact, the Europeans and Americans who have got tired of their religion, are nowadays turning to the more subtle philosophies of the Vedic religion, and Meditation and Yoga are gaining popularity among these people.

The Portugese tried very hard to bring the church of the Syrian Christians of Malabar (Kerala) also under their ecclestiacal allegiance. They tried very hard to break the connection of the Syrian Christians with the Patriarch in Mesapotamia (Iraq). There were differences in theuse of the sacraments. Also the Syrian clergy were married,, while the Portugese held the Roman rule of celibate clergy. The Portugese in the Roman manner venerated images of the Lord, the blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, while the Syrians did not observe this custom. So there were many differences. The Portugese attempts at converting the Syrians to their way of thinking was to a certain extent successful in the coastal towns of Cochin and Cranganore. After 1599, after a lot of ar-

guments and opposition from the Syrian clergy, the Portugese forced the Syrian Christian clergy to accept the ways of the Roman church.

This situation lasted till the Dutch arrived in India in the seventeenth century for trade, and slowly they displaced the Portugese in many places in India as well as in Java, Malacca and in Ceylon. They took over Cochin, and after that the influence of the Portugese in Malabar (Kerala) practically came to an end. Since the Dutch were Protestants, they were not eager to bring the dissident Syrians back to the Roman church, nor were they eager to make them Protestants. So the Syrian Christians renewed their connection with the Patriarch in Mesopotamia., the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Mar Gregorias, a Jacobite of Jerusalem arrived in 1665 and became the bishop of Malabar. Also, though many of the Syrian Christians have remained in the Roman church, others have become attached to the Jacobite church, and this situation still remains in Kerala today.

In Goa and some other places in India, the Roman Catholic church has still remained strong among the Christians. The Jesuits were invited by the great Mughal emperor Akbar, so that he could study Christianity from them. They were allowed to build a chapel in Agra and to preach without restriction., and to teach his son Murad. But there were very few conversions.

A very different kind of Christian mission was started in Tamilnadu by Father Robert de Nobili, a young

Italian Jesuit of aristocratic parentage who arrived in India in 1605. After a short stay in Goa and a few months in Cochin, he came to Madurai in Tamilnadu in 1606, which was the capital of the Nayak kings. Madurai was a center of Vedic learning, and Hindu philosophy and science was extensively studied. Father Fernandez, an elderly Portugese priest was ministering to the Portugese traders and to the Parava community of Christian fishermen. He ran an elementary school for boys with a Hindu Nayak teacher. Nobili learnt a lot about the Hindu religion and philosophy from the Nayak teacher, and learnt about the great gulf that existed between the high caste Hindus and the Christians. Christianity had not made much contact with the higher caste Hindus. In the eyes of the Hindus, Christianity was the religion of the "Franks" or "Parangis", the term used to denote the Portugese or any other Europeans. So Nobili felt that unless the high caste Hindus were contacted, the Christian faith would never take deep root in India. So Nobili decided to Indianise himself, and that he would become a Sanyasi-Guru. He therefore asked the permission of his superior, the Archbishop of Cranganore. The permission came in 1607, and he exchanged his black cassock for Kavi (saffron) coloured robes and his leather shoes for wooden sandals. He engaged a Brahmin cook who gave him vegetarian food consisting of rice, vegetables, fruit and milk. Many high caste Hindus visited him, and they had religious and philosophical discussions.

A number of younger men became his disciples. He also engaged a Telugu Brahmin Sanskrit scholar to teach him the Vedas, expecting to meet the Brahmins on their own ground. In that year, he could convert 63 people., some Nayaks, some Brahmins and some agriculturists. They were baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but they were not required to break their caste or change their dress, food or mode of life except in the matter of idolatry. They could also retain their sacred thread and tuft of hair on their head.

Nobili's teachings did not go all plain sailing. Once a large assembly of Brahmins demanded publicly his expulsion. Even some Parava (low caste Fishermen) Christians said he was a Parangi and he was converting them into Parangis. Nobili defended himself, saying that he was not a Parangi, but a sannyasi from Rome, and that the religion that he taught did not abolish the caste system. The Archbishop of Goa was hostile and he applied to the Pope for permission to take action against Nobili, but Pope Gregory XV supported Nobili in 1623. After this, Nobili extended his work to other places like Tiruchirappalli and Salem in Tamilnadu. In 1625, he baptized Tirumangala Nayak who was the deposed ruler of Sendamangalam and his family. After this, his converts were more from the Sudra castes and from the Adi Dravidas (the Panchamas of Tamilnadu). From 1635 to 1639, the officers of Tirumala Nayak expelled Nobili from Tiruchirappalli. In 1645, Nobili left India and went to Jaffna in

Ceylon where he took care of the Jesuit mission there. Then he was sent to Mylapore and he died in 1656 at the age of seventy-nine years. Nobili wrote several books in Tamil, Sanskrit and Telugu on Christianity and its teachings. He was certainly a great man who tried very hard to Indianise the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In the seventeenth century and the greater part of the eighteenth century, Jesuits carried on their work in South India, using Nobili's work. In 1648, this work extended to the south eastern part of the State of Mysore (now a part of Karnataka). Some of the important Catechists were Muttiudevan, SavariRayan and Dhairyam. The places of worship were designed to have two portions, one for the higher caste converts and the other for the depressed caste converts. It is estimated that the Madura mission had about 80,000 Christians in 1700. The Marava Christians of Ramnad and Pudukotta Christians were fairly large in number, and the Jesuit associated with them was St. John de Britto, a Portuguese of noble birth. Another famous personality of the Madura Mission was the Italian Father Constant Joseph Beschi who served from 1711 to 1742. He is very well known for his long epic poem "Thembavani" (the unfading garland) which is a poem of 36 cantos in ornate High Tamil giving the Biblical history of Redemption. Gradually, the Jesuit priests allowed these Tamil Christians to retain their Hindu customs, so that it was easy to get the Christian church to be established.

In the meantime, the Jesuits were

getting unpopular in Europe especially in Portugal and Spain, because they were acquiring great influence in public affairs. In Portugal, they were accused of plotting against the King, and in 1759 the Portuguese government ordered the suppression of the society in Portuguese and its overseas territories. It was suppressed in France in 1759 and in Spain in 1767. In India, the Jesuits were arrested and deported.

From 1776, the Paris Society for Foreign Missions, based in Pondicherry, took over the responsibility of the Tamilnadu, Mysore and Carnatic missions. One of the secular priests named Abbe J.A. Dubois, well known for his book "Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies", made extremely pessimistic views about the state and prospects of Christianity in India after thirty years in India from 1792 to 1823, first in the Tamil country and later on in the Kannada country of Mysore State.

In the early eighteenth century, the Protestant Missions first appeared in India, again in Tamilnadu. During the seventeenth century, European trading companies of other European nations other than that of Portugal appeared in India, and mostly on the east coast of India. The Dutch settled in Pulicat (1609), Sadras (1647), and at Nagapattinam (1660) all in Tamilnadu, the British at Surat on the west coast in Gujerat, at Masulipatam (1622) in Andhra Pradesh, Cuddalore (1683) in Tamilnadu, and at Calcutta (1689) in Bengal, the French at Pondicherry (1674) and at Chandernagore in West Bengal, the Danes at Tranquebar

(1620) in Tamilnadu and at Serampore in Bengal. All these Europeans were Protestant except the French who were Roman Catholic. These European companies were not very eager to spread Christianity, and their sole aim was profit and trade. In this way, they were not very different from the Protestants of their home country in Europe. Their struggle for existence against the Roman Catholic church in Europe and the contentions of the different Protestant sects with one another kept them busy and they were not interested in converting other people.

