



The Dream Of Ravan - A Mystery by Anon

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PREFACE

The DREAM OF RAVAN appeared originally in a series of articles in "The Dublin University Magazine" of 1853, 1854. The name of the writer has not been disclosed; but, whoever he was, there is no doubt that he was both a scholar and a mystic. That he had studied the "Râmâyana" from the original texts and was a master of Vedântic psychology is amply manifested; that he was a mystic himself and spoke of things that were realities to him and not mere empty speculations, is evident to every earnest student of Indian theosophical literature. In no other western publication, have the three "states" of man's consciousness been so strikingly and so intelligibly set forth as by our author. This mystic exposition will endow such intellectual production as Professor Max Müller's "Lectures on the Vedânta" and Dr. Paul Deussen's "Das System des Vedânta" with a soul, and breathe into them the breath of life. Though the narrative is set forth in the garb of phantasy and much of strangeness is intermixed, so that the general reader will pass it by as merely a strange conceit, nevertheless the mystic and student of yoga will recognize many a home truth but slightly veiled, and many a secret wholly disclosed.

G.R.S. Mead

In the caves of Eastern Sibyl, what curious leaves lie hidden, or go whirling in the wind! written over with strange, hieroglyphic characters, not without deep meaning — akin to prophetic, —

Teste David cum Sibylla.

Fragmentary — incomplete — hard to put together, yet furnishing here and there, when the attempt is made, a piece of chance mosaic that engages our attention like the forms in the moss-stone. Such a bundle of Sibylline leaves is the “Dream of Ravan”, of which we propose to put together and interpret some torn and ragged fragments.

Valmiki — in that musical epic, the Ramayana, which stands beside the [Page 2] Iliad for antique and stately simplicity, and for the surpassing melody of its numbers, no less than for its elevated morality, may fairly challenge a comparison with any poem in existence — has told us the main incidents in the history of Rama and his Titanic enemy Ravan. We need hardly inform our readers that the Ramayana is, like the Iliad, the story of a city besieged, for the sake of a wife who has been unjustly carried off. Rama, the son of Dasharatha, King of Ayodhya, having been banished for fourteen years by his father to gratify the ambition of one of his younger queens, Kekaiyi, who wished to secure the succession for her own son Bharata (an admirable illustration of the working of polygamy), proceeds with his incomparable wife Sita, one of the loveliest female creations of poetry, and his brother the indomitable archer [Page 3] Lakshmana, or as he is now popularly called, Laxuman, to wander in the wilds of the then thinly-peopled India, exploring and admiring the magnificent forests, rivers, and mountains which lie in their course; visiting the holy sages and hermits who live far in these wilds unknown to public view, and slaying demons, goblins, and giants innumerable.

Sita, though the heroine and central female personage round whom the whole action of the poem resolves, and though the immediate cause of the war between Rama, the religious or Brahmanical prince of Ayodhya, the modern Oude, and Ravan, the Titanic, or in other words the anti-Brahmanical, aboriginal, fetish-worshipping monarch of Lanka or Ceylon, — was herself but the secondary and occasional cause. The original mover and teterrima cause belli was a sister of Ravan, a certain [Page 4] Rakshasi or Titanic Ogress, whose nails were of the size and shape of the Indian winnowing basket, and who was thence called Shurpa-nakha, or Basket-nails. This lady had assigned for her maintenance the forest of Janasthana, covering an immense tract in the South of India, and lived here in considerable case, with her brother and a large train of attendant Rakshasas, feeding upon the Munis or hermits who resorted in great numbers to the recesses of this forest, as in later ages to the Thebaid, for the purpose of leading, with their disciples, in its silent solitudes, a life of holy contemplation, and abstraction, and attaining a perfection which was not possible amid the uproar and the temptations of the world. Considering the life of mortification and self-denial which these Munis led — that some stood on their heads, some upon [Page 5] one leg, some with one or both arms stretched over their heads; some hanging by their feet from the branches of trees, with their

heads downward, and this for tens, hundreds, thousands of years; that the most luxurious ate only leaves and roots, and vast numbers were “Vata-bhakshas”, or “wind-eaters” — we fear that Basket-nails and her Titanic court, even after the most successful day of hermit bagging, must have had, after all, but meagre fare. Still the ogress was happy in her condition, for she knew not the pangs of love. One fatal day, however, while prowling about in hopes of picking up a stray Muni, she chanced to spy the foot-print of a man, so exquisitely beautiful that she fell instantly in love with its possessor; and tracking it on through the thicket with the sharp sense of a roamer in the forest, she came at [Page 6] last upon its owner, the youthful and beautiful Rama. The sequel we shall give as succinctly related in the Adhyatma Ramayana — [Aranya Kanda — Sarga V.]

Raghava, son or descendant of Raghu, it should be stated, is a patronymic for Rama; Saumitri, or son of Sumitra, a similar patronymic for Laxuman. The Rakshasas are the Titans and giants of Hindu mythology, the fiends and ghouls of the Hindu cemetery, the ogres and goblins of the Hindu nursery.

The Unhappy Love of the Rakshasi or Titaness Shurpa-Nakha
and the Tragic Consequences of her Revenge

Translated from the Sanskrit

In the great forest just then a Rakshasi, changing her form at will.
Of terrible strength, went roaming about, dwelling in Janasthana, [Page 7]
Once on a time, on the Gautami [Another name for Godavari] banks,
not far from the Five Banian Trees,
The foot-prints of the Universe Lord, marked with the lotus petals,
Chancing to see, inflamed with love, bewitched by the beautiful feet,
Tracking them onward, slowly she came at last to the dwelling of Rama.
There that lord of prosperity, along with Sita abiding,
Beholding beautiful as Kandarpa, intoxicated with love,
The Rakshasi spoke to Raghava: — Who and of whom art thou ? in this
hermitage what
Seekest thou to accomplish, with hair coiled up and clothing of bark ?
this unto me declare.

I am a Rakshasi, taking all forms at will — Shurpa-nakha my name;
Sister I am to the king of the Rakshasas, Ravana the magnanimous.
Here in this forest I dwell, together with Khara, my brother.
Unto me by the king the whole has been given. I live by devouring Munis.
Who thou art I desire to know — tell me, most eloquent speaker.

To her he replied: — My name is Rama, the son of the king of Ayodhya;
 This beautiful woman is Sita, my wife, the daughter of (King)Janaka;
 That exceedingly handsome youth my younger brother, Laxuman. [Page 8]
 What is thy wish that I can accomplish ? tell me, O universe beauty!
 Hearing these words of Rama, in anguish from love she replied —
 Come to the forest, O Rama, with me; come sport in mountain and grove.
 I am sick with love; I cannot relinquish thee with thy lotus eyes.
 Rama, glancing a sidelong look towards Sita, said with a smile —
 This is my wife, happy in me, whom I never quit for a moment.
 How, without pain to her, my wife, canst thou become mine, O fair one ?
 Without stands my brother, Laxuman, a youth surpassingly handsome
 He'll be a suitable husband for thee. Go, wander about with him.
 Thus addressed, she said to Laxuman — Be thou my husband, O
 handsome youth.
 Obeying thy brother's commands, today let us be united; do not delay.
 Thus to Laxuman spoke the terrible Rakshasi, overcome with desire.
 To her thus Laxuman: — Good lady, I am the slave of that high-minded
 one.
 Thou wilt become his female slave. O, what more wretched than this!
 Go to himself, good luck to thee; he is a king — the Lord of all.
 Thus bespoken, the evil-minded one turned again to Raghava: —
 Why dost thou make a fool of me thus, with anger she cried, unstable
 one ? [Page 9]
 This moment, before thy very eyes, this Sita of thine I'll devour.
 Thus saying, assuming a hideous form, she rushed on the daughter of
 Janaka.
 Then, by the order of Rama, drawing his sword and seizing her,
 Laxuman, nimble mover, slit off her nose and ears.
 Then uttering a terrible roar — her body streaked over with blood — with
 speed,
 Screeching, she flew to the presence of Khara, in utterance discordant.
 What is all this? cried Khara to her, still harsher in his utterance.
 By whom, rushing into the jaws of death, wert thou thus lacerated ?
 Tell me; him will I instantly slay tho' he resembled Fate.
 To him the Rakshasi thus: —Attended by Sita and Laxuman, Rama
 Dwells upon the Godavari banks, freeing the Dandaka forest from fear.
 'Tis his brother hath maimed me thus, by Rama himself commanded.
 If thou art a son of a noble race — if a hero, slay these enemies,
 That I may drink up their blood and devour the arrogant pair,
 Otherwise I, abandoning life, will go to the dwelling of Yama.
 This hearing, Khara rushed hastily forth, out of himself with anger;
 And fourteen thousand Rakshasas, terrible in their deeds, [Page 10]
 He commanded to march upon Rama, thro' desire to effect his slaughter.
 And Khara himself, and Trishiras, and Dushana, the Rakshas —
 [All these names are significant. “Khara” means harsh; “Trishiras”, three
 heads; “Dushana”. crime]

All went forth against Rama, with manifold weapons armed.
Hearing their tumult, Rama thus spoke to the son of Sumitra: —
Hark to this mighty uproar! doubtless the Rakshasas come;
'Twixt them and me of a truth this day will be fought a mighty battle.
Lead Sita away, and go to the cave; and there, O mighty one, stand.
All the Rakshasas, horrible-shaped, I am desirous to slay.
In this not a word must thou utter: I by myself adjure thee.
Obedient, leading Sita away, Laxuman went to the cave.
Rama, girding his zone around him, taking his cruel bow,
And of arrows two inexhaustible quivers binding, the lord stood ready.
Then the Rakshasas, marching up, hurled forth upon Rama
Weapons of manifold form, and fragments of rocks and trees.
Those in a moment Rama asunder cleft, in sport, like sesamum seeds;

[Page 11]

Then with a thousand arrows slaughtering all those Rakshasas,
Khara also, and Trishiras and Dushana the Rakshas —
The whole he slew within half a watch, the eminent son of Raghu.
Laxuman, too, having brought forth Sita out of the cave, to Rama
Delivering her up, beholding the Rakshasas slain, was filled with
astonishment.

