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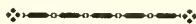
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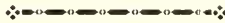
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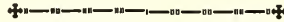
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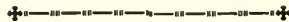
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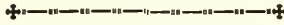
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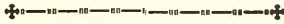


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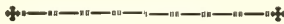
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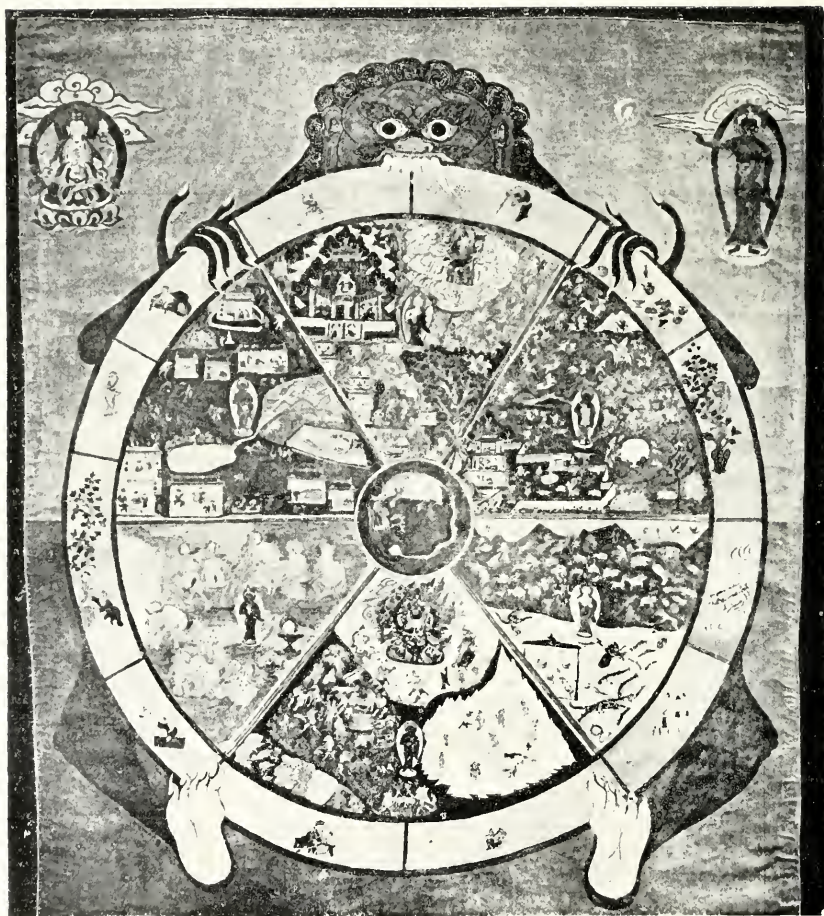
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THE INDIAN IDEA OF THE SOUL

BY W. LOFTUS HARE

IN the Hymns of the Rig-Veda, the earliest of the Indian religious writings, there is no strict and uniform term for the Soul. The word Atman, coined in the Upanishads, does not appear in the Hymns, and the word Purusha, adopted later by the Sāṅkhya philosophy for the Soul, occurs but seldom in the Hymns to describe the great being who is both Universal Soul and Individual Soul. Purusha is a mythological figure who has a thousand heads, eyes and feet, pervading every side on earth, who is divided into many portions to make single living beings, both animal and human. The ancient text is worth quoting as being the first formulation of a doctrine of Universal Soul separated into individual Souls. The idea is crude, certainly, but it gives us a clue to the origin of one of the several doctrines of the human Soul.

I. A thousand heads hath Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet.

On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.

This Purusha is all that yet hath been and all that is to be;

II. When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make?

(Griffith X, 90)

Then follows a list of the various portions of the world, animal and human life, into which the first great Purusha was divided. It is clear from this that any given portion was not "the Soul," was not the immortal part of man but merely a differentiation of universal being—the sun, the moon, the sky, horses, kine, goats and sheep. There is here no doctrine of the Soul, strictly speaking, but

merely a creation myth out of which, later, a Soul doctrine was derived. We must therefore dismiss the passage, and all passages like it and look elsewhere in the Rig-Veda for material about the Soul. There is, indeed, a great deal; but it is a general idea, a tradition taken for granted, rather than a formulated teaching. Such teachings generally come later instead of earlier, being preceded by a commonly accepted notion whose origin it is difficult to trace.