However, in England the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) both at home and in other parts of the world was founded in 1698, and in 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) in foreign parts was founded. The aim of the S.P.G. was to provide Anglican ministrations for the British people abroad, and to evangelize the non-Christian races of the world.

It was King Frederick IV of Denmark, a Lutheran and follower of Martin Luther King, who was the first one to send missionaries to India who arrived at Tranquebar on the 9th of July 1706 on the east coast in Tamilnadu. They did not receive a warm welcome, but were allowed to settle down in the Portuguese quarter of the town. They first learnt Portuguese and Tamil to prepare themselves for work. Bartolomew Ziegenbalg was their leader. They started their work among the German soldiers serving in the Dutch East India Company's troops. The missionaries also started adopting orphan chil-

dren and baptizing them and taking care of them in an orphanage, and starting a Tamil school for them. Ziegenbalg started having discussions with Hindus in Tamil, and very soon a small Protestant church was built. He started translating Luther's Short Catechism into Tamil, and it was printed in a printing press sent out from Europe in 1712. He also compiled a German-Tamil dictionary. Ziegenbalg extended his work to Nagapatnam and to Madras. At Madras, he received hospitality from the English chaplains who were in correspondence with the S.P.C.K. The Danish trading Company in Tranquebar did not support the ideas of Ziegenbalg, and he became ill and died in 1719 at the age of thirty-six. The Danish missionaries who followed tried to preach against the caste system, and this resulted in opposition and revolt, and they were recalled. The next missionaries Walther and Pressier restored the old practice of caste distinctions, and they succeeded in their mission. They moved to other places like Tanjore, Ramnad, Madras, Cuddalore, Nagapatnam and Trichinopoly (now called Tiruchirappalli). Their converts were Roman Catholics who had earlier been converted by the Portuguese. The books published by the Lutheran Mission on Tamil translations of German Hymns, the Tamil-English dictionary became very popular. C.F. Schwarz was one of the best known missionaries who worked from 1750 to 1798. He was supported by the British at Madras. He not only had converts from Hindus, but also from British troops. Schwarz also

helped the British in their wars with Hyder Ali of Mysore, by working as an ambassador. He also helped in the straightening out the misgovernment of the Raja of Tanjore. He was also unmarried and most of his salary was used for the work of the mission. He died at Tanjore in 1798. Schwarz was helped in his work by his assistant the Tamil convert Sattianaden.

The British treated these German missionaries with sympathy in not only Madras but also in Bengal, while the Danish authorities at Tranquebar did not encourage them. Later on towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was criticism of the missionaries and the Indian Christians in the parliamentary debates in England at the time of the discussion of the renewal of the charter of the East India Company. It was argued in Parliament in 1793 that to interfere with the beliefs of the Indian peoples would create disaffection and endanger British rule. Hence the East India Company in both England and in India began to oppose the entry of missionaries, and this policy was pursued for twenty years. Europeans were not allowed to reside in the Company's territories without its permission, and the Company could easily enforce this rule.

But in the next twenty years, several men of the East India Company which was ruling Bengal expressed a different opinion that something should be done for the spiritual welfare of the Indian people, and this was supported by the British public. The next renewal of the charter of the East India Company had to make

some concessions.

Meanwhile, a very unusual and remarkable English man named William Carey had arrived in Bengal in 1793. He was a self educated country pastor, who earned a small salary by teaching in a village school and working as a cobbler. He became the leading spirit in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. He went on saying, "Accept great things from God, attempt great things for God", and that moved a small group of people to found the Society, and he himself became one of its first two missionaries. He arrived in Calcutta with his wife and four children and his wife's sister. A doctor named John Thomas also came with him. Carey and Thomas started a business, but very soon lost everything. Carey moved to some waste land in the Sunderbans and started clearing the jungle. However Carey and Thomas were offered the posts as managers of two new indigo factories at Madnabati in Malda district of Bengal by an old friend George Udny, where they moved in June 1794. One of Carey's children died, and his wife became mentally deranged. Here they stayed for five and a half years. Carey learnt Bengali and Sanskrit, and preached to the people. He also translated the New Testament into Bengali. Through Udny's help, he could buy an old printing press.

In 1799, four families of the British Baptist Mission Society (B.M.S.) arrived and were advised to go straight to the Danish settlement of Serampore, about fifteen miles upstream on the Hooghly river from Calcutta, because the British did not

want any missionaries in their territory. At Serampore, the Danish governor, who was earlier in Tranquebar, welcomed them. Carey left his job in Madnabati, and came to Serampore to join these new members of the B.M.S. Here began the Serampore Mission. Thomas came later on and joined them.

A large house in a big compound near the river Hooghly was bought, and Carey and two newcomers Joshua Marshman and William Ward who was a printer formed a partnership which became very famous. They finished printing the Bengali New Testament in 1801. They could also convert two Bengalis named Krishna Pal who was a carpenter and Krishna Prasad who was a Brahmin. Seeing the new Bengali New Testament, Lord Wellesley, the Governor General at Calcutta offered the post of Professor of Bengali to Carey in the College of Fort William which was founded in 1801 for the training of the East India Company's junior British officials. Carey accepted the post which brought in a handsome salary, and divided his time between Serampore and Calcutta. He paid the money to the common fund just like his colleagues, and the mission became self supporting. As the college in the early years served all the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay,, most of the major languages of India were taught there, and Pundits from those language areas were working there. At one time fifty pundits were working in Carey's department. Carey saw a wonderful opportunity of multiple translations of the Bible into

Indian languages. Calcutta being a port and having connections to other countries of South-east Asia, he also dreamed of translation into the South-east Asian languages also. Lord Wellesley himself patronized the project. The Mission compound at Serampore became the home for the translation industry. They even manufactured their own paper. Carey himself was responsible for the Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit and Marathi versions. The others were done by the help of Pundits in those languages. Several languages like Arabic, Persian, Telugu, Punjabi, Marathi, Chinese, Oriya, Burmese, Kannada, Greek, Hebrew were covered. Though evangelists who were Indians and Anglo-Indians were working in several places in Bengal, the official attitude to the missions was very hostile, especially after the Vellore mutiny in 1803. When the charter of the East India Company was revised in 1813, missions under the supervision of the Serampore Mission were sent to Nagpur, Delhi and Ajmer in India, and to Amboyna in Indonesia. Carey, Marshman and Ward were the leaders of all this activity. All this work was financed by the money earned by them.

This Serampore Mission built up a system of elementary schools in Bengal and in 1818, there were 126 of them. After that they planned a college to teach Eastern Literature and European Science in Serampore. It was an arts and science college with a theological department, for Christian and non-Christian students. They bought the land and made the buildings, and classes be-

gan in 1819 with 19 resident Christians and 18 non-resident non-Christians. The curriculum included Sanskrit, Arabic, Bengali, English, Natural Science and Medicine, and in the early years all subjects were taught in Bengali. In the same year, the Serampore Trio entered the field of journalism, and started a weekly newspaper in Bengali, called "Samachar Darpan", probably the first newspaper ever printed in India, and an English monthly "The Friend Of India". These papers discussed problems like "Satisahagamana" and other evil social practices in India. But the British government were afraid of offending orthodox opinion. It was the strong voice of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and a few other such Bengali leaders which made Lord William Bentinck pass the order to prohibit this wicked custom in the British ruled territories of India.

Ward died of cholera in 1823, Carey died in 1834 and Marshman in 1837. They were pioneers and planners of not only Christian Protestant missions, but also of education for Indians and supporting social reform.