Sita, embracing Rama, with a countenance beaming joy,
The daughter of Janaka brushed \diamond the wounds of the weapons upon his
limbs.

But SHE, beholding those eminent chiefs of the Rakshasas slain, fled
away.

Hastening to Lanka — into the council screaming she rushed, and down
at the feet of Ravan, [Page 12]

\diamond From the word used here, as well as from the commentary, there is
little doubt that Sita is here described as having, by mesmeric passes
downward, completely healed the bruises and wounds inflicted by the
Rakshasas. The words of the commentary are remarkable —

“Shastra Vranáni mârjita rudhiráni purna gartáni
Satya- Sankalpatvach - Chakà- etyarthaha”

“This is the sense — Brushing the bloody wounds of the weapons, she
filled up the cavities by the volition of pure intention”.

The “brushing” indicates the mesmeric traction; the “filling up the
cavities”, the perfect healing of the wounds; the “volition of pure intention”
— the strong will and pure intention laid down by Du Potet and others as
so necessary to success in mesmeric operations.

She, the Titan's sister, fell prostrate upon the earth.
Beholding her, Ravan addressed his sister thus overcome with terror —
Arise, poor darling, arise ! The deed of maiming thee thus,
Tho' by Indra 'twere done, O auspicious! by Yama or by Varuna;
Or by Kuvera, relate unto me. I will instantly burn him to ashes.
The Rakshasi thus replied: Thou art arrogant overmuch and stolid of
mind;
Given over to drink, by women o'ercome, thou art everywhere seen as a
fool:
Without any spies — those eyes of a monarch — O, how canst thou be a
king?
Lo ! Khara lies slaughtered in battle; Trishiras, and Dushana too,
And fourteen thousand other Rakshasas, all of them mighty in spirit,
Have been in a moment by Rama slain, the enemy of Asuras.
The whole Janasthana forest now he has rendered safe for the Munis;
And thou, O foolish one, knowest it not; to thee by me it is told !

RAVAN

Who is this Rama ? For what and how, by him were the Asuras
slaughtered ?
Relate unto me exactly. I will utterly extirpate them. [Page 13]

SHURPA-NAKA.

From the Janasthana forest once to the Gautami's bank as I went,
I came to an ancient asylum of Munis, bearing the name of the Five
Banian Trees. [Panchavati]
There within a hermitage I beheld the lotus-eyed Rama,
Glorious, holding arrows and bow, with hair coiled up, and clad in bark;
And, even in like manner arrayed, his younger brother Laxuman;
And the large-eyed Sita — his beautiful wife — like a second Goddess
Shri.
Among Gods, Gandharvas, or Nagas, among mankind, such a being
Was never beheld — was heard of never, O King, with her beauty
illuming the forest!
Making endeavours to bring her away, O sinless one, for thy wife,
Her brother, Laxuman named, slit off my nose
And both my ears — that mighty one, commanded thus by Rama.
Weeping from intense anguish, I went and sought out Khara.
Then he, in battle assailing Rama, with multitudes of Rakshasas,
Thereupon in a moment, by that strength-resplendent Rama
All those Rakshasas were destroyed — so terrible in prowess. [Page 14]
If Rama wished it, the whole three worlds, in half a twinkling of the eye,

He would doubtless reduce to ashes; so, my lord, it appears to me.
 Ah ! were she but thy wife — then hadst thou not been born in vain !
 Now endeavour, O King, that she thy beloved become.
 Sita, with eyes like lotus leaves, alone in the world is beautiful.
 Thou, in the presence of Rama — Lord, canst never openly stand;
 By magic the excellent son of Raghu bewitching, thou shalt obtain her.
 Hearing this, by soothing words, by gifts and by marks of honour,
 Consoling his sister the monarch retired into his own apartment.
 There with anxiety filled, he could get no sleep through the night.
 “How by Rama, merely a man, was my powerful Khara destroyed!
 How was my brother, alas ! with strength and courage and pride,
 destroyed by the son of Raghu!
 Or is it that Rama is not a man, but the most high Lord himself,
 Me and my army desiring to slay, with his multitude of forces ?
 That besought by Brahma of old, today he appears in the race of Raghu ?
 If I'm to be slain by the Spirit Supreme, I shall win the Vaikunta
 kingdom.

[The celestial kingdom of Vishnu or Hari.] [Page 15]

If not, I shall long this kingdom Titanic enjoy;
 I will, therefore, march against Rama”.
 Thus reflected the monarch of all the Rakshasas, knowing Rama for Hari,
 the Lord Supreme,
 “By hostile intention to Hari I go; not soon the Supreme by devotion is
 won !“

Thus the die was cast and the fatal resolve taken, upon grounds that
 must appear strange to European minds — viz., that hostile struggle
 with, and death at the hands of Vishnu, incarnate in the person of Kama,
 so far from being a punishment to the soul, was its triumph — was in
 fact union with the Deity; a more rapid and royal road for its attainment,
 than the slow and wearisome path of devotion. Thus all Ravan's
 subsequent violence and crime receives a religious colouring. However
 the slave of earthly passion to the eyes of men, his whole conduct was
 really motived upon this determination to bring on the beatific
 catastrophe, and [Page 16] speed the collision which was to unite him with
 the supreme soul of the world; — an interpretation of action, which,
 however startling, seems to flow, as a necessary result, from a
 pantheistic view of the universe.

Ravan, soon after, carries off Sita, Rama's wife, to the great scandal of
 his own queen, the virtuous Titaness, “Mandodari”, who seems to have
 been a very corpulent lady, as that name, unless rendered by the
 singular term which St. Paul applies to the Cretans, must be translated
 euphuistically “weighty-stomach”. The name, however, is not worse than
 that which our fair Ulster friends apply to their sisters of a dark
 complexion; and which is, in the south, applied indiscriminately to all

the natives of the barony of Forth.

Rama, assisted by an army of talking monkeys — a race, we believe, not yet [Page 17] extinct in India, nor perhaps elsewhere — under the command of Hanumanta, an astonishing leaper and marcher, who is to this day worshipped in India, and has a celebrated temple in Bombay, marches to the south in pursuit; bridges over the straits of Manaar; besieges the Titan's capital, Lanka, perhaps the present Candy; and after Indrajit, the heroic son of Ravan and Mandodari, has fallen to the bow of Laxuman, and several other leading chiefs of the Titanic army are killed, takes and burns Lanka, slays the ten-headed Titan, and recovers Sita, whom Ravan had never been able to prevail upon to listen to his love, either by flatteries or threats.

What Homer's battle of the frogs and mice is to the Iliad, the Dream of Ravan is to the Ramayana; for although there is in it much of sad and serious, all these graver parts are bound together [Page 18] by matter of a light and sometimes ludicrous character. It is free in this respect as Don Juan; and, after rising from a perusal, one may be puzzled to decide if the whole poem is to be taken as having a deep and serious moral, or is a mere jeu d'esprit. It may be reasonably doubted if Valmiki is the author. Indeed, we have little hesitation in pronouncing our verdict against that view; for although it contains some descriptions, as we shall see, resembling passages in the Ramayana; and though some of the epithets, such as the "Ten-headed", "matchless archer", "astonishing marcher", correspond very closely with those applied by Valmiki to Ravan, Laxuman, and Hanumanta respectively, these coincidences are to be expected from an imitator. There are, moreover, apparent anachronisms which militate against Valmiki's [Page 19] authorship, and the prophecies of the future state of India, uttered by the Rishis to Ravan, are at least suggestive of grave suspicion.

The poem opens abruptly — upon the return of Ravan from a hard-fought day with Rama and Laxuman. He retires to sleep, attended by his Titanic queen Mandodari; has a fearful dream; and awaking in alarm, summons, like Belshazzar, all his wise men and counsellors, and especially the whole tribe of Yogis, Munis, and Rishis — ascetics, saints, and holy sages, who, singular to say, are found in invariable attendance on, and apparently held in reverence in the Titanic Court — to interpret its meaning. The first canto of the poem is, from this assembly, called the Sabhâ Parva, or "Canto of the Assembly", and opens shortly after Indrajit is slain. The main action of the poem, in the [Page 20] first Kanda or section of this Parva, consists in the alternate narrative of Ravan, and utterances, chiefly vedantic and always oracular, by the chorus of Rishis, or assembled sages, which give the whole poem a dramatic cast.

In the subsequent Kandas, a third Interlocutor is introduced, a youthful Seer, in whom the Rishis awaken, by laying their hands (mesmerically ?) upon his head, the dnyana drishti, or “gnostic vision”, which is evidently clairvoyance. Thus illumined, he proceeds, at the request of Ravan, to picture as present, the scenes of a far futurity, in which Ravan shall be engaged.