THE FATHERS, OR ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

Like all primitive races, the ancient Indians remembered, revered and worshipped their ancestors whom they called *Pitris*. They were the heroes of famous exploits, richly rewarded by the gods for their pious service, by which they "gained immortality." The hymns of the Rig-Veda contain numerous references to these semi-divine beings to whom is assigned a region of heaven, who visit the place of sacrifice and produce plentiful fruit on earth. This all leads up to the belief in continued communion with the Fathers and ultimate return to them at death.

"Men born on earth tread their own paths that lead them whither our ancient Fathers have departed."

(*V. XIV, 2*)

"I have heard mention of two revical pathways, ways of the Fathers and of Gods and mortals

On these two paths each moving creature travels."

(*X. xxxviii. 15*)

It also implies, or necessarily takes for granted, the continued existence of that part of man which is not his body. No discussion of a psychological character is to be found in the Hymns in reference to this; the language used is frankly human, and the argument for the existence of a Soul is presented in the simplest form, and perhaps in the most beautiful in the following prayer:

The kingdom of inexhaustible light,
Whence is derived the radiance of the sun,
To this kingdom transport me,
Eternal, undying.

There, where Yama sits enthroned as king,
Among the holiest of the heavenly world,
Where ever living water streams,
There suffer me to dwell immortal.

Where we may wander undisturbed at will,
 Where the third loftiest heaven spreads its vault,
 Where are realms filled with light,
 There suffer me to dwell immortal.

Where is longing and the consummation of longing,
 Where the other side of the sun is seen,
 Where is refreshment and satiety,
 There suffer me to dwell immortal.

Where bliss resides and felicity,
 Where joy beyond joy dwells,
 Where the craving of desire is stilled,
 There suffer me to dwell immortal.

(Deussen IX. CXiii. 7-11)

THE FIRST PSYCHOLOGY

In the interval between the composition of the Vedic Hymns and that of the Upanishads great changes took place in Indian practice and thought. The Hymns became a mysterious deposit of sacred teaching and required extensive commentaries to explain them not to the people generally, but to the officiating priests, headed by the Brahmins. On the other hand philosophical speculation had begun and led to the writing of the Upanishads and quiet opposition to the ritual and observances taught in the Brahmanas, or commentaries. Here we find for the first time many doctrines of the Soul and here true interest in the subject begins.

Curiously enough although I have bound myself strictly to keep to psychology and avoid theology—owing to the way in which the Indian doctrine of the Soul is first formulated this rule has to be at once broken: for the earliest doctrine of the Upanishads teaches the existence of one unique Soul—"it is thyself which is within all." Here the word is *Ātman*, used to denote the self of man and the self of the universe, and thus to assert their identity. As already stated the idea of one Soul of the world there named *Purusha* had appeared in the Rig Veda (X. 90) in a hymn attributed to the Rishi Narāyana. This *Purusha*, or at least a part of him, was the soul of each animate and each inanimate being. We may assert therefore that after the primitive assumption of the existence of a Soul which at death went to be with the Fathers or the Gods there came into the minds of Indian thinkers a doctrine of the human Soul as identical with the Universal Soul, called alternatively *Purusha* or

Ātman. In the Hymn this teaching is given by the poet Narāyana and in the Upanishad by Yāgnavalkya the priest.