At the same time, another Protestant mission began in the southern part of Travancore State which is now the district of Kanyakumari of Tamilnadu. Here the pioneer was W.T. Ringeltaube who was a German Lutheran. He with the help of a depressed caste Tamilian named Vedamanikam, were able to convert hundreds of Tamilians of the Nadar caste. His successor Charles Mead continued his work throughout the nineteenth century under the aus-

pices of the London Missionary Society, and established the important diocese of the Kanyakumari district of Tamilnadu, which exists even today.

The revision of the charter of the East India Company in 1813 brought in important changes in the activities of the Protestant missions in India. An Anglican bishop of Calcutta was installed, and three archdeacons for Madras, Calcutta and Bombay were appointed. Future missionaries were to be allowed to live and work in British India unhindered provided that they respected the local government and maintain the principle of religious freedom. Missions from Europe and the U.S.A. started coming after 1833, when another revision of the charter removed restrictions against non-British societies. The first of the European societies which came was the Basel Mission which began its work in South Canara district on the west coast of the present state of Karnataka. Other European and American missions which were started at that time were the Gossner's Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Bihar, 1839), the Leipzig Lutheran Mission (Tranquebar, 1841), the American Board (Bombay, 1813, The Marathi Mission in Ahmednagar, 1831, Madura Mission, 1834), the American Presbyterians (Punjab, 1831), the American Baptists (Andhra Pradesh and Assam, 1836), the American Lutherans (Northern Circars, Andhra Pradesh, 1842). Gradually the Anglican Bishop of India brought all the Protestant missions in different parts of British India under the control of the Anglican

church. There was only one trouble in these transitions. The old Lutheran missions had tolerated the practice of caste in their missions throughout the nineteenth century. The Anglican mission tried very hard to eliminate the caste system in church, but could not succeed very well. Tinnevely and Kanyakumari districts were the two parts of India where the Protestants were most numerous.

In 1806, there were about 70,000 to 80,000 Jacobites of the Syrian Church in Malabar (Kerala). They were mostly agriculturists, and artisans living inland, very religious and dutiful to their clergy., and respected by the Rajas and The Nair Hindu Community. Colenel Macaulay of the Madras government wished very much to bring these Jacobites to be attached to the Anglican church. Claudius Buchanan from Calcutta toured over this area and met the Jacobite priests who knew Syriac, and induced them to translate the Syriac Bible into the local language Malayalam. During Tipu Sultan's invasions into Malabar (Kerala) the Syrians suffered. After the British defeated Tipu and killed him in 1798, the British Anglicans tried to help the Syrians to learn from the Anglican church and advised them that the Jacobite church should join the Anglican church, and requested the Syrian clergy to minister in Anglican churches in other parts of India, where Indian clergy were greatly needed. Colenel Munro, when he became the Resident and Dewan of Travancore, tried to revive the languishing Syrian church, thinking

that it would be good for the British to have the support of a loyal body of Indian Christians of a high standing. He also helped establish a seminary at Kottayam. But still the Conservative Syrian clergy resisted the move of the Anglicans to anglicize their church. The attempt of the British Anglicans was not very successful. However, there arose a reforming party within the Jacobite community and the emergence of the Mar Thoma Church came about. The Syrians who were influenced by the Anglicans remained in the Jacobite church. The Mar Thoma church manages schools and ashrams, and has shown an active and evangelistic spirit than any other Syrian community. It has five bishops and several churches. Although there has been party strife and litigation in the Jacobite church, there is also evidence of more constructional activity, and it has made much progress in education, theological training and Christian service of the community.

The nineteenth century saw the beginning of modern Indian history when British rule was consolidated, and there was impact of western ideas on the social, political and religious life of the country through the medium of the English language. Until 1829, Persian continued to be the court language and official language, but after a long controversy, the British introduced education in English and modern subjects, and the first educational institution of this kind was the Hindu College in Calcutta (Kolkata) started in 1817. This college produced a class of intelligent, English educated young men who be-

came active in destructive criticism of orthodox Hinduism. At this time a young missionary named Alexander Duff sent by the Church of Scotland opened a school where English and Bengali and other modern subjects were taught accompanied by Christian teaching. The veteran missionary Carey and the Hindu reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy gave him support. The students were examined in all these subjects. A college was also started and it came to be known as the General Assembly's Institution. He also tried to attract the students of Hindu College who were firebrands. A few high caste Hindu boys were baptized and that gave the missionaries a boost. In 1854, the modern system of public education was laid down, and departments of Public Instruction were to be established in each capital city which would take care of a large number of government schools and also private schools receiving grants in aid from the Government. Very soon the three Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established.

A large number of Christian schools without government aid carried on secondary education. The missionaries of the Scottish Church laid the way in this effort. Wilson College in Bombay was started in 1832 and the Madras Christian College in 1837, other similar colleges in other cities. A few students got converted and had to face opposition from their families.

After the great Mutiny of 1858, the British Government under Queen Victoria professed itself neutral to the different religions of India., but

the activities of the different missions increased greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century, and many American and Canadian missions entered the scene. Hopes were entertrained that more and more Indians would become Christian. But this never happened. A few people like Pundita Rama bai and others got converted, but other educated Indians got attracted to societies like the Brahma Samaj under the guidance of Keshab Chandra Sen, and the Prarthana Samaj of Bombay which advocated religious and social reform. The Ramakrishna Mission started by Swami Vivekananda on the lines of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa taught that all religions are ultimately one, and attracted educated Indians. The Arya Samaj started by Sri Dayananda Saraswati tried the reform of Hinduism, while defending it strongly. As the twentieth century progressed, the reinterpretation of Hinduism by several scholarly Hindus like Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Chinmaya and others have progressed, and an organization like the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISCON) has attracted a large number of Europeans and Americans and others in addition to Indians.

An important activity of the Christian missions in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century has been the support given to women's education. The earliest girls' schools were started by these Christian missions all over India, and even today they are some of the best girls' schools in the country. I was a student of the

London Mission Girls' School in Bangalore which was started in 1842 in Bangalore, and it is the oldest girls' school in Karnataka State, and is now called Mitralaya Girls' School.

In the middle of the nineteenth century began missionary work among the many aboriginal tribes who have not been absorbed into the Hindu society. One of the earliest attempts in this direction was by the Gossner's Evangelical Lutheran Mission in the Chota Nagpur region of Bihar among the Munda and Oraon tribes near Ranchi, and they were known collectively as Kols. In 1857, there were about 800 to 900 converted Christians scattered among several villages. These converted people were prosecuted by the Hindu and Muslim zamindars of the area. During the Mutiny and afterwards, the persecution was very severe and the European missionaries fled into the jungles. When law and order was restored, there were more conversions, because the tribals felt that they could get better protection from the British Government if they became Christians. Similarly, the Kols of Assam, the Santals on the border of Bihar and Bengal, the Konds and Pans of Orissa, the Garos, Nagas, Khasis, Jaintia, Lushai and other tribes of the North Eastern states were converted in large numbers. Due to this, the Christian population of India is chiefly concentrated in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, and the North eastern Hill States and Assam.

During the famine years of 1876 to 1878, there was large conversion in Tamilnadu, Andhra and in Karna-

taka of some of the low castes. In Uttar Pradesh the Mazhabi Sikh community and the Mehtars, in Punjab the Chuhra caste, the Chamars of Madhya Pradesh, and the Dheds of Gujerat have been converted in large numbers. The conversion of high caste Hindus in the early years provoked violent reactions, but the mass conversions of the low caste people came about without their losing their social status.

In the nineteenth century, a good work done by the missions is by the medical missions which was appreciated by all classes of Indians. The American missions were the pioneers in this line of work, and they could even work among the Muslims. All these medical missions made arrangements to train the doctors, nurses and compounders, and they started medical educational institutions like the famous Vellore Christian Medical College founded by Dr. Ida Scudder in Tamilnadu, a Christian Medical School in Miraj in Maharashtra, and the North India Christian Medical School at Ludhiana in the Punjab. The Christian missions also were the first to start tuberculosis sanatoriums, leprasariums. The Christian missions have also been pioneers in starting printing presses in English and many Indian languages.