We now proceed to quote the opening, and a considerable portion of the first Kanda of the Sabha Parva..

SABHA PARVA.

KANDA 1.

Hark to the rushing and clangour, the snorting, and galloping rattle —
[Page 21]

'Tis Ravan the ten-headed Titan to Lanka come home from the battle
With Rama the Prince of Ayodhya, and Laxuman matchless archer,
And Hanumanta the chief of the monkeys, that most astonishing
marcher.

Down from his chariot of polished steel the Titan monarch descended,
And straight to his lofty sleeping chamber overlooking Lanka ascended;
There having doffed his coat of mail, and hung up his tenfold crown,
And quaffed a dozen mashaks of wine, the Ten-headed laid him down.
And he called his magnanimous wife, the Titaness Mandodari,
And he told her beside him to take her seat upon a bearskin godari
And shampoo his limbs while he went to sleep, for he felt fatigued and
weary

With all the combating he had had on that day of battle dreary.
Out of his twice five noses the Titan soon was snoring
As loud as if a hundred lions were all in a concert roaring.
But his slumbers were not refreshing, his sleep seemed sorely troubled;
His body uneasily rolled about, and often was upward doubled;
His twenty arms were tossed aloft with all their rattling bones,
His ten heads started fearfully, and he uttered forth smothered moans;
[Page 22]

All his faces were deadly pale, for he saw some terrible dream,
And at last he started up and woke, with a wild tremendous scream !

Mandodari asked in alarm, What aileth thee so, my lord ?
What fearful dream or vision thy refreshing sleep hath marred ?

Summon the council, cried Ravan aloud, the Rishis and holy sages,
The astrologers and dream-expounders, and readers of destiny's pages;
For I have dreamt an astonishing dream, me feareth it bodes disaster —
Speed for the Rishis and Councillors, why don't the slaves run faster ?

The nágara drums struck up at once, and the kettle-drums rub-a-dub,
And, ere ten minutes were over, all Lanka was in a hubbub;
And into the palace, with sleepy eyes, came the yawning counsellors
trooping,
With descending beards, and matted hair, from the weight of their ages
stooping,
Next came the Senapatis and other heroic commanders,
The fire-eating chiefs of Akali youths, and similar salamanders,
Brahmins and Panta-Pradhanas, and Rishis and holy sages,
Astrologers and dream-expounders, and readers of destiny's pages. [Page
23]
The grave assemblage respectful stood, silent, with joined hands,
Wondering what meant this hurried summons, awaiting the monarch's
commands.
Solemnly looking upon the assemblage, Rávan the silence broke,
Respectfully bowing down to his Guru, thus the Ten-headed spoke: —

Hearken, ye bearded sages, ye Rishis emaciated,
Ye Yogis with matted hair, and arms stretched upwards and elongated,
Ye venerable warriors, and Akali heroes elated,
Ye sleek-headed men of worldly wisdom, with proportions round and fair,
Whom out of your beds I have dragged reluctant, into the cold night air;
This night when weary from battle I came, and laid me down to sleep,
I dreamt a dream that troubles my mind, for I heard Mandodari weep,
And other voices of lamentation, that of evil omen seem;
Interpret me, I command you, sages, the significance of my dream.

THE DREAM OF RAVAN.

I wandered, methought, in a wonderful land from which all life had fled,
Where everything was turned to stone, or desolate, or dead,
And silent cities in the desert, profounder deserts spread; [Page 24]
Along their sad and lonely streets there moved no living crowd,
Within the vast colossal fanes no breathing votary bowed;
The warrior and his war-horse, the monarch and his bride,
The priest, the god, the victim — alike were petrified.
The maiden and her poor pet cat lay lifeless side by side.
Gigantic forms of life gone by looked out at you from stone,
With a sad, eternal beauty, that time had not overthrown,
And wailing, as the sun arose, they uttered forth a moan.

CHORUS OF RISHIS.

Ten-headed Ravan ! beware, beware,
How even in a dream thou ventures! there;
'Tis the land mysterious of those that mourn:

On the wings of the wind thou thither may'st go,
But woe for Mandodari! O woe !
Canst thou, wilt thou safe return ?
Ah no!

RAVAN

In that land of the silent and desolate I wandered not all alone,
For beside me there moved a beautiful one, whom I loved and called my
own; [Page 25]
And yet altho' she appeared as one I had known from eternity,
It was not this my magnanimous queen the dusky Mandodari:
She seemed as tho' she were one with whom, in some long anterior birth,
Hundreds of thousands of years before, I had been the companion on
earth.

CHORUS OF RISHIS

Rávan, Rávan, thou errest, beware!
Hearken to this truth sublime —
To the spirit is no time,
Past or future — space or clime —
Before or after — here or there.
In its own, its primordial state
Of unity, purity, power and grace, In
itself it mirrors all finite fate,
Possessing in one-ness, gazing on all
That hath befallen, or shall ever befall
Its evolution in time and space;
Events and relations, persons and things,
Actings and thinkings, and utterings,
Been or to be, in its finite race,
All are in unity seen and possessed,
As present at once, without where or when
Such is the universal range
Of the spirit's boundless ken,
Such the eternal spirit life,
Without succession, devoid of change,
Duality, passion, or strife,
Condition of the free, the doubly blest —
Highest activity, in unbroken rest — [Page 26]
Three-fold being, thought, and bliss
Crowding in one happiness !

In the eternal Now of that high sphere,
Which ever was and is, and will be there,

In that all-comprehending infinite Here,
Which circling boundless, centres everywhere.
Within that recapitulated All,
Where person mergeth in impersonal,
Which It, and I, indifferent we call,
All scenes and all events, all times and places,
All persons, gestures, speeches, voices, faces,
To be encountered in our finite days,
Are present to the spirit's sense and gaze.

Hence often man, chancing on some new scene,
Whither in life his footsteps never bore,
Hearing some voice, meeting some well-marked mien,
Feels vaguely, all familiar were of yore;
He seems to live again scenes lived or dreamt before,
And wonders where or how it could have been.

They are seen by the spirit rapt and sublime,
Not in a former, but out of all time,
When retiring backward into itself
From the world of sense, and passion, and self,
And concentrated in that deep
Mysterious and illumined sleep,
The body's trance, the spirit's seeing,
Its own primordial mode, ecstatic being,
Its infinite nature it contemplates
As mirrored forth in the temporal fates,
Which await on its goings forth as a soul; [Page 27]
For then the universal sum
Of its destinies past, or in time to come,
Lie open before it like a scroll.

'Twas thus, O Ten-headed Rávan, with thee;
Not ages ago in a former birth,
As thou thoughtest, wert thou her companion on earth,
But in ages of ages yet to come,
On thy forehead and on thy thumb
It is written that thou shalt be.

Before all time — beyond — beside,
Thou rememberest her eternally,
For she is thy spirit's primeval bride,
The complement of thy unity,
Joined or dissevered, averted or fond,
'Twixt her and thee an eternal bond
Exists, which, tho' ye were to seek,

Ye cannot ever, ever break —
A bond from whence there is no freeing,
 Since the typhal spirit never
 From its antitype can sever,
She is a portion of thy being
 To all eternity.

RAVAN

Her cheeks were very pale, loosely bound her flaxen hair,
And the face was that of childhood, so simple, small and fair;
But that child-like face, tho' beautiful, looked sorrowful and wan.
And from the circlet on her brow, two living gems were gone; [Page 28]
Her hair was decked with coral sprigs and beautiful sea-weed,
And a scarf of crimson sea-moss across her shoulders hung;
Her feet were small and delicate, the shingle made them bleed,
So she sat her down to wash them the Babul trees among.
She listened to the wind that sighed thro' bulrush and thro' reed,
And she joined the plaintive dirge, and a low sweet ditty sung.

SONG OF THE MYSTERIOUS WANDERER

I saw a vision once, and it sometimes reappears,
 I know not if 'twas real, for they said I was not well;
But often as the Sun goes down my eyes fill up with tears,
 And then that vision comes, and I see my Floribel.

The day was going softly down, the breeze had died away,
 The waters from the far west came slowly rolling on,
The sky, the clouds, the ocean wave, one molten glory lay,
 All kindled into crimson by the deep red Sun.

As silently I stood and gazed before the glory passed,
 There rose a sad remembrance of days long gone; [Page 29]
My youth, my childhood came again, my mind was overcast,
 As I gazed upon the going down of that red Sun.

I thought on the beloved dead, the beautiful, the dear,
 The hearts that once were warm with life, the loving ones now gone;
The voices that like marriage bells rang sweetly on my ear,
 The eyes that once had gazed with mine on that red Sun.

The past upon my spirit rushed, the dead were standing near,
 Their cheeks were warm again with life, their winding sheets were
gone,
 Their voices rang like marriage bells once more upon my ear,

Their eyes were gazing there with mine on that red Sun.

Many days have passed since then, many chequered years
I have wandered far and wide — still I fear I am not well;
For often as the Sun goes down, my eyes fill up with tears,
And then that vision comes, and I see my Floribel.

Ah! never sank in human heart more deeply touching sound, [Page 30]
Than from the low and child-like voice that sang that pensive song;
Never lute woke melody more varied or profound,
Than to those fairy fingers as they ran its cords along.