In the Hymn the great act of creation is represented as a "Sacrifice" of *Purusha* by the gods by dividing him into many parts. Thus he has innumerable heads, eyes and feet; he pervades all the earth and yet in man he is but "ten fingers wide." He is all that has been and will be and grows greater by the pious sacrifice of mankind. His being consists, as to one fourth part, of earthly creatures and as to the remaining three fourths of heavenly spirits or gods who, ascending to heaven, left behind them the earthly portion of *Purusha*, from whom *Virāj* was born and then mankind, the creatures of the air and earth. From his mind came the moon, from his eye the sun, from his head the sky, earth from his feet and so on. "Thus they formed the worlds."

In the Upanishads we have a less primitive idea of creation but with the same basis: "In the beginning was this Self alone in the shape of *Purusha*. He looking round saw nothing but his Self." By his own act rather than by sacrifice by Vedic gods, he produced all creatures from himself and said: "I indeed am this creation for I created all this." After having created the varied forms of human beings, he entered into them "to the tips of the finger nails." (*Bṛihadāranyaka Up: I. iV*).

Putting aside all detail and differences, hymn and Upanishad both assert that *Purusha*, the one self, is the metaphysical basis of all separate selves; each Soul receives its being from him.

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE DOCTRINE

It is unnecessary to draw in full the metaphysical, psychological and ethical consequences from the doctrine of divine and human identity. The earlier Upanishads devote themselves to elaborate discussions of these consequences in passages of great beauty and complexity. From every angle, with proofs both naïf and profound, the group of teachers strengthen the doctrine they have initiated. Since the self of Man is the Self of God it is necessarily immortal. "This body indeed withers and dies when the living Self has left it; the living Self dies not." (*Chandog: Up: VI. xi. 3*). It is the inward ruler of each and every one; it is the *Ātman Vaisvānara*, the self common to all, and consequently each is not merely inwardly identical to God, but to each other. So when a man looks into the

pupil of his brother's eye "he sees himself." Even more than this: the community of inner being extends to animal and natural forms: "Whatever these creatures are here, whether a lion or a wolf or a boar, or a worm or a mosquito. . . . that which is that subtle essence, in it all that exists has itself. It is the real. It is the Self and thou art it." (VI. ix. 3-4).

While there were always some who maintained this high doctrine of idealistic monism, the experience of man was continually leading away from it, and contradicting it. Difference, not identity, was the message of the normal senses, and consequently a view of the Soul as a *separate* being using bodily organs, began to develop. The Supreme and Individual Souls, once identical, are now thought of as experience seems to witness to them, as distinct from each other. The former is a Personal God, Ishvara, and the latter a being independent of him. Body and Soul, therefore are the two aspects of human existence with which a man is concerned.

THE MIND AND THE ORGANS

It is in the Sāṅkhya philosophy that the doctrine of the Soul reaches its farthest development away from the earlier Vedānta of the Upanishads. As a concession to realism the higher, invisible member of the triad: "God, Soul and World" becomes lost. Creation processes are forgotten; the senses are trusted, the world is real and the Soul, the seat of experience, requires no proof. The whole world can be enumerated into 24 categories with a twenty-fifth which is *Purusha*, the Soul. Here we learn how the Soul uses a central sense-organ called *Manas* (the Mind) five organs of knowledge, and five of action, called collectively the ten *Indriyas*. These organs, it must be noted, are not parts of the soul, which is one and indivisible; they are apparently bound up with it from eternity, but not essentially. The sufferings or enjoyments which a man experiences are not those of the soul, nor indeed are his actions attributed to it. Actions and experience are those of Nature, *Prakṛiti*, to which the *manas* and the *indriyas* belong. There is therefore left to the soul in this doctrine those characteristics of immortality and impeccability which it possesses in the Vedānta. It is completely beyond harm; as in the Vedānta "the living self dies not."

THE STATES OF THE SOUL

It is no part of my task here to explain the Vedāntic doctrine of the illusory nature of the Universe except in so far as it concerns the Soul's experience of itself and the world. Deussen puts it in a sentence.

The Ātman is the sole reality; with the knowledge of it all is known; there is no plurality and no change. Nature which presents the appearance of plurality and change is a mere illusion (*maya*).