In the early days, the Portugese dioceses were most prominent all over India as far as the Roman Catholic religion was concerned. The Jesuits and other orders did not only conversion work but also opened a large number of Christian educational institutions. During the last

quarter of the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic missions increased and consolidated themselves. With the exception of a few high caste Hindus, they converted mostly the low caste people and a large number of aboriginal tribes all over the country. The educational work done by Roman Catholic missions are at all levels and they also have very good medical institutions in many places. Some of the well known Roman Catholic colleges are St. Joseph's College in Tiruchirapalli, Loyola College in Chennai, St. Xavier's College in Mumbai, St. Xavier's College in Kolkata, St. Joseph's College in Bangalore, St. John's Medical College in Bangalore. Roman Catholic missions have been quite tolerant about the caste system, and that may be the reason that their numbers is very much more in the country. Also there are several seminaries to train Indian clergy, probably many more than what the Protestents have. In 1923, Pope Pius XI created an ecclesiastical province of the Syrian Catholic Christians, who have also started their own orders for both men and women. The Roman Catholic orders for women also do a lot of educational and medical work. The nuns are trained in convents in many parts of the country.

The educational work and medical work done by both the Protestant and Roman Catholic missions in India were pioneering and has been appreciated by all Indians whether they are Christian or non Christian. Similar work has been undertaken by many other religious and caste

groups like the Lingayats and Vokkaligas and Muslims of Karnataka State, and they have educational institutions to train young people in engineering, medicine, management and arts and sciences. This has resulted in very well trained engineers, doctors, managers and scientists in the country, both women and men. Such efforts are there in other states like Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and AndhraPradesh. Other states in the

north are catching up. In spite of its poverty, India's educational efforts has raised the average literacy rate from 20% in 1947 to nearly 70% today, and Kerala State leads the whole country.

Certainly the Christian community of India has shown the pioneering efforts in all types of education for both women and men, and in the medical field. Kudos to the Christians of India!

3.4.6. BREAD OR BAKERY IYENGARS

Iyengar is the usual surname of a South Indian Shrivaisnava brahmin, who is a follower of the great Hindu religious teacher Ramanujacharya who lived from 1077 A.D. to 1157 A.D.. Mr Lakshmi Narasimha Iyengar of Hassan town was about twenty years old around 1900 A.D., when the British were ruling India, and India was a part of the British empire. He had completed about five years of school and had a working knowledge of the English language. He was visiting his relatives at Sakaleshpur about 30 miles from Hassan, and through them found a job of a writer(clerk) at a coffee estate owned by a Englishman named Harry Miller. Mr Miller was a very kind man and taught Lakshminarasimha how to keep records and the correspondence of the affairs of the estate. The office was in one of the front rooms of Mr Miller,s bungalow. One day Mr Miller took his clerk around the bungalow, and showed him the kitchen which was in an outhouse, where his cook John Chinathambi was preparing to make a few loafs of bread and a fruit cake.

Lakshminarasimha could not enter the kitchen, because he was an orthodox brahmin who followed strict rules of purity, and could not enter an untouchable's kitchen. All Christians including Mr Miller and his cook John were untouchables. So the clerk stood at the door of the kitchen and watched all the intricacies of the making of bread and cake, Later on he talked to the cook when he was going home and learnt all the details of bread and cake making, including the firewood fired oven.

On weekends, Lakshminarasimha built the furnace in an outhouse of his house, and starting making bread and cake. After a few trials, he became an expert baker, and the cake and bread became favourite snacks of his family, which consisted of his parents, his wife and little child, and his younger brothers and sisters.

Slowly his brothers also learnt the art of baking and started selling bread and cakes and other baked goodies like biscuits (cookies)..

In a few years, their relatives also learnt the art of baking, and moved out of Hassan to bigger cities like

Bangalore and Mysore and other towns of Mysore State and opened bakeries, and starting a thriving business.

Other people started calling this group of Shri vaishnava Brahmins by the name “Bread or Bakery Iyengars.”

4. HINDU MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN LAWS IN INDIA

4.1. HINDU LAW—HISTORY

The word “Hindu” is a distorted form of the word “Sindhu” which is the old Sanskrit name of the river named “Indus”, which has its source in the Himalaya mountains, and flows through the present day Pakistan and India, and finally flows into the Arabian Sea near the big metropolitan seaport city of Karachi in Pakistan. The river has five tributaries, namely, Indus, Sutlej, Ravi, Beas and Jhelum., and the land through which these five rivers flow has been called the Punjab or the land of five rivers. After the partition of India into India and Pakistan in 1947, West Punjab went to Pakistan and East Punjab to India.

It was the Greeks who came to India with Alexander the Great in the 4th century, B.C. who called the inhabitants of this country Hindus, and they gave the name India to the country they inhabited.

In a way, it is better to call the HINDU RELIGION by the name “VEDIC RELIGION” which is based on the old sacred texts called the Ve-

das and on the Upanishads. However, we shall use the word “Hindu”, because that is the word in present usage. The Vedic religion is also called “Sanatana Dharma”. The word “Dharma” has a very wide meaning, comprising of the rules of religion, society and law. These three components of Dharma are inseparable.

The earliest roots of Hindu Law can be found in the Vedas in a very vague manner. The law was more specifically defined in the later works called the “Smritis”, where the rules of law were based on the usual practices of the day, and which were based on what was practised for a long time, and which was accepted by the people. These laws which were spelt out in the Smritis, have been in practice for hundreds of years till about the middle of the nineteenth Century A.D.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the British had established their rule over most parts of undivided India (what is today Pakistan,

India and Bangladesh). They were directly ruling the states called the British provinces, and were indirectly ruling the states called Native states which were ruled by Maharajas, Nawabs, and the Nizam of Hyderabad. The central British government, which ruled from its capital city of Calcutta, and its summer capital at Shimla in the Himalayas, took care of important subjects like defence, law, communications and so on.

They made a uniform code of law for all Hindus of the whole country, which were based on the law spelt out in the SMRITIS. Some of the important changes made by the British government were (1) the banning of "Sati" (or Sahagamana) which was the practice of a Hindu widow placing herself on the funeral pyre of her husband and getting herself burnt alive, (2) the banning of child marriage, and (3) the law to permit widow remarriage. Though these three laws were made, it was difficult to implement them, because of the customs which were prevalent for ages, and the people were unwilling to change them.

However, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, education based on the British system slowly progressed, due to the efforts of individuals like the great Raja Rammo-han Roy and Ishwarachandra Vidyasagar of Bengal, Gopalakrishna Gokhale and Balagangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra, and some of the enterprising, broad minded and generous hearted Maharajas of the states of Mysore, Travancore and Cochin (which is part of present Kerala) and

of Baroda (now in Gujerat) and so on, for both boys and girls, naturally the boys being in larger numbers. In this effort, we cannot underestimate the contributions of Christian missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant. The British government encouraged this British system of education, more to get young Indian men trained to help them run their government. The education of girls came up much more slowly due to two reasons, one that the Indian society including Hindu society was not very eager for it, and also that the British government was not at all eager to recruit women to run their government. In fact, there was no country in the world where educated women were encouraged to work outside their homes in the nineteenth century. Of course, all over the world, women worked in their homes, and the very poor women went out and worked as household servants or in the fields or did any other back breaking type of work that was available to them, so that they could keep their bodies and souls together and so that they could feed their children and take care of them as best as they could.