O wonder of creation ! O beauteous female hand.
That o'er such various elements can exercise command! I
saw her with that little hand control the Yavan steed, And
check him in the desert while careering at full speed; With
that evolving fabric, so exquisitely fine,
More fabulous in texture than Vishvakarma spun,
With that she woke on canvas such forms of life divine,
The champas blow, the parrots talk, the speckled cobras twine,
You smell the fragrance of the flowers, you hear the stag hounds run,
You feel the Penitent's return and weep with sire and son.

Nor lived she in the transcendent sphere
Of art and the beautiful alone;
High intellect and reason clear,
And philosophy their daughter dear,
Had erected upon her brow a throne,
And shared her mind with the ideal —
The actual, and the unseen real,
Claiming her equally for their own. [Page 31]

Marking her sylph-like figure, and her pensive features small,
You thought her the fairy child to whom unearthly bard might sing —
Whose hand might sadly touch the lute, or sweep the virginal,
Embroider a drooping violet, or paint a butterfly's wing.

But go to her chamber, and there behold
The ponderous folios that range,
Written all over with characters old,
Classic, and beautiful, and bold,
Recondite, rare, and strange:
And all this deep, mysterious lore,

Whose every dark and sibylline page
Studious youth and thoughtful age
Might meditate and ponder o'er,
And grow more learned and more sage,
And not exhaust, if haply understand,
All was the labour — labour loved, severe,
Labour pursued thro' many a painful year
By that small, fragile, but unresting hand!

With such manifold gifts, such mystic learning,
With a subtle power of thought discerning,
And an unappeasable yearning
Towards all that is pure, and good,
And noble, and beautiful, and high,
And infinite as the deep blue sky,
Alone upon earth she stood,
Alone in her delicate soul and lofty mood —
Of the friends that she loved and looked upon
Read truly, loved, by only one,
By others misunderstood. [Page 32]

On the awful mystery round
She gazed with a sadness profound,
That oft brought the tears to her eye,
And the light ones around her wondered why!
The creatures she loved in life,
She wept like a child in death.
With her living cat she had playful strife,
She received with tears her dying breath.
She mourned o'er the drooping bird
And the withering flower:
She wondered — she had never heard —
Why such a dark and terrible power
As death, should over all things lower.
Nothing beautiful seemed to live,
Nothing that joy could give
Endured an hour! —
With the fathomless eyes of a dove,
And the power of an infinite love,
That nothing on earth could satisfy.
For something unknown she would ever sigh,
For some far-off country pine,
And all joy of the present decline.

CHORUS OF RISHIS

Ah ! Ravan, couldst thou not tell why ?
Knowest thou not the mark and sign
Of the soul descended from on high
That claims its kindred with the sky ?
To such no permanent rest is given
Short of its native heaven.
Love after love, joy after joy.
Rejecting like a worn-out toy,
Till upward ever drawn and tending, [Page 33]

From trial cloud to cloud ascending;
All earthly hopes away are cast,
All earthly loves resigned and past,
And the spirit so weak and weary deemed,
Enlightened, strengthened, and redeemed,
Triumphant rests at last,
Never again to roam,
In its own, its native home,
Its love primordial, and its last
The Love divine!

RAVAN

Oft would she steal away
To sit and think alone,
Seated apart on some grey stone,
Or from the lattice of ruin lone
With moss and ivy all overgrown,
Watch the receding day,
Or the moon as it rose over hills and bay,
Or upward turn her gaze afar
Upon some solitary star,
Its bright eye tearful as her own.
She loved to look upon the sea,
In whatever fitful mood it might be —
To watch its swelling, white-crested waves
Dash with a hollow sound
And a hollow rebound
Among the rugged rocks and caves
That hem it round.
She loved the moaning of the wind,
For it harmonised with her pensive mind;
And, were no profane intruder there,
Her amber tresses she would unbind
And woo it to sigh thro' her hair.[Page 34]
Oft to her ear she would hold a mottled shell,

And listen as if to sounds that she knew full well,
And loved, and heard with deep emotion,
For they seemed over memory's track
To bring all her childhood back.
And some coral-embowered home that lay
Far, far, far away
In the depths of the dark blue ocean.

Oft I wondered who could she be,
This wonderful being, thus linked with me,
Was she some fairy princess, or some syren of the sea ?
For oft she was seen to sit alone on the rocks,
Holding a mirror in her hand, dressing her flowing locks,
And as she combed her amber hair,
She sang again that low sweet song,
That softly stole the waves along,
And rose so mournful thro' the air,
The very sea-birds gathered round
To hear so sweet and sad a sound.

One thing in my dream I remember well,
That I called her beloved Zingarel;
And from this, methinks, she must have been
Some syren or nymph of the ocean green,
For every one knows that the Zingarels
Are the tiny rose-coloured mermaid belles
That float on the waves in the summer calms,
And sport about
When the tide is out
Round the beautiful Isle of Palms.
On her wrist was bound an amulet [Page 35]
Which she had never relinquished yet,
For an ancient sage named Rajarshi,
When walking the earth, of old, in disguise,
As a poor faquir, selling medical roots,
And metallic powders and Tulsi shoots,
And charms against agues and evil eyes,
From her gracious hand, with that gracious smile
That speaketh the heart without grudging or guile,
Receiving food and a bright rupee
In token of womanly charity;
Had gratefully bound it upon her arm
As a precious talisman and charm
To guard her from all future harm;

'Twas a tiny white cow of the sea,

Not bigger I ween than a humble bee;
In a crystal grotto she was shut,
And only now and then let out,
For a minute or two, lest she should pout.
In the deepest recesses of this grot
Was a fairy lake, in a shady spot,
Where miniature corals and sea-weed grew,
 And crystals, and pebbles, and speckled shells,
 And hanging spars like icicles,
And tiny sea-flowers of every hue;
Here in this quiet, secluded lake,
The little sea-cow would her pleasure take,
And paddle about in the brine,
 Would swim and feed
 On fresh sea-weed,
And her name was Chrystalline. [Page 36]

When you opened the grotto the little cow
Would give a joyful, inaudible low,
Then playfully come to the door and greet
Your sense with her sanative breath so sweet,
“Twas far more ravishing to the nose
Than breath of jasmine, or the rose
That on the Pahlavi mountain grows.
But the little sea-cow had a diamond horn,
 That was sharp as a needle to the touch,
And if either in love, in frolic, or scorn,
 You teased the little creature much,
Or keep its grotto open long,
 It would suddenly make a rush at the door,
For the creature, tho' little, was swift and strong.
And half in anger, and half in joke,
With its horn would give your nose such a poke
 As would make you stagger and roar;
But after a minute or two again
Her sanative breath would ascend your brain,
Infuse fresh vigour, assuage your pain,
 And leave you livelier than before.

At this point the assembly is startled by a cry of grief, which is found to proceed from the Queen of Ravan, the “dusky Mandodari”. She had been an attentive listener to the transcendental delivery of the Rishis, and reads in it her own displacement and [Page 37] disseverance from Ravan. We believe few of our fair married readers would feel any very poignant emotions of grief, at being informed that some thousands of years hence, they would no longer occupy their present relation to their husbands. It

is even to be feared, that the vast majority would be in absolute despair at the idea of the relation continuing one tenth part of the time. Even those most happily circumstanced might wince a little at the prospect of such a dreadful monotony of happiness ! What ? “toujours perdrix” through all eternity ! It must be confessed the “perdrix” should be a very bird of paradise, yea, a phoenix renewing its youth, like the eagles, not to weary and bore the “varium et mutabile” through so long a duration. But in that circle of ideas in which Mandodari was brought up it is otherwise. [Page 38] The ideal of happiness to the Hindu female is a perpetuity of renewed union with the one “lord of her life”. And, as none of those who have been thus beatified have ever come back, and hinted what a bore the reality is, the ideal still maintains its place, and serves its moral purpose. The Chorus, therefore, is compelled to find an adequate solution of the nodus. For Mandodari's virtues and fidelity render it worthy of a vindicator; and a perpetual theodicea is a part of their very office. To the sad cry, therefore,

“Woe! Woe! Woe !
Whither shall poor Mandodari go ?”

they administer what to the disinterested affection and elevated spiritualism of the dusky queen, — for notwithstanding the bulky corporeity which her name indicates, and which might render it a heavy infliction on the horses that [Page 39] would have, were she living in these modern times, to draw her carriage when she went out for an airing or drove to the band — notwithstanding this unfortunate “stoutness”, the dusky Mandodari is clearly of a lofty and spiritual nature, and capable of entire self-sacrifice, though the powerful spiritual element in her is unconscious, and unawakened by intelligence; and to such a nature the Rishis administer what is an ample consolation; though we fear the proud dames whose garments sweep the ground of modern drawing-rooms, and their husband's pockets into the bargain, would deem it rather humiliating. Mandodari is told not to mourn. She, too, the Chorus informs her, stands in an eternal relation to Ravan; and here follows an authoritative utterance on Hindu psychology, which we shall endeavour [Page 40] to render as intelligible in prose as so dark a subject can be made. The metrical outpouring of the Chorus, like all metaphysics in verse, would, we fear, be hopelessly obscure to the uninitiated reader.

Any one who has ever dabbled in Hindu philosophy must have been somewhat puzzled by the three radical, shall we say prismatic, qualities, into which the primordial and eternal unity divides itself, when reflected in time, through the prism of Maya, into the multitudinous universe; and of which every soul, while in this estranged state, partakes in greater or less degree. These qualities, Tamas, Rajas, and Satva, have been translated generally, the first, Darkness; the second, Passion or Foulness

(Turbidness ?); the third, Truth or Goodness. Schlegel renders them caligo, impetus, essentia, the word [Page 41] Sat meaning primarily Being, and secondarily, Truth or Goodness, because that which beeth is alone true, and alone good. The Bhagavad Gita goes briefly into the subject of their nature and influence in the fourteenth Lecture.