(*The Philosophy of the Upanishads* p. 237)

A moment's reflection shows that the phenomenon of plurality is due, on this hypothesis, to some peculiar power of the Soul which makes illusion possible. The doctrine in reference to these powers was developed gradually in the Upanishads and may be stated in the terms of the *Saropānistsara*, translated by Deussen (p. 299).

"When using the fourteen organs of which manas is the first (manas), buddhi, c'ittam, ahankara, and the faculties of knowledge and action), that are developed outwards, and besides are sustained by deities such as aditya, etc., a man regards as real the external objects of sense, as sounds, etc., this is named the waking (*jagaranam*) of the ātman."

"When freed from waking impressions, and using only four organs (manas, buddhi, c'ittam, ahankara), apart from the actual presence of the sounds etc., a man regards as real sounds dependent on those impressions, this is named the dreaming (*svapnam*) of the ātman."

"When as a result of the quiescence of all fourteen organs and the cessation of the consciousness of particular objects, a man (is without consciousness), this is named the deep sleep (*sushuptam*) of the ātman."

"When the three states named have ceased, and the spiritual subsists alone by itself, contrasted like a spectator with all existing things as a substance indifferentiated, set free from all existing things, this spiritual state is called the *turiyam* (the fourth)."

It would have been better, perhaps, if these four states had been presented in their logical or psychological order. The third is the fundamental state out of which the ātman passes from dreamless sleep into a state less real, namely dreaming. From this he enters the waking state which is, according to this theory, still more removed from reality, presenting the phenomena of a complicated

plurality. But from this third state by means of effort (yoga), of which more will be said hereafter) it is possible to pass directly into a conscious possession of the ātman which in the first state, is unconscious. Putting aside the philosophical conception of a greater or less reality attributable to these four states, it is obvious that they are collected from the experience of ordinary life or to the first second and third and from the powers of meditation as to the fourth, in which a blissful consciousness of absorption with the Higher Self or Universal Ātman replaces the unconscious absorption said to take place in dreamless sleep. The state is metaphysically similar in the first and fourth but knowledge of the state is added in the fourth which renders it more desirable. Such is the theory of the alternative states of the Soul from the view point of man. It need hardly be said that, considered theologically, the Ātman as "God" can have but one state; but this is not our present concern. It is relevant however to ask the question as to which entity *maya* or illusion belongs. No simple answer can be given, except to say that man, being the offspring of the *Ātman* as creator, is less than the creator. *Maya* is a deprivation of *Vidya* which man suffers; its first state is dream in which the mind creates its own peculiar world, its second state is waking in which minds create a world common to all. But there is still the possibility of escaping illusion in deep sleep or *turiya*.

THE LIBERATION OF THE SOUL

The Sāṅkhya philosophy resembles the Vedānta in another of its elements, namely, that a "knowledge of the truth" is said to be imparted by it. In the older philosophy it is "knowledge only" for its own sake, while in the Sāṅkhya the knowledge in question is a "remedy for pain." That pain or suffering of three kinds is a matter of experience but it is not known outside philosophical illumination that this pain is not an experience of the Soul. Liberation from the perpetual round of suffering attendant on rebirth in the world is possible, but it is not an experience of *the Soul*. For the Soul is not in bondage, though it seems to be. Here again there is a kind of *maya* from which the Sāṅkhya philosophy is ready to relieve us. I will here confine myself to a few points about the *Purusha*, or Soul, drawn from *The Sankhya Aphorisms of Kapila* (Trubner's Oriental Series 3rd Edition).

Bondage, from which escape is desired, is not derived from time and place because those who have escaped from it are subject also to time and place. Nor is it derived from circumstance, which is of the body, nor from Ignorance, nor from motion, nor from works. It arises from not discriminating between Nature and Soul. The process of discrimination is not possible to the dull, unlikely to the mediocre and will only be mastered by the best.

As soon as this discrimination begins we learn that to Nature and not to Soul belong the instruments of suffering and bondage: viz Mind (manas) Intellect (buddhi) Selfconsciousness (ahamkara) the senses and their organs. (I. 61).