In the early part of the twentieth century, it was the national struggle for freedom, led by Mahatma Gandhi, which changed the minds of some right thinking Indians to encourage more women and girls to get educated, and take part in the freedom struggle. Organizations like the All India Women's Conference started discussing the rights of women including property rights, the raising of the age of marriage of both girls and

boys, and the ideas of giving more higher education to girls and not only to the boys. They said "Educate the girl, and the whole family gets educated".

In as early as 1930, the Mysore State Legislative Assembly had two nominated women members, Mrs Kamamma Dasappa, who was my grandmother and who was the third woman University graduate of the Mysore State, and was the honorary secretary of the pioneering women's organization Mahila Seva Samaja on Sri Krishnarajendra Road in Bangalore City. In a discussion in the budget session in June 1931, on the subject of amending the Hindu Law as to the rights of women regarding inheritance, separate property rights, and adoption, women's full estate, and maintenance, Mrs Kamamma Dasappa while expressing gratitude to the interest taken by the state government in securing rights for women, pointed out that the recommendations of the Committee did not go far enough, and that the All India Women's Conference had passed resolutions to that effect, and expressed that women wanted equal rights with men, in the matter of inheritance. With reference to a query from a member, as to what special claim had been established by the women of Mysore for a better treatment in future, Mrs Kamamma's reply seems to be indeed significant. She retorted by asking, "What particular achievements had entitled the men of Mysore to the superior position they were enjoying? I regret that any section of the male population should take a narrow view of the

matter, particularly at a time when every civilised country- eastern and western- was anxious to improve the position of women. Recent political developments in India had shown that women are capable of the best services and the highest sacrifices, no less than men. While men are fighting for their political rights in the shape of responsible government, how could these same men deny women their legitimate rights in the matter of inheritance? There is a mistaken notion that property is not safe in the hands of women. Are there not cases where property has been squandered by men?" Many of the men opposed the bill, saying that the law propounded by Manu since time immemorial stood for all time and required no change.

The bill provided for the revival of the practice of allotment of shares of the property to female relatives, like the widow, the mother, the unmarried daughter and the unmarried sister. The Mitakshara law which was propounded by Vignaneshwara, and based on the Smriti of Yagnavalkya, in the eleventh century A.D., was in practice all over India, except in the states of Bengal and Assam, where the law called Dayabhaga which was compiled by Jimuthavahana in the twelfth century A.D. was in practice. Later in the seventeenth century, a slightly changed law called Vira Mitrodaya was propounded. In all these variations of law, they have taken into consideration, the practices that were accepted by the Hindu society in those days. From the eighteenth century onwards, the different parts of India came under the British rule

slowly part by part, till it was completed by the middle of the nineteenth century. The British courts of justice in India depended mostly on the interpretation of the Smritis, and did not take into consideration the changes that had taken place earlier due to Vignaneshvara, Jimuthavahana and others. However the judges of the Privy Council have taken into consideration carefully some of the changes that had taken place. This is the reason that people who could afford it, like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and

some of the native rulers like the Maharajas took their cases to the Privy Council.

Some changes took place in the Hindu law before 1947 (the year of independence), mostly due to the pressure of organizations like the All India Women's Conference which was encouraged by political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and others. After independence in 1947, many more changes have taken place, and is now called the New Hindu Law Code.

4.2 WHO IS A HINDU ?

In 1955, one of the definitions given by the New Constitution of India, has defined a "Hindu" as follows, for the purpose of applying the Hindu Law.

(1) Any woman or man believing in any variation of the Hindu religion. In this context, Veerashaivas, Lingayitas, those who belong to the Brahmo Samaja, the Prarthana Samaja and the Arya Samaja are also included.

(2) Those who belong to the religions of Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

(3) Anyone who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi, or Jew, and who shows that she or he does not follow the Hindu religion, may not be considered a Hindu for the purpose of

this new Hindu Law.

The answer to the question whether you are a Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jain is given below:

(1) You are the child of parents who belong to any of the above religions.

(2) You are the child of parents, one of whom belong to one of the above religions, and you have been brought up in that religion.

(3) You have been converted or reconverted to one of the above religions.

(4) You belong to one of the sub-groups, which have revolted against some of the practices of the Hindu religion, like the Veerashaivas and Lingayits.

4.3 CHANGES MADE BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN THE HINDU LAW PRIOR TO 1947

Important changes were made in the Hindu Law prior to 1947, namely,

(1) Banning of Sati in 1827.

(2) Widow remarriage act in 1857.

(3) Raising of the age of marriage to fourteen years in 1929.

(4) The right of a widow to enjoy

her late husband's property during her lifetime in 1937. The widow will inherit a portion equal to that of his son only during her lifetime.

The Mysore Government had passed a similar bill in 1933.

The history of Hindu law is based on the following three principles, namely,

(1) patriarchal family (2) joint family (3) village family. The principle of village family was only in practice in the state of Punjab.

The patriarchal family, which is one of the oldest ideas of Hindu society, consists of the father, the grandfather, great grandfather, sons, grandsons, greatgrandsons, in the male line, the greatgrandmother, the grandmother, the mother, wife, unmarried daughters, unmarried grand daughters, unmarried great grand daughters, the wives of the sons, the wives of the grandsons, the wives of the greatgrandsons, in the female line. The females were very unimportant as far as the inheritance goes. The oldest male member is the head of the family, and everybody else is subservient to him. The patriarchal family becomes a joint family, only after the father dies. If the family decides to remain an undivided family, then the eldest son becomes the head of the family, the only difference being that while the father was the natural head of the family, the eldest son is the head only by the power given to him by the other members of the family. In case the eldest son is not capable, another son can be selected the head.

The joint family system was the system propounded by Manu, and al-

tered slightly later on by leaders like Yagnavalkya, Vigneshvara, Jimutavahana and others.

In the beginning, a man's own earning was not counted, and the earnings of all the members of the family were put together, and the head of the family decided how the total earnings could be spent to take care of the needs of all the members of the family. If one of the male members of the family wished to obtain his share of the property with the consent of the head of the family, it was accepted with grace. If the head of the family did not agree to give the member this choice, then the head can excommunicate this male member by giving a dinner to celebrate this excommunication.

Slowly, changes took place, and the division of property among junior members were slowly accepted, but it was only the head of the family who could decide this division of property. Also another change took place, namely that the wife of the head (father) of the family should also obtain a share, and this idea usually postponed the division of the property, till the death of the mother. For this purpose the step mother was also considered.

The undivided joint family is a feature which is special to Hindu law, and this does not exist in the laws applying to Muslim, Christian or Parsi laws in India.

Even if the members of a joint family lived at different places, the undivided joint family is the most important feature of the Hindu law. This undivided joint family may even have members who were distantly re-

lated, but descended from the same male member several generations ago.

In the Mitakshara law which applies to all of India except Bengal and Assam, the coparcenaries are all men who had the same male ancestor in the male line, and each one of them could obtain an equal share of the property. In addition to the group of men, there was a group of women who could claim maintenance during their lifetime. This group of women included the wife, the unmarried daughter, unmarried granddaughter, the widow of a deceased son and the widow of a deceased grandson. In addition, though all these members of the undivided joint family had a right to live in the ancestral home, they could not define exactly what was their share of their property, and no member could write a will regarding his share of the property. Only when the property was divided, then a member had a right to write a will.

According to this Mitakshara law, though the members of five generations may have been living together, the division of property applies to the head of the family and his three generations, and these three generations are the coparcenaries of the joint property. For example, the head of the family, his sons, his grandsons, and great grandsons are the coparcenaries. These are also the only male members who can do the funeral rites of the deceased head of the family. Adopted sons are also included in this group.