“There are” (says Krishna, addressing Arjuna) “three Goon or qualities arising from Prakreetee or nature: Satva truth, Raja passion, and Tama darkness; and each of them confineth the incorruptible spirit in the body. The Satva-Goon, because of its purity, is clear and free from defect, and entwinneth the soul with sweet and pleasant consequences, and the fruit of wisdom. The Raja-Goon is of a passionate nature, arising from the effects of worldly thirst, and imprisoneth the soul with the consequences produced from action. The Tama-Goon is the offspring of ignorance, and the [Page 42] confounder of all the faculties of the mind, and it imprisoneth the soul with intoxication, sloth, and idleness. The Satva-Goon prevaieth in felicity, the Raja in action, and the Tama, having possessed the soul, prevaieth in intoxication. When the Tama and the Raja have been overcome, then the Satva appeareth; when the Raja and the Satva, the Tama; and when the Tama and the Satva, the Raja. When Gnan, or wisdom shall become evident in this body at all its gates, then shall it be known that the Satva-Goon is prevalent within. The love of gain, industry, and the commencement of works, intemperance, and inordinate desire, are produced from the prevalency of the Raja-Goon, whilst the tokens of the Tama-Goon are gloominess, idleness, sottishness, and distraction of thought. When the body is dissolved, whilst the [Page 43] Satva-Goon prevaieth, the soul proceedeth to the regions of those immaculate beings who are acquainted with the Most High. When the body findeth dissolution whilst the Raja-Goon is predominant, the soul is born again amongst those who are attached to the fruits of their actions. So, in like manner, should the body be dissolved whilst the Tama-Goon is prevalent, the spirit is conceived again in the wombs of irrational beings. The fruit of good works is called Satvika and pure; the fruit of the Raja-Goon is pain, and the fruit of the Tama-Goon is ignorance. From the Satva is produced wisdom, from the Raja, covetousness, and from the Tama, madness, distraction, and ignorance. Those of the Satva-Goon mount on high; those of the Raja stay in the middle; whilst those abject followers of the Tama-Goon sink below”. [Page 44]

But in other authorities the Tamas quality appears more clearly explained, and from this it is evident that its demerit is negative. It is the absence of all knowledge, feeling, motion, penetrability, transparency. It is, in fact, what may appear a strange expression, the moral basis of

matter; or, in other words, that stolid state or form of spirit, which causes it to appear and be what we call matter.

Makunda Raja, in his relation of the order of creation [Viveka Sindhu, Section III., v. 72, 73] says:—

“Know the three-fold egoity or self-consciousness (Ahankara) to be the Satvika, or self-consciousness of Truth or Goodness; the Rajasa, or self-consciousness of Passion; and the Tamasa or self-consciousness of Darkness; in each of which respectively, a power or energy peculiar to it, appears radiantly developed.

“In the self-consciousness of Truth or Goodness, is the power or energy of knowledge or wisdom; in the self-consciousness of Passion, resideth the power or energy of action; in the self-consciousness of Darkness, existeth [Page 45] incessantly the power or energy of substance or matter (dravya)”.

The Tamas quality, therefore, we may consider as the great characteristic of brute matter, insensibility, opacity, cold obstruction, immovability; — in optics, the dark purple or violet ray; — in morals, the sluggish, material, brutish tendency. Its highest form of organic development goes not beyond the mere animal life and the region of sense.

The Rajas is the characteristic of moral life, or soul; the dark opacity is penetrated with a fiery and turbid glare but not yet rendered purely transparent; the cold obstruction and insensibility are wakened into pangs of painful movement; the dark purple or violet has kindled into the red ray. The sensational has struggled into the emotional; sentiment has supplanted sense and blind impulse. [Page 46]

The Satva is the characteristic of spirit; spirit indeed still in antithesis to body and soul, to matter and life; and, therefore, though bright, luminous, and glorious, still partaking of distinction, and bound in the chains of individuality and limitation; the orange ray in optics, ready to escape and lose itself in the pure light. The feeling soul compelled by suffering into a profounder self-consciousness and reflection, passion has risen into reason and knowledge. Self-knowledge, reasoning outward, progresses into universal sympathy. The life of emotion reaches its consummation, and all other passions expire in giving birth to an eternal sentiment of justice and love, which are ultimately one.

Thus, as sense was wakened into passion or sentiment — sentiment itself has risen into eternal principle: and, as [Page 47] the sensual life of blind animal impulse was kindled into the heroic life of passion, the latter is, in turn, by reflection and knowledge, elevated into the calm

regions of idea! or spiritual life, in which Rishis, and Munis, and Kavis, sages and saints, prophets and poets divine, live a life of eternal labour in unbroken tranquillity; labour “unhasting, unresting” — not demiurgic, but sabbatical, [in that sense in which it is said “The father worketh hitherto”].

Still beyond the isolated Satva quality is a sphere called the pure Satva, which must be considered to denote *essentia pura*, pure being, pure truth, pure goodness — viewed as one simple essence. This seems attained only when all isolation is renounced; when the Satva, re-entering predominant into the Rajas and Tamas, and penetrating them with its influence, all three isolated prismatic [Page 48] rays coalesce into pure universal light, and a consciousness of divine re-union. Or, as Hippolytus says — if Hippolytus be the author of the Oxford MSS.— “when man becomes God”; or, as Alfonso Liguori, therein translating the Spanish of St. Theresa, expresses it in his theology [Oratio Meditationis], “Anima fit unum quid cum Deo”, — when the plastic, and the emotional, and the ideal, become absolutely one, and there is, properly speaking, neither matter, nor soul, nor spirit, but something which is all and yet none of these — call it Bramh; call it the constant or eternal Life [nitya]; call it, if you will, that true Hindu trinity in unity — SACH -- CHID - - ANANDA-GHANA — “SOLIDARITY of BEING, THOUGHT, and JOY”, in which the eternal going-forth and re-introcession of the One, is expressed in the most perfect harmony [Page 49] with the deepest speculation of Platonism, and still more so with the pro-foundest development of Johannic Christianity.

SAT — absolute self-existing BEING — develops in itself self-consciousness [Ahankara]; instinctive Being or Life becomes CHIT, i.e., THOUGHT, or REASON reflecting on its own nature — the internal WORD or LOGOS, which says, “I am Bramh or the Self-existent”. From the self-conscious Thought contemplating its own eternal Being, from the eternal Being developing into perpetual self-consciousness, Thought, or Reason, is an eternal breathing forth of ANANDA, JOY, or LOVE, and these three are in one GHANA or SOLIDARITY.

Out of the purple or dark Violet has struggled the Red; out of the Red is breathed the Orange. The movement of the Orange Joy is three-fold. If, [Page 50] holding to its root in the Red, it goeth forth in a circle according to Pravritti, or procession, till it re-enters the primordial Violet, it produces the glad Green of universal nature, wherein all living things rejoice, and on which the fairies love to dance. If, preferring the way of Nivritti or retrocession into itself — it re-enters its fountain, the Red, and their common fountain the Violet, all three coalesce, and merge into pure light — then the Red is subject unto the Violet, and Light is all in all.

If casting itself off from its fountain the Red, and not tending towards their common parent the Violet, it seeks to stand alone, it becometh, in its proud isolation, a deadly, venomous yellow, the colour of serpents, and dragons, and irredeemable Bramha-Rakshasas.

The Titanic nature is not of this kind: for though the Tamas nature [Page 51] immensely predominates, it still partakes largely of the Rajas, and in lesser measure of the Satva quality. The problem to be solved in the case of Titanic Ravan — and in greater or less degree of every human soul, in proportion as it partakes of the Titanic nature, as all in their emerging must in some measure — is, how shall the Tamas be changed into the Satva, or penetrated and ruled by it ? — how shall matter re-ascend and become spirit ? — the gross darkness and stolid stupidity of the tree or the animal be illumined into self-consciousness, reflection, reason, knowledge ? — the brute self-concentration be kindled into universal sympathy and love ? — the blind instinct and coarse desires of the Titan, or Titanic man, be sublimed into the eternal conscious principles, self-renunciation, and pure ideality of the divine life ? [Page 52]

This can only be accomplished in one way, and that way lies through the Rajas — the life of passion — the life of suffering. The result of every passion of our nature, even love, nay, of love more than of all others, is suffering and sorrow. The first awakening of unconscious matter into the consciousness of mere animal life is through physical pain; and the process is carried still further by the mental suffering which is the very nature of the soul's emotional life.