“It is merely verbal, and not a reality this so called bondage of the Soul; since the bondage resides in the mind and not in the Soul.” (I. 58).

Nature supplies to the Soul two bodies, one subtile and one gross; the former consists of seventeen parts and the latter of five elements; the second is the tabernacle of the first. The mundane existence of the subtile body is for the sake of the Soul (III. II) which does not itself transmigrate. This is the function of the subtile body which by transmigration accumulates knowledge which leads to salvation, the Soul's chief end. Discrimination between Soul and Nature is one of the powers of the subtile body which likewise is brought into bondage through non-discrimination. Some remarkable sayings are:

“From Brahma down to a post for the Soul's sake is creation till there be discrimination between Soul and Nature.” (III. 47.)

“Bondage and Liberation do not actually belong to Soul and would not even appear to do so but for non-discrimination.” (III. 71.)

“That which has to be done has been done, when entire cessation of pain has resulted from discrimination; not otherwise, not otherwise. (III. 84.)

The reader will make his own comparison between the Vedānta and Sāṅkhya conceptions of the Soul. I take the liberty of suggesting that since Purusha is essentially pure and unharmed our concern is really with the Subtile Body. Might not the first be called “The Spirit” and the second “The Soul”?

ISOLATING THE SOUL

The common endeavour of the religious philosophies of the ancient Hindus was to isolate the Soul from the bodily and worldly environment which led to illusion and pain. This endeavour was called generally *Yoga* or effort, and was to obtain knowledge by *jnāna yoga*, merit by *karma yoga* and *bakti-yoga*. All these have their origins in the Upanishads and reappear in the Sāṅkhya philosophy, whose key word is *Viveka*, discrimination. One of the results of specialization was the production of the ascetic practice of meditation, and its literary expression was the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali. Here at last the term *yoga* seems to be monopolized by the philosophy which bears its name and which is one of the six orthodox systems derived from the Vedic scriptures.

Theologically the *Yoga* adopts the standpoint of the Sāṅkhya philosophy and dispenses with a god who is Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. In the combined Sāṅkhya-*Yoga* system the universe sustains itself, being by no means the dead thing western science has made it. True, there is a concession to piety by the admission of an *Ishvara* who seems to have no function other than as a model or standard of ideal purity.

The *yoga* system exists to enable the devotee to obtain Soul-isolation, called *kaivālya*. It is the specific form of the more general *moksha*, liberation. But we must not forget that this isolation is obtainable in this present life. Union with the Ātman or Brahman is taught by the Vedānta by a profoundly intellectual process which leads to, but does not compel the awakening of the Ātman; Discrimination of the Soul from Nature is the result of a scientific analysis of the twenty-four elements of the world; Isolation is an actual psychological experience which results from the practice of *yoga*.

Patanjali's work is divided into four books on Concentration, Means of Attainment, Supernormal Powers and Isolation respectively and may be studied best, I think in Mr. James Haughton Woods' translation (Harvard Oriental Series). A handy translation is that by M. N. Divedi (Rajaram Tukaram, Bombay).

The principles of *yoga* are stated in the first four aphorisms. *Yoga* is the restriction of the fluctuations of the mind-stuff, or the suppression of the transformations of the thinking principle. (I. 2.) When attained the Seer (*Ātman* or *Purusha*) abides in himself.

(3) At other times the Self takes the same form as the fluctuations of the mindstuff or becomes assimilated with the transformations of the thinking principle (4).

I am not here concerned with the practice of yoga except so far as it throws light on the nature of the Soul. The above brief sentences make it clear that the Soul stands above the mind and its attendant senses. Normally, we live identified with the mind and its rapid transformations; we suffer and enjoy its contacts with the world. The mind and its group of senses constitute the nexus between the soul and the world; this nexus can be cut by stilling the mind. The soul then remains in Isolation. The yogin obtains this state in the present life. What can Isolation be like?