Regarding which property was considered as the property inherited from the male ancestor, it was only

the property inherited from the father, grandfather and great grand father. Any other inherited property inherited from anybody else did not fall in this category. The head of the family usually took care of the joint family property, and he was called "Karta". It was his duty to regulate the expenses of the family, taking into consideration the total income. He was also entitled to take loans if necessary, and when the division of property took place, it was the duty of the successors to repay the loans. Even if the Karta (or the Head) got himself involved in loans for the purpose of undesirable activities like drinking, gambling and so on, it was the duty of the successors to repay the loans. This was a special feature of the Hindu law.

However, there was a saving grace for the female inheritors, if at all they inherited anything at all, that only the male inheritors had this obligation of repaying the loans of the deceased head of the family. This was indeed a saving grace for the females in a society where they were crippled in many and many ways, and they were considered as non entities, who were there only to cater to all the needs of the males.

In the Mitakshara law, the family was only propagated only through the male issues, namely, son, grandson and greatgrandson, and so on.. If a man did not have sons, he had to adopt a son to propagate his family. In fact a man was considered very unfortunate if he did not produce a son. To save himself from this disgrace, he could marry a second time so that his second wife

could produce a son. In fact, the women were taught from childhood that they are worth living only if they could give a son to their husbands. Many a time, a woman would plead with her husband to get married a second time, and she would help him in finding a suitable girl as a second wife. There were cases where such a woman would treat her husband's second wife as her younger sister and take care of her son as her own. We can salute such women of India of the olden days as really such unselfish women who cared more for their husband's welfare than for their own. "Pativrata", the Sanskrit word meaning "One who is wedded to the idea of devoting herself completely to the welfare of her husband" was the ideal of all Hindu women.

The Dayabhaga Hindu law, which existed in Bengal and Assam, was a little different from the Mitakshara law. Unlike the Mitakshara law, the Dayabhaga law made the father the supreme owner of the property, and he could give the property to any person of his choice. In this law, in addition to the son, the grandson, the greatgrandson, the man's widow, his daughter, his mother, his father's mother, father's father's mother are all recognized as belonging to his paternal family, and all are entitled to a share of the property. But the women mentioned above could claim the property, only if there was no son, grandson, or grandson., and

these women could enjoy their share of their property only during their lifetime.

From olden times, the concept of "Sthridhana" for Hindu women has been honoured. The first time the word has been used was in the legal code pronounced by Gautama. The meaning of Sthridhana is "Woman's Wealth". According to the Mitakshara law, the wealth (property, jewels, etc.) which belongs to the woman, even though her possession of it is limited in nature, was called "Sthridhana". In the Dayabhaga law, "Sthridhana" is only that portion of her wealth, of which she is in full possession. The Sthridhana was the sole property of the woman, and no other claimant including her husband could claim it. She had the right to give it to anybody she liked. In case of great trouble, the husband could use it. In case the woman died without a will, the Sthridhana went to her descendents in the following order :- (1) unmarried daughter (2) married daughter with no means of living (3) married daughter with some means of living. In case there were no daughters, Sthridhana used to go to the husband, the sons and grandsons. In case the Sthridhana had come to her from her father, and if there were no female inheritors, then it used to go to her father's relatives, and if it had come from her husband, then it would go to his relatives.

4.4 HINDU LAW ACT—1956

It was necessary to make many changes in the Hindu law, as the society and the economics of the coun-

try changed. It was very necessary to remove the differences between men and women which existed in the old

Hindu law, and it was also necessary to have a uniform Hindu law which could be applied all over the country, and to remove the differences between region and region.

Even before independence, the British Government in India had appointed a committee headed by Benegal Narasinga Rao, to examine the above matter, and to suggest changes. This committee travelled all over the country to find out the opinions of the Hindu people, and it submitted a report before independence came in 1947.

Though independence came in 1947, the new country had to tackle very important problems like the aftermath of partition and several crucial problems. The new constitution of India came into being in 1950, and some of the new laws were passed in 1954, 1955, and in 1956. The task of codifying all these new laws was not a simple matter. The orthodox sections of Hindu society exhibited extreme resistance to the changes proposed in the laws. In spite of all this opposition, the new Hindu Law Code came into force in 1956.

According to the new Hindu Law Act of 1956, the following changes have been made:

The relationship which existed between the religious practices and the law of inheritance of property has been removed.

The limited possession of property by a woman during her lifetime has been removed, and the woman has the same property rights as the man.

The wife, the daughters, the granddaughters, and the mother have equal rights to the property of the fa-

ther, as that of the sons, and the grandsons. This results in all grandchildren and great grandchildren, whether female or male, to have equal claim, after the female and male children's claims have been satisfied.

The difference between the Mitakshara and the Dayabhaga systems have been removed.

The concept of Sthridhana has been changed so that any property or wealth the woman gains is her sole property, and she can do whatever she likes with it.

All the differences which existed earlier between men and women regarding property, has been removed. Men and women are treated equally for this purpose.

The disability that women had in inheriting property due to adultery has been removed, and they are treated exactly like men in all respects.

If the family house has to be sold, the first preference is given to the members of the family.

For the first time, the person (female or male) who has a share of the undivided joint family property, has been given the right to write a will in regard to his or her share of the property.

The law called "Aliya Santana" or the law called "Marumakattayam" which existed among some castes in the South Kanara district of Karnataka and in Kerala, have been incorporated in the new Hindu Law Code of 1956.

According to this new Hindu Code, any Hindu woman has been given full ownership of any type of

property or wealth she has obtained either before the law was passed or after it was passed. This also includes the Stridhana. She has all the rights to gift or sell this property and wealth of hers, or to write a will concerning it. Also, if there is no will, her property will go to her husband, daughters, and also to her sons, and also to her parents and grandchildren, thus removing the discrepancies between male and female inheritors. In case she has obtained her property from her parents-in-law, it will go back to them, and not to her parents.

According to this law, a man or woman can give his or her property to anybody he or she wishes to, by writing a will. Thus the difference between a man and a woman, regarding property rights, has been removed.

In 1994, an amended law by which women in Karnataka State can inherit an equal share with the men, of the ancestral property also, came into existence..

However, still many more disputable questions regarding the rights of women over property, have to be solved. For example, many men have not changed their old attitudes towards women. Instead of giving the daughters a share which is equal to that given to the sons, they are giving bigger dowries and spending more money on the celebrations of their weddings. Though the changes in the law have been made, it is not always carried out in practice, and other evil practices like huge dowries and elaborate expensive weddings have crept in. The dowries are usu-

ally swallowed up by the parents-in-law, and the huge expenses benefit the people who are the caterers and others who arrange the lavish celebrations. The girl who gets married does not get any benefits, but many times is tormented by the husband and his family for not getting a bigger dowry. Is it not possible for the parents to transfer to the girl an equivalent amount of money or any other property in her name so that no one else can touch it, and have a simple wedding and refuse to pay a dowry ?. The dowry is given to the son-in-law, and the daughter does not get any benefit from it.

The new law which gives to the daughters an equal share of the ancestral property equal to that of the sons, has come into practice only in the four southern states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh., and Maharashtra.. So far there has been no move to pass similar laws in the rest of the country.

However, in Kerala, the previous existing law of Marumakattayam which existed for a very long time even before 1947, has been changed. Similarly, the Aliya Santana law existing in some Hindu castes of South Kanara district, has also been changed. These two laws were similar, and the Hindu castes who observed these laws were the Nayars, Thiyas, and some other non-Brahmin castes of Kerala, and some groups of Kerala Brahmins like the Payyanur group, the Pillais,; and the Bunts, Billavas, and the non-priestly groups of Jains of South Kanara district of Karnataka.