Through the anguish of the fire alone can the black coal of the mine become transmuted into light. And so the sorrow and anguish, which result in-inevitably from the passions in the Rajas, or emotional life, constitute the purifying fire designed to purge away the dross of our Titanic nature, and transmute it into the pure Satva, where [Page 53] purity, goodness, and truth are predominant. Brute appetite and blind impulse are first superseded by passion; and passion working, through sorrow and the reflexion and sympathy which sorrow begets, its own extinction, finally merges in and is swallowed up in love and absolute resignation. This philosophy seems to rest on a basis of unquestionable truth. For, understood in all its depth, it is identical, in ultimate results, with the way of the Cross,

Upon this psychological basis the Chorus offers consolation to Mandodari. She is the complement of the Tamas quality in Ravan's nature. The Tamas too partakes of good: it contains within itself potentially both the Rajas and the Satva, which only require to be evolved from it: nay, it is the necessary basis or Adhishtan, without which they could have no place. Like the black flint of [Page 54] the

desert, it is cold, dark, insensible, motionless; but within it is the movement, the fire, and the anguish of the Rajas, and the light and joy of the Satva. And in proportion to the large basis of the Tamas quality is the intensity and power of that Rajas fire and Satva light, which movement can evolve: a view in remarkable harmony with the conclusions of modern phrenology; where it is found that, for heroic greatness and energy of character, no development of the moral and intellectual organs, however favourable, is sufficient, without a powerful basis in the organs of destructiveness, combativeness, and the other animal or Tamas energies of man. The Tamas, in a word, to repeat a former illustration, is the coal, without which there is no fire, no steam, no light. The Tamas portion, therefore, of our being, for its normal development, [Page 55] requires its appropriate guardianship of love; for in the very lowest spheres of existence, in the plastic and even the seemingly, but only seemingly, dead atomic region, love is ever manifest in some cognate and there cognisable form; and is the worker and preserver of existence there. So long as the Tamas or Titanic nature is predominant in Ravan, whether that be for a whole life, or only a portion of it, Mandodari is his necessary and tutelary co-ordinate, for she has the Tamas, or dark plastic love. Devoid of passion, or heroic sentiment — unawakened to the Satva element within her, a stranger to the light of knowledge and ideality — she possesses the simple, unreflecting, spontaneous kindness of nature, the plastic, cherishing affection of the negro woman. In his present stage of development these are what the Titan needs.

When he comes home from the battle, she will have a warm cake and smoking kid ready for his exhausted frame and craving appetite; she will fill his Titanic goblet with mashaks of fresh mirth-inspiring wine; she will sit and shampoo his weary limbs as if she were kneading a loaf; she will perhaps touch her banjo, and animate his spirits with a wild, though not unmelodious chant, or sing him to sleep with some simple, monotonous song; and, taking a chawri of peacock's feathers, whisk the flies from his face, till she herself is overcome by the drowse, and sinks to sleep by his side.

But when this stage is passed, when the influence of appetite and brute impulse is surmounted, and Ravan is ripe for entering the higher career of true passion and heroic sentiment, through which alone he can be fitted for the [Page 57] still higher sphere of ideal life nourished by a spiritual love, then a higher nature must be placed in relation with him; a nature which, possessing sufficient power of beauty to inspire him with love, and sufficient sympathy with the nobler side of his own nature to attract his affections, shall yet present the most rigid antithesis to that nature, wherever it is defective and requires elevation or change. With a purity and gentleness which shall rebuke his Titanic coarseness and ferocity; with an intuitive sense of right and truth which shall lay mountains of reasoning low with a word; with a lofty scorn of every divergence or short-coming, which shall sting him into an emulating pursuit of absolute, heroic good; with an intelligence which shall appreciate and stimulate his own, and a feminine ideality which shall reveal to him the inferiority of his own grosser [Page 58] nature, and lead him to know and worship ideal beauty; with a tenderness which shall sink deeper into his soul than every other quality, and make every sorrow or suffering falling upon her beloved head, and every hiding of the face of her love, bitter to his soul as death; — out of the anguish to be wrought in his nature by these complex emotions, he is destined to emerge, purified, ennobled and refined, into a higher nature.

When the time comes that Ravan is capable of undergoing this process, Mandodari will be no longer suited for his companion and partner, no longer capable of appreciating his nature, or deriving happiness from an equal companionship with him.

When this period, therefore, arrives, Mandodari's task as companion and co-partner ends; but not her offices of [Page 59] kindness or her relation to Ravan. Though his Tamas nature shall then be no longer predominant, and shall only exist as the basis which affords fuel to higher emotions, it is not annihilated. His Tamas, or animal man, will still require cherishing; the more so as he himself will now be neglectful

of it. Mandodari will still be with him, but she will have receded into the lower relation, in which such services can be most appropriately rendered; and, with the same simple tenderness that now characterises her as the Titan's wife, she will minister to him then as an attendant, and nurse him in his illness and in sorrow. And this is the destiny which, as we hinted above, may appear a humiliating change to most of our fair readers. But it need not, and ought not: for there is no violent contrast in that future destiny to awaken such a [Page 60] feeling. United to one in the same Tamas sphere of life as herself, Mandodari in that future birth will become a mother, and a desolate widow. Needing protection, she will find it under the shadow of Ravan, in his future appearance on earth. She will experience unvarying kindness and unbounded trust at his hands, and will return it with affectionate fidelity. A perfect sympathy shall establish itself between them — not as equals, but befitting their new relation. A benevolent and gracious kindness on his part — respect, gratitude, and maternal watchfulness over his welfare on hers. Ravan will seal the bond between them by parental care of her dying son, and she will have ample scope for repaying love for love in her own sphere. For, it is not the least of the consolations awarded to Mandodari by the Rishis, that the [Page 61] beautiful, but pensive and mysterious, Zingarel, of whose destiny, supplanting, as it is doomed to do, her own, she entertains the jealousy natural to her position, is destined to be, conjointly with Ravan, one of the chief objects of her own future affection, and almost maternal care. She will wait upon, and gaze on her with wonder, as a being incomprehensible, whom she might almost worship, and yet one whom she cannot help loving as fondly, and as freely, as if she were her own infant; she will nurse all her children; she will fondle and carry in her arms one cherished boy when he is snatched away; and will mourn her Indrajit a second time in the beloved Floribel. She will nurse Zingarel herself with a mother's tenderness, when her frame has given way, and her mind has become clouded; and ere her pilgrimage to the [Page 62] mournful and silent land described in Ravan's dream, the last kiss imprinted by the wan lips of the weeping wanderer, on leaving the beautiful Isle of Palms, shall be on the dusky but faithful cheek of her, within whose body the spirit of Mandodari shall then be tabernacled. Nor is this all. Disasters not yet told by Ravan are gathering in that dream of futurity; and when they occur — when Zingarel is far from Ravan — 'tis her faithful and tender spirit — Mandodari's — that shall be near him, to soothe, to cherish, to console, and to support him, in the hour of his anguish and isolation.

At the announcement of such a destiny, the honest heart of Mandodari swells, and her eyes kindle and fill with tears of affectionate joy — forgetful of self, forgetful of everything but the happiness of ministering to Ravan ! So fully does love partake of nobleness, of [Page 63] divinity, in

however humble a sphere of the universe it is manifested! And here some grave questions arise. Why should not so noble, though simple a love, merit to rise, like Ravan's own nature, into the Rajas sphere, and be his future companion, as now, in lieu of Zingarel? When Ravan, surmounting the Rajas sphere, shall ascend to the Satva, must he have a third partner of his spirit, and must Zingarel be superseded by another, as Mandodari by her? Does the spirit of the male alone progress through eternity, and is that of the female, by whose aid his nature ascends, bound and stationary for ever? If not, if Zingarel progresses into the Satva, why not Mandodari into the Rajas'? These questions all pass before the mind of Ravan; but he defers asking them, till he has concluded the relation of his dream. He will then [Page 64] seek, and receive, a solution of these mysteries from the Chorus. For the present, the first Kanda of the Sabha Parva closes, and the curtain descends upon the joyful tears of the consoled Mandodari.

PART - 2 -

THE first Kanda closed with the consolation of Mandodari. At the opening of the second, Ravan resumes the narration of his dream. It chances that while he lies asleep, overpowered with the heat, at the base of an ancient column or obelisk, on the banks of a mighty river, Zingarel, who had been watching at his side, rises, with that indomitable thirst for knowledge which distinguishes the sex, to scan more intently the curious characters and hieroglyphics, that cover the time-worn monument. In her tip-toe eagerness to accomplish this, the clasps, which [Page 65] fasten Chrystalline on her arm, give way, and the amulet drops, without her being sensible of the loss, into the bosom of Ravan. Fatal loss! Fatal female curiosity that occasioned it! The talisman that ensured her safety, and averted evil, no longer guards her; and misfortune is, for a time, mistress of her destiny. A dark, terrible object in the adjacent waters now fixes her attention, by its mass, its wonderful shape, its strange utterings, and its motions so indicative of power. Is it Leviathan, or Behemoth, or one of those creatures of the gigantic saurian tribe, that possessed our fenny world and its waters, before it was yet trodden by the foot and gladdened by the voice of man? The description given of this great creature of the deep reminds us of the magnificent picture in Job, of him who is styled "king over all the children of pride": — [Page 66]

“By his neesings a light doth shine;
And his eyelids are like the eyelids of the morning.
Out of his mouth go burning lamps;
And sparks of fire leap out.
Out of his nostrils goeth smoke,
As out of a seething pot or cauldron.

His breath kindleth coals,
And a flame goeth out of his mouth”.

The great creature advances, seizes, and carries off Zingarel. Awakened by her screams, Ravan rushes into the river to her rescue, and puts forth all his Titanic strength to arrest the monster's course; but in vain.

“The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold;
The spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.
He esteemeth iron as straw,
And brass as rotten wood.

Darts are counted as stubble !
He laugheth at the shaking of a spear.
He maketh the deep to boil like a pot:
He maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.
He maketh a path to shine alter him:
One would think the deep to be hoary”.