Since all our normal experience comes from association with the world by means of the instrument of sense perception, it must be difficult to conceive of experience when cut off from its customary objects by the cessation of the functioning of the mind. Yet this is what we seek to know. The mind which was formerly directed to objects of sense and its own states of being becomes changed as soon as it has mastered discrimination. It is borne onwards towards Isolation. But even after illumination of the difference between Prakriti and Purusha, after turning away from the world as an object of desire, one must not turn to Isolation as a desired experience. One must be passionless in respect to this also! With Isolation the energy of intellect is grounded in the self, not in the mind which belongs to Nature. Drawn away from some specific things upon which it has been hitherto fixed, the Intellect—the pure knowing function of the Self—becomes omniscient.

But a further consequence of Isolation is that the Self is reborn no more in the world. Upon the cessation of his Karma (which normally draws a man to rebirth) even while yet alive he is released forever. For him the incessant transformations of Nature have fulfilled their purpose, they have reached their end. Involution, or the cyclic withdrawal of the world from manifestation, accompanies Isolation of the Soul.

Such, in brief, is the teaching about the Soul in Patanjali's Fourth Book.

THE SOUL IN JAINISM

The Jain philosophy is one of those heterodox systems which are not founded on the Vedas. The title Jain is derived from the

old Sanskrit word *jina*, signifying "Conquerer," i. e. one who conquers his lower nature. It was in general non-technical use about the period of the Buddha and Mahavira, his elder contemporary, the reputed founder of the Jain Order. The Jains claim to go back to a period more remote and all that need be said here in relation to their theology and metaphysic is that they seem to bear little resemblance to the dominant Hindu doctrine with which we are more familiar.

Of the four aspects of Jaina religion (1) Theology, (2) Metaphysics, (3) Ethics and (4) Ritual we are concerned here only with a part of the second which deals with the Soul. Jaina metaphysics divides the Universe into two everlasting uncreated co-existing categories *Jiva* and *Ajiva*, Soul and Non-Soul. This resemblance to the Sankhya *Purusha* and *Prakriti* ceases when we come to examine these categories more closely. *Ajiva* is divided into Matter, Time, Space, Motions and Rest. *Jiva* is the higher and only responsible entity. It is always in association with Matter until it reaches its *Nirvana*, the final state of liberation corresponding to the *Moksha* and *Kaivalya* of the other systems. The body is the natural partner of the soul and belongs to *ajiva*; it has to be subdued or conquered by the soul, which then becomes a Jina in the full sense of the term. The union of body and soul is wrought by *Karma* whose destruction—or rather whose expulsion—is the fruit of the soul's effort. The remarkable idea in Jainism is that this *Karma* is a material substance. In common with the other systems it is *Karma* which keeps a man in bondage to the *Samsara* or cycle of birth and death.

There are several classes of human Souls, (A) those liberated and in *Nirvana*, and (B) Mundane Souls still enlarged with matter. The former are again subdivided into (1) those who preached Jainism while on earth, and (2) other liberate souls. The latter (3) are separated into Ascetics and Non-ascetics, while the Ascetics again fall into two groups, Arhats, perfected souls awaiting *Nirvana* and other teachers and saints.

There are however souls called *Sthāvāra* or "immobile souls" on account of their not possessing power over the bodies they inhabit, being subject to these bodies, namely, souls in minerals, water, fire, air and plants. *Trasa* souls are "mobile" and can control the bodies they inhabit: insects, fishes, animals and men. I quote

the following from an authoritative work: (Footnote. *Outlines of Jainism* by Jaini, Cambridge University Press, 1916).