Both these Marumakattayam and

Aliya Santana groups were matri-
monial groups, and the groups are
descendents of a woman. The male
and female descendents of this
woman ancestor belong to a family
called Tarawad. The inheritance of
property in this matriarchal system
was only through the woman, and
only the women descendents could
inherit the property. The woman was
the head of the family.

The changes made in these two
matriarchal groups mentioned above
by the Hindu Law Code of 1956 have

brought them to a more or less simi-
lar situation like the other Hindus.
According to this new law, the
woman's property goes to the follow-
ing people in order :- (1) daughter,
son and mother (2) father and son (3)
mother's descendents (4) father's
relatives (5) husband's relatives.

Even in these matriarchal com-
munities, the Kartha of the family is
the seniormost man of the family. In
case there is no man, The senior
most woman becomes the Kartha.

4.5 SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT

If the woman and man are both
Hindus, they can get married accord-
ing to Hindu customs. In that case,
their property rights and the prop-
erty rights of their children are ac-
cording to the Hindu Law Act.

In case one of them is a Hindu
and the other is not and decides to
remain in his own religion, then the
special marriage act applies to them,
and they have to have a registered
marriage. Then the property rights of
such a married couple and that of

their children follows the property
rights of the 1925 Act. According to
this Act, if a man from an undivided
Hindu joint family marries a woman
belonging to another religion, then
he does not belong to the undivided
joint family anymore, but his prop-
erty rights remain the same as if he
belonged to the undivided joint fam-
ily. According to the new Hindu Law
Act of 1956, the same thing applies to
the Hindu woman also.

4.6 HINDU ADOPTION ACT—1956

Even in the Vedic times, the ques-
tion of adoption was discussed, but it
was not given very much importance,
because in case a man did not have a
son, the son of a daughter of his was
nominated by him to do all religious
ceremonies allotted to a son, and he
used to inherit all his property after
his death, Later on, since the nomi-
nated grandson (grandson) had to do
all the ceremonies for two fathers
(his own natural father and his

grandfather), and since it also be-
came difficult even to get the daugh-
ter (the nominated grandson's
mother) married, and also due to the
fact that the other grandchildren
(children of other daughters) could
not obtain a share of the grandfa-
ther's property, the question of a
formal adoption came into force. In
this manner of property could be
done only in the male line. So this
practice of adopting a son came into

being, more due to practical reasons. Due to the reason that a man did not have sons toward his old age, due to the death of his sons due to wars or due to other reasons, the practice of adopting a son who could belong to the adopted father's family, and who was to do all the religious ceremonies for the adopted father, came into practice. The adopted son could also inherit the property of the adopted father. Due to this reason, the daughters and their children lost the right to inherit the father's property.

The adoption of a son by the father was possible, even if his wife did not agree to it. In fact, the man could do anything without taking the advice of his wife. The wife was there only to produce sons for him, and to take care of his personal needs. In fact, a man was called hen-pecked, if at all he consulted his wife about any matter. She was the unpaid mistress and an unpaid servant of the family. This was true not only in India, but in most parts of the world of ours. The wife had no right to adopt a son, and she had this right as a widow only if her husband had given her permission to do so. In this type

of unusual circumstances, she could adopt a son for her dead husband, but not in her own name. As soon as the widow adopted a son for her dead husband, she lost all her property rights, and this adopted son became the head of the family in all respects.

The 1956 Act of adoption has given the woman the right to adopt a son or a daughter as she or he wishes, and the adopted son or daughter has only the property rights of the other natural children of the mother and father, and he or she cannot take away the property rights of anybody else in the family. This act applies to all class of women, married women, unmarried women, widows and divorcees. Also the woman or man who adopts a child can leave her or his property to anybody he likes.

Another important change brought about by the new adoption law, is that if a married man or woman wishes to adopt a child (male or female), he or she has to obtain the permission of the other partner..

This new law makes man and woman equal in all respects

4.7 THE HINDU MARRIAGE

In India, with the exception of Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsis, everybody else is considered as a Hindu by the new Hindu Law Act of 1955.

So, any two Hindus can get married according to the Hindu rites, and even intercaste marriage is allowed according to these rites. In earlier days, though intercaste marriage was allowed, it was only between a

man of a higher caste and a woman of a lower caste, but the marriage between a higher caste woman and a lower caste woman was not allowed. Due to the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Keshava Chandra Vidyasagar of Bengal, a law was passed by the British Government that all intercaste marriages are lawful. According to the Hindu Law Act of 1955, all marriages between Hin-

dus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs are lawful. The children born out of these marriages have all the rights according to Hindu law.

What are the rules according to which a Hindu woman and a Hindu man can marry ?

The man and woman cannot belong to the same gotra, according to the 1946 Act. Now Hindu law accepts a marriage between a man and a woman of the same gotra and same pravara. The meaning of pravara is ancestry in the male line.

The stars under which the man and the woman are born have to be compatible, according to astrology.

At the time of marriage, the first wife or the first husband of the woman should not be living. This does not apply to the divorced wife or the divorced husband.

The man and the woman should not be "Sapinda" relatives. This word "Sapinda" means that the ancestor from the father's side for seven generations, and the ancestors from the mother's side for five generations,

should not be the same man. There are scientific and medical reasons for it. But according to customs which are prevalent, many marriages take place between sapinda relatives, like a man marrying his sister's daughter, the daughter of a sister of his father, and so on, which are marriages between very close relatives. Such marriages have been allowed by custom for a very long time. Such marriages are accepted by law.

The most important religious ceremony of the Hindu marriage is the "Saptapadi", which is the ceremony in which the man and the woman go round the sacred fire seven steps in the presence of the priest or priests and close relatives. While they take the seven steps together, they have to say the words " Dharmecha, Arthecha, Kamecha Naticharami" which means that " We will abide throughout our lives by the rules of religion, and of love ". According to Hindu law of olden days, this promise cannot be broken.

4.8 THE HINDU DIVORCE ACT— 1956

The old law had to be changed in 1956, due to changed conditions of Hindu society. According to it, a man or woman can seek legal divorce if :

If after the marriage, the man or woman has sexual relations with another woman or man respectively.

If the man or woman treats his partner in a cruel manner.

If the man or woman abandons the partner for more than two years.

The man or woman gives up the Hindu religion and embraces another religion.

If the man or woman suffers from an incurable mental disease.

If the man or woman suffers from incurable leprosy.

If the man or woman suffers from an incurable sexually transmitted disease.

If the man or woman becomes a Sanyasi (monk) or a Sanyasini (nun).

If the close relatives of the man or woman are not aware that his or her partner is living.

If after obtaining permission to live separately from the husband or

wife from the court, even after one year if the woman or man cannot live with her or his partner, then divorce can be obtained.

Even if the court has agreed that the husband or wife has abandoned his or her partner, and even if after one year the court has ordered that they should live together but they have not come together, then divorce can be obtained for this reason.

If before the Hindu Marriage Act came into force in 1955, if the man had got married to another woman, or if the woman learns that he had a wife before he got married to her, then the woman can be granted divorce from her husband by the court..

If after the marriage, the husband sexually assaults another woman, then also the woman can be given divorce.

According to the Maintenance Act of 1956, if the court had ordered that the wife should be granted maintenance (financial support) by the husband, if after one year the husband and wife cannot live together, then also divorce can be granted.

If the woman had been married before she was fifteen years old, which is against the law, then the woman can ask for divorce any time after she is fifteen years old and before she is eighteen years old.

4.9 THE HINDU DIVORCE ACT -1976

The important change made in the Hindu Divorce Act in 1976 is the permission given to the husband and wife to jointly submit an application to the court to be granted divorce. Before the application is submitted, the husband and wife should be living separately for more than a year. In the application, they have to submit that it is impossible for them to live together and hence they should be granted divorce according

to their mutual consent. After the submission of this application to the court, the court will issue the notice after six months, after ascertaining that it is impossible to make the couple to live together. The mediation can be done by the judge, or by a person indicated by the couple, or by a person appointed by the judge. The judge proceeds to give his judgement only after obtaining the report given by the mediating person.