And thus, cleaving his path through [Page 67] the foaming billows of the river, the amorphous ravisher of Zingarel makes for the depths of the ocean; whilst she, borne weeping and reluctant upon his scaly back, extends her arms to the shore, calling out in her sense of utter isolation,

dīnām mán-dīna-vatsala, kathan-vityajase, rájan, bhítám, asmin, sarij-
jale !

O king, to the wretched so tender,
Poor me, in this river water terrified how canst thou thus abandon ?

Baffled and stupefied with grief, Ravan stands in the water, gazing upon the receding monster, when, smiting his bosom in a sudden movement of despair, his hand strikes against the talisman, which till then he had never noticed. Aware of its importance to the welfare of Zingarel, and of the fatal consequences which must result from its loss, of which he has already [Page 68] had this terrible sample, he resolves to make one last, desperate effort; and, if he cannot rescue her from the monster, at least restore to her possession the amulet, on which her safety depended, and through which she might yet escape the dark fate that seemed impending over her. He seeks the cave of some Divars, a species of Eastern Tritons, and taking off his tenfold gemmed tiara, and his heavy collar formed of the large pearls obtained in the fishery of Lanka, or Ceylon, tenders them to the Divars for their aid. The eyes of the Divars glisten at the sight of the promised reward, and they eagerly accept his proposal; but all is nearly lost by the greediness, mutual envy, and perverseness of the Divars' wives, who no sooner behold the sparkling jewels proffered by Ravan, than they commence fighting for their [Page 69] possession, and raise such a horrible clamour in the cave, that the Divars beseech Ravan to take his gems away, as the only mode of

restoring peace among their females. This proposal, however, brings the latter to their senses; and, sooner than lose the treasure altogether, they come to the curious compromise, that the jewels shall be considered common property; but, that, at every new moon, they, the Divars' wives, shall all be weighed, and the heaviest shall have the first choice of the jewels for that month; the next heaviest the second choice, and so on to the end. No sooner has this compact been made, than they all fall to eating voraciously, in hopes of bettering their chance of success; and, thus released, the Divars yoke their sea chariot, an enormous shell, to a train of gigantic, red, shrimp like sea-horses; [Page 70] and, placing Ravan in the seat of honour, and taking their tridents and harpoons, proceed rapidly to sea, in pursuit of the saurian monster.

As soon as they come near enough to give some hope of accomplishing their object, Ravan is desirous that the Divars shall approach the monster cautiously from behind. But they are mad with wine, with the excitement of the pursuit, and with the hope of securing the splendid recompense before them. They pay no heed, therefore, to his entreaties, but rush right upon the creature's flank, and receive, in consequence, a stroke from his powerful flipper, which crushes two of the red sea-horses, and nearly sends the whole equipage, and those within it, to the bottom. Warned by this calamity, the Divars cut the traces of the slain horses, and fall back to the rear. [Page 71] But here a violent lash of the monster's tail covers them with a deluge of foam, and creates an abyss in which they are nearly engulfed. Emerging from this second danger, they are averted from further effort, by a warning voice in the air, and they behold the hoary form of Lingastya — the ancient Rishi of the Sea, one of the favourite children of Varuna, the Hindu Neptune — who, sitting at a distance in his conch, with his two green-haired daughters, cautions them against further approach to this terrible monster. Ravan is fain to submit to the voice of Lingastya, whose experience has given him a prophetic power like that of Proteus. Taking a last look at Zingarel, he beholds her standing on the back of the giant alligator, with her arms outstretched towards him; and, holding up Chrystalline to her view, [Page 72] he flings the talisman with all his force towards her. The little sea-cow, by some secret sympathy and power on her own element, guides the flight of her crystal grotto straight to the hands of Zingarel, who receives it in her outspread scarf, and is filled with joy and courage at its repossession — with a sad smile she waves her scarf to Ravan —

et “longum Vale, Vale!” inquit —

Here the good Mandodari is heard to sigh; and as, according to the etiquette of all Eastern courts, it is considered of rigour to re-echo the

slightest feelings and sentiments of royal personages, the whole of the assembly take up the sorrowful utterance, and sigh, or feign to sigh in unison with her. The attempt proves distressing to some of the old Rishis, and veteran Senapatis, and ludicrous on the part of others; and [Page 73] the effect of the whole is to produce a very singular and undignified combination of sounds, which interrupt the Titan's narrative, and try his patience for a full quarter of an hour. Silence and decorum being at length restored, he proceeds with his tale.

He remained — thus runs his relation — long in a state of stupid abstraction, gazing vacantly on the black but ever-lessening shadow which the receding monster interposed between himself and the setting sun, and scarcely daring to contemplate in its reality the great change which had thus fallen upon his existence. He is at last roused to a sense of the present by the Divars, who are anxious to return to their cavern, not only to claim their reward, having accomplished at least one great object of their attempt, the restoral of the talisman; but also, [Page 74] because, judging from what they had seen when setting out, they begin to entertain serious apprehensions of not finding any supper left, if they do not reach home as soon as possible. Ravan returns to the cavern, and pays the Divars the promised reward. He would fain have rested that night there, but finds it impossible. The Divars' wives resolve upon being weighed immediately, to decide possession till the next new moon. The Divars, having their appetite sharpened by their exertions, and the keen air of the winter sea, insist upon first having their supper; and, pressing the matter, find their worst forbodings realised. The women have eaten up everything ! The result of such a discovery in a Triton's cave may be anticipated. The Divars resort to blows, their wives to that weapon, [Page 75] which female Tritons, in all times and places, have ever used with so sharp and shrill an edge.

In addition to these sources of disturbance, the whole neighbourhood resounds with the cries of thousands of wild asses, inhabited by the spirits of men, who, having been cruel to their animals and servants in a former life, are now condemned to wander in brute form, in this desolate region, bearing the burthens and blows of their hard taskmasters, the Divars. The variety of sad tones in which these creatures cry out to each other through the night proves that they still retain their human knowledge and feelings; and the effect, joined to the incessant sound of blows, and the shrill screaming and invectives of the Divars' wives, is so distracting, that Ravan rushes out of the cavern, and throwing himself upon the back of [Page 76] one of the wild asses, plunges into the deep gloom and silence of the faintly starlit desert.

All night long rode he through the dreary waste, amid silence and desolation. As soon as the morning dawned, and the sun had advanced

well up the sky, he began to be conscious of some phenomena which he had experienced once before, on his first entry into the silent land in company with Zingarel. He beheld in the distance, in the midst of this arid and treeless desert, extensive lakes of cool, blue water, studded with verdant islands, and surrounded by groves of the most refreshing green. This was the “mriga-jala” — the “deer-water” or blue mirage, which mocked the desire, and ever fled at his approach; the illusive water-brook, after which the weary hart panteth in the wilderness; emblem of the desires and hopes of this [Page 77] false world, which appear so inviting and beautiful afar off, but which ever fly the pursuit, and at last vanish, perhaps when apparently on the point of being attained, and leave the disappointed soul, which has so long wasted its divine energies on the vain pursuit, in bitterness and blank despair!

The second delusion sometimes accompanied the first, but was frequently seen alone. It consisted of an assemblage of gorgeous castles, towers and palaces, rising afar off, in mid-air, or in the sky, tinted often with all the glorious hues of sunset, and resembling those ineffable vistas into eternity, which some sunsets, and some music alone, present upon this earth to the soul of the longing gazer, and entranced listener. This was the “Gandharva-nagari”, the “Gandharva-city”, or assemblage of fairy palaces, which resulted from the [Page 78] white mirage, and presented a mournful emblem of those beautiful and magnificent castles, which the poor human soul builds with so much labour in the air, to vanish in a moment.

The third was the semblance of a black, wavering vapour, that seemed ever to flutter before the eyes in the sunshine, but which you could never fix by a steady gaze. Ever and anon it seemed to glimmer black before you, but, look fixedly, it was gone; relax the tension of your gaze, and there it wavered again. This was the greatest delusion of the three; for it deluded not the eye merely, but the mind. As the blue and white mirage, operating in space, and altering its relations, inverted real objects, and produced phantasmal representations of unreal ones; so this, operating in, and altering the relations of time, inverted real events, [Page 79] and projected illusive phantasms of unreal ones. Ravan felt himself remembering the events which had happened tomorrow; and looking forward, with expectation, to those which would happen yesterday. He lived in future ages. He looked forward to the arrival of the past. The destruction of the universe by the sword-shaped comet of Kalki, the tenth Avatar, was gone by. Its first production by Brahma — its successive preservation in three deluges, by the Fish, the Tortoise, and the Boar Avatars, were yet to come. Such was the effect of the “Kala-Vivarta”, the “Black Mirage” or “Mirage of Time”.