It is capable of seeing and knowing all, and it desires happiness and avoids pain. Of the mundane form of body and soul the soul is the higher, and the only responsible partner. Or rather the body, except in the drag of its dead inertia, is merely the sleeping partner. The powers of the soul are limitless, The whole universe is its scope. Its knowledge and perception cover all; its happiness is not measured by time, because time cannot run beyond it; and its power is divine, because it is joined to omniscience. This great principle of Jainism, this little "I," which is the everagitated centre of our brief lives, is eternal. Matter may capture it, keep it back from its light and freedom and bliss; but matter cannot kill it. The string of life is continuous; the migrations are only knots in it. Life is a journey. The soul is immaterial, of course; it has neither touch, nor taste, nor smell, nor colour. It is the essence of wisdom and power, and eternally happy. Who will gauge its possibilities. It is a king in rags. It has faint memories of the richness and glory and power that were its own. But the rags are tangible. and make it feel incredulous of ever having been a king. "How can I be a king and in rags? No one would allow that." Long accustomed to nothing but pain and limitations, the human soul is sceptical about its power and bliss.

Of the "mobile Souls" we are concerned chiefly with those of man, but it should be remarked that in the Jain system every one of the living beings is essentially divine; there is no such thing as an evil soul. Moreover all are equal: the apparent "evil" or "inequality" is due to the presence, more or less, of *Karma*, the only evil.

The mundane soul is in combination with Karmic matter and consequently none are perfect. But improvement is possible. In the human personality there is a combat betwixt the pure soul and gross matter. The soul is ignorant and identifies itself with matter and from this all its troubles begin.

In the pure state the soul has pure enjoyments: perfect perception, perfect knowledge, infinite power and infinite bliss. In the impure state nine properties may be discussed:

1. Eternal life, 2. Perception and Knowledge, 3. Immateriality,
4. Responsibility, 5. Spacial occupancy of the body, 6. Enjoys the

fruit of its *Karmas*, 7. Wanders in Samsara (Re-incarnation), 8. Moral progression, 9. Paternal perfection, *Siddha*.

KARMA IN JAINISM

Perhaps it is in the doctrine of *Karma* that the Jain system differs most from the others. Karmic matter keeps the soul from the realization of its four-fold powers. It is classified therefore as destructive *Karma* under four heads:

1. Knowledge-obscuring *Karma*
2. Faith—or Perception—obscuring *Karma*
3. Progress-obstructing *Karma*
4. Infatuating *Karma*

Another cycle of Four Conditioning non-destructive *Karmas* is as follows:

5. Duration of life
6. Determination of character of individuality
7. Determination of family and nationality
8. Determination of pleasure and pain

A moment's consideration shows us that even in respect to the four Destructive and the four Conditioning *Karmas* the variety of experience of many individuals is infinite. The difference is not accounted for in Jainism by the work of a God, nor the operation of matter which is said to be dead. The works of the soul alone accounts for the changes in the circumstances of each person; each deed absorbs or extrudes corrupt matter. Of what we have done we must bear the consequences; the balance of good and evil in every being registered in the Destructive and Conditioning *Karmas*. And when death comes, to the still imperfect man, his Karmic body—his body of deeds—claims a new life and starts with its debit afresh.

The recognition among our common experience of the various sub-division of the Form Destructive *Karmas* is most surprising; no where else but in Jainism (as far as I know) are the day to day feelings identified with such precision as Karmic consequences of our deeds.

There are five Knowledge-obscuring *Karmas* which lead to loss of intelligence, revelation, goal, mental order and understanding of the Universe.

The Perception-obscuring *Karmas* are physical blindness, deaf-

ness, etc., bad memory, sleepiness, heavy sleep, restless sleep, very restless dream sleep, somnambulistic sleep.

Progress-obstructing *Karmas* affect our charity, our profit, our enjoyment, our circumstances and our power.

The largest class is that of Delusive *Karma* which has forty-two varieties. Anger, pride, infatuation and greed result in "false belief"; the same vices obstruct partial or complete renunciation, they also disturb self-restraint. Self-restraint is rendered impossible by frivolity, eros, aversion, sorrow, fear, dislike effeminacy in men or mannishness in women.

One hundred more conditions of body and circumstance are detailed as due to the acts of our will in former lives. One may take up the Jain catalogue of *Karmas* and learn from one's own defects and vicissitudes precisely these moral faults which are said to lead to the absorption of the appropriate Karmic matter! After all, this is what we want to know; and from it is derived the Jain ethic, which need not be entered upon here.