4.10 THE RESULTS OF THE CHANGES MADE IN THE HINDU LAW AFTER 1947

Though the Hindu Law has been made very liberal in all respects, especially treating women and men

alike to a large extent, it has not been implemented. We shall see why this is so, at a later stage.

4.11 CIVIL MARRIAGE ACT

Any man and woman of any religious faith can get married by the Civil Marriage Act, as long as they satisfy the following condition

In case it is a marriage for a second time, the previous wife or previous husband., as the case may be, should not be living. This does not apply to a divorced wife or divorced husband.

The man and the woman should not be mentally ill.

The man should be more than twenty –one years old, and the woman should be more than eighteen years old.

The man and woman should not be related by forbidden relationships

According to this marriage act, two Hindus, or two people belonging to two different religions, or two people belonging to two different countries, can marry.

The man and the woman should give notice in the prescribed forms in person to the concerned sub-registrar of marriages, and at least one of them should have resided in that place for at least thirty days before that date. In case the man or the woman belong to another place, a copy of the notice will be posted in that other place also. In case anybody has any objection to this mar-

riage, he or she can object to it within thirty days. This objection can only be in respect of whether the woman is less than eighteen years of age, or if the man has another wife. The officer concerned will investigate this objection within thirty days of filing of this objection, and will decide whether the marriage can take place or not. In case there is no objection, the marriage can take place in any manner the couple decides. It is necessary for the officer-in-charge of marriages and three more witnesses to be present at the place of marriage, in front of whom, the man will say, “I will accept you as a lawfully wedded wife” and the woman will say “ I will accept you as a lawfully wedded husband “. Then the man and the woman and the three witnesses will sign the marriage certificate, which will be issued by the officer-in-charge.

The marriage can take place after thirty days after the notice is issued and within three months. If the three months are over, a second notice has to be given.

After a civil marriage, the man is no longer a member of the unlimited joint family. After that the laws of the civil code apply to both of them.

4.12 THE MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE LAWS OF MUSLIMS

The Hindu Law Act does not apply to the Muslims, Christians, Jews and Parsis of India.

According to the Muslim Law, the marriage (Nikha) is an agreement between a man and a woman, and not a religious ceremony. It is not necessary for a Muslim priest (Kazi) to perform this marriage. The man or the woman propose the marriage in front of two men or women witnesses, and if the woman or the man on the other side expresses agreement, the marriage ceremony is over. All this has to be done simultaneously. It is not necessary to have even a written agreement. However the Kazi enters the marriage contract in his book, and also enters the agreement of the man and the woman.

A Muslim man can marry a Muslim woman or a Christian woman or a Jewish woman, but cannot marry an idol worshipper. However, the Muslim woman does not have this freedom, and she can marry only a Muslim man.

Among the Sunni Muslims, only a permanent marriage is allowed. But among the Shia Muslims, a temporary marriage called Mutha marriage is allowed, and the man and the woman specify earlier the period over which the marriage will last. In this temporary marriage, the woman cannot expect any share of the husband's property, but the children born during the period of the marriage are entitled for their share of the father's property. However, the woman is entitled to get the money that is agreed to be paid to her during the marriage. The marriage ends

automatically at the time which has been agreed upon. But it can continue also after that date if both man and woman agree. Also the marriage can come to an end earlier than that date, if the man or woman desire to do so. If the man ends it, the man has to pay the woman the full amount agreed upon. However if the woman ends it, she will be paid only the proportionate amount. It is not necessary for mutual agreement, or the permission of the court, to end such a marriage. Such marriages are common among the men who come to India from the Arab countries for business, and during their stay in India they marry Indian Muslim women according to the rules of the Mutha marriage. By this marriage, with the exception of the money paid to them, there is no other protection.

Even in the permanent marriage, the woman is entitled to the money agreed upon (mahar) at the time of marriage. This money has to be paid to her either on her obtaining a divorce or on her husband's death. If the mahar is not paid, it can be taken from the husband's property by the court.

If the Muslim woman has been abandoned by the husband, she can appeal to the court according to the Criminal Procedure Code to grant her maintenance for herself and her minor children. The Section 125 of this code gives some relief to the unfortunate Muslim woman. But many orthodox Muslim men argue that this section should not be applied to Muslim women.

Muslim men do not have to go to court to divorce their wives. A men-

tally sound adult Muslim man can end his marriage at any time. If the man pronounces the word "TALAQ" once during the period between two monthly periods of the wife, or he can pronounce the word three times during the period between three monthly periods, then it is supposed to be the best "TALAQ".. If he pronounces the word three times at the same time ' then it is not a sacred Talaq. This pronouncing the word need not be in the presence of the wife. It can also be done by writing the word on paper (Talaqnama) and the wife need not know it. This "TALAQ" practice cannot be done by the wife. This custom is like the sword of Damocles hanging over the head of the married Muslim woman.

Divorce can be obtained by a Muslim couple by mutual consent also and this method is called "Mubarak". But in this method, the man need not pay anything to his wife.. There is still one more method for the Muslim woman to obtain her divorce from her husband. In this case the husband should have given permission to his wife to ask for a divorce if he gets married to another woman

Because of these variety of conditions for the Muslim woman to obtain a divorce, the British Government passed a law in 1939 called the

4.13 THE MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE LAWS OF CHRISTIANS

.In the Christian marriage, the man and the woman take their marriage vows in the Christian church in the presence of the Christian minister or priest, and the marriage is entered in the church records. The marriage is sacrosanct and it is for

Muslim divorce Law. According to this law, the Muslim woman can go to the court to obtain a divorce under the following conditions :

If there is no sign of the existence of the husband of the husband for four years.

If the husband abandons the wife for more than two years.

If the husband has been sentenced to be imprisoned for more than seven years.

If the husband does not do his duties for more than three years.

If the husband is physically unable to do his husband's duties.

If for two years, the husband is mentally sick, or suffering from leprosy or from an incurable sexually transmitted disease.

If her guardians have got her married before she was fifteen years old, and if there has been no intercourse, and if the husband has not accepted his marriage before she is eighteen years old. This reason also applies to the husband.

If the husband is treating her cruelly.

If there is any other reason according to Muslim law.

The Muslim man can have four wives at a time. He can divorce one wife and marry again. The Muslim woman does not have this right.

their lives, and it is not breakable. However, there is a Christian law passed in 1869 by the British Government in India, which provides divorce under the following conditions :

The Christian man can divorce his Christian wife if it can be proved

that she is engaged in adultery. However, the Cristian woman can divorce her husband only if one of the following conditions are satisfied :

If the husband has changed his religion and has married another woman.

If the man is engaged in a forbidden relationship with another woman.

In addition to adultery, he has abandoned his wife for more than two years.

Even if there is mutual incompatibility, in addition, one of the above conditions should exist

Also, if the lower court sanctions the divorce, the higher court should substantiate it.

The law for divorce for couples

who marry according to the civil code is the same as exists in the Hindu Divorce Act.

Though the Hindu Law is going on continuing to be changed as necessity arises, the Muslim and Christian laws have not been changed at all. After the Muslim divorce Act of 1939, no changes have been made. After the Christian Divorce Act of 1869, and the Christian marriage Act of 1872, no changes have been made. However the Christian women's organizations have appealed to Parliament to change the Christian laws to make them more liberal.

It is probably necessary to make a common civil law code to apply to all Indians, irrespective of what religion they belong to.

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