Through these delusions he proceeded for two days and nights without

refreshment, or sense of fatigue, deep sorrow supporting, and being assuaged by, the prolonged physical exertion. On the third night, when it was [Page 80] towards dawn, and the waning moon was just going down among the western sandhills, he observed a singular appearance upon the eastern mountains, upon which the last pale glimmer of her departing radiance was now projected. A dark, undulating, broad shadow came waving over the side of the mountains, from the summit downward, like that cast by the rapid flitting of autumn clouds over a field of grass or corn. But not a cloud was then in the sky. As the moving shadow extended into, and darkened the plain, it looked like a black mantle or sheet covering the ground for miles, and moving close to the earth. He paused in curiosity to watch this phenomenon; and, as it approached and passed the spot on which he stood, he observed with astonishment, not unmixed with terror, that it consisted of an army of [Page 81] millions of black wolves proceeding in marshalled order and dead silence across the plain, in the direction of the setting moon. The vision — for he could not tell whether they were living creatures, or mere phantasms — lasted for about half-an-hour, and then gradually disappeared to the west, leaving a chill upon his feelings that made him anxiously long for the morning. Often did he turn to the east to catch, across the faint twilight, some glimpse of orient red heralding the rising sun. But no ruddy golden glow flushed the horizon. No sun arose that mournful day. He lay sleeping in his clouds in some far off, misty chamber, “careless of the voice of the morning”. At last, when the hour arrived that the day should have broken, and his light should have been gladdening the hills, Ravan beheld, in his stead, a black comet rise [Page 82] in the east, with its nucleus in the Zenith, and its tail — in which, by some strange effect of refraction, he saw a terrific and magnified image of himself, pointing downwards towards the earth, looming, in its rise, larger and larger, and nearer and nearer — till its distinct outline was lost in its immense spread and proximity, and he was only conscious of a black tempest — as yet silent, collected, and as it were brooding — advancing, imperceptibly over the earth.

While reflecting upon the meaning of this strange portent, other ominous signs began to show themselves. A lurid, coppery glow crept gradually up the horizon. The wind began to blow at intervals in low, mournful gusts, and then suddenly to cease. Flocks of birds came wheeling and screaming over his head, and groups of wild dogs, jackals, and other beasts of the desert, [Page 83] darted suddenly past, uttering cries indicative of distress and supernatural terror. The wild ass on which he rode at last lay down beneath him, and buried its nose in the sand; and, finding no effort of his could induce it to rise, he left it to its fate, and staggered on alone, dismayed by the appearances of change and elemental convulsion that gathered more thickly around him at every step. At last, a deep hollow sound, as of roaring waters in the distance,

burst upon his ear, and hastened his flight. The great blue river, at whose embouchure Zingarel had been borne off, had burst its bounds to the right; while the sea itself, overleaping its barriers to the south, was advancing to cut off retreat in that direction. The coppery glow of the horizon deepened upward into a dark, inky purple — the low [Page 84] murmuring of the wind gradually swelled to a roar; red and blue flashes of light shot athwart the gloom, amid sharp crashes of thunder — and all nature seemed returning again to chaos, darkness, and whirlwind.

Above, blackness, tempest, red lightning, and waterspout; below, the river and the ocean roaring along, and covering the earth — the Maha-Pralaya, or great dissolution of all things, was at hand, and escape appeared hopeless. In this crisis, Ravan clambered to the top of an ancient pyramidal temple of the Goddess Uma, or Bhavani, which stood abandoned in the desert, and there awaited his fate. It was time that he did so; for the waters now covered the whole face of the desert, and threatened, before many hours were past, to submerge even the lofty temple where he had taken refuge. At this crisis he [Page 85] discerns a large object looming through the darkness, and apparently advancing towards him on the face of the waters. As it approaches, he perceives it to have the semblance of a ship; and, to his inexpressible relief, it stops on arriving opposite the temple. But there is something mysterious, something supernatural or spiritual (adhy-atmika) in this dim, phantasmal ship. Its outline is nowhere sharp and firm, but wavy and ragged, like a swaying cloud; it has neither helm nor sails, and appears to move and to stop at will. There are human figures on board; but they appear shadowy, and almost transparent; they neither speak nor move, but seem wrapt in Samadhi, or the profound trance of religious contemplation. Their attire, too, is of a fashion now unknown. Still, it strikes Ravan as not wholly new; and, [Page 86] on taxing his memory, he remembers with astonishment, that he has seen them all in the religious paintings which adorn the walls of his eastern palace. Eight of the parties who occupied the centre, seven surrounding in a semicircle one apparently greater than the rest — all wore matted hair coiled up into a pyramid above the head, and garments of bark. The central personage had one arm and one leg stiffened and shrunk, as if he had been standing for years, or centuries, in a penitential attitude, which destroyed their natural functions. In him Ravan recognised with awe no less a personage than Satyavrata, or Manu Vaivasvata (the Hindu Noah); and in his seven attendants, the seven Rishis, or holy sages, Bhrigu, Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Kratu and Vashista, who are preserved with him [Page 87] in the ark, in the dissolution of all things, by the Fish Avatar. This phantom ship, then, can be no other than Manu's Ark; and he now comprehends how it moved without sails or rudder, being fastened by a rope to the horn of the divine fish. But if this be the ark of Manu, the deluge must indeed be once more upon the earth ! What,

then, can be the fate of Zingarel ? Lanka too must have been submerged, and Sita and Rama must both have perished!

Here Mandodari said in a low voice: —

“Ah! Ravan, so it was of Sita's perishing you thought! You could not spare a thought for poor Mandodari! Nor for your sister, the long-nailed Shurpanakha, now slit both of nose and ears: nor for the dark-eyed Sulochana, the noble widow of our brave Indrajit! [Page 88] And yet, to my mind, some of us might be reckoned as worthy of being remembered as she; for although she has, beyond doubt, a beautiful face — which I should be sorry to disparage — she is, as compared with some of us, deficient in majestic roundness of proportion, and looks rather uncomfortably bare about the neck”.

“She is quite scraggy”, said Shurpanakha.

“She is crooked in the spine”, said Mahodari.

“She has the voice of a peacock”, said Anunasika.

“She has elephant ankles”, said Pankamagna.

“She is very proud”, said Ahankara.

“She is very sly”, said Gupta.

Ravan bit his lips at this interruption, and the unpleasant turn of the remarks; [Page 89] and, turning to Sulochana, said with bitterness —

“Well, Sulochana, you have not yet spoken. What is your accusation against Sita ?”

“Sita”, replied the noble widow of Indrajit — “Sita is the most beautiful woman, the truest lady, the most heroic wife, and the most translucent, childlike soul that walks the earth. Would she were my sister, and would that she were sent back with honour to her husband !”

This generous tribute from her, whom Sita's brother-in-law had made a widow, drew a spontaneous burst of applause from the whole assembly, and gratified Ravan, in spite of the rebuke to himself contained in the closing wish.

He now resumes his narrative —

While gazing with wonder at the [Page 90] phantom ship, and the

motionless statues seated upon the deck, he observes three other figures emerge from the interior of the vessel. One he knows, by his rainbow wings and antelope eyes, to be the beautiful Gandharva Davini. The second he concludes, from the resemblance he bears to his portraits, to be the compassionate Muni Ke. In the third, to his astonishment and delight, he recognises one of his own Titan followers, the Rakshas Surang, whom he thought far away in his own Lanka. He had no time to speculate how these parties, especially the latter, came to be in the ark of Manu, for the Rakshas Surang immediately plunged into the water, and, swimming towards him, touched his feet respectfully with his hands, and then, taking him on his back, bore him safely through the water, and landed him in the ark. [Page 91] Here, the Muni Ke putting his finger to his lips to enjoin absolute silence, the three went forward with Ravan, and sat down apart from the contemplating Rishis. The ship now moved forward again with velocity, and Ravan could discover by the immense mass of phosphoric light extending before the bows, the dim outlines of the Fish that towed it through the waves. About a yojana in front rose the golden horn, round which was fastened the cable which drew it. On — on — went the ship through the desolate ocean. In the monotony of motion, the dead silence, and dreary sameness of view on every side, Ravan lost all sense of time. It might be only hours; but it seemed to him years, centuries, ages, that they thus careered through the boundless waters. At last, the monotony was broken. A roar was heard in the [Page 92] distance; and they beheld, as it were, a cloudy pillar emerge out of the sea, and again sink back out of sight.

As the ship approached, the lineament of THE THING became dimly discernible. It resembled in the lower part a stupendous conch-shell, out of which emerged what seemed the shell-dappled neck of a gigantic horse, bristling with a mane of branching corals, and surmounted by an enormous, jagged, crustaceous boar's head, turned upwards, and armed with a multitude of tusks, like the barbed weapon of the sword-fish. At the root of the neck were two rotating arms, which produced a whirlpool in the water round, like those at the head of the Vorticella. It was no other than HAYA-GRIVA or "HORSE-NECK", the famous SHANKASURA, or SHELL-DEMON, who stole the Vedas out of Brahma's mouth, when [Page 93] he fell asleep, and hid them in the sea; and whom it is one of the purposes of Vishnu, in the Fish Avatar, to slay, in order to their recovery. This conflict is now, therefore, imminent. The Shell-demon and the Fish are almost in contact, the former coming up under the very bows of the ship, in order to attack the Fish from behind, and keeping nothing but his enormous tusk-armed head above water. Ravan rushes forward to catch a nearer glimpse of the monster; and, stooping imprudently over, loses his balance, and falls headlong, encumbered as he is with his armour, into the open, upturned mouth of the Shankasura. A moment longer, and he had been crushed; but the faithful Rakshas Surang, who

never quitted his side, catches his mantle as he falls, and, though too late to break the crushing shock of the fall upon the [Page 94] monster's barbed tusks, he is enabled to draw him up in time, and thus save him from utter destruction. The combat, meantime, twixt Haya-Griva and the Fish has commenced; but Ravan lies unconscious of its issues. Stunned by the fall, bruised by his own armour, and lacerated by the jagged tusks of the monster, he lies fainting and bleeding in a corner of the ark, till the benignant Muni Ke approaches, raises him up, and stripping him, with the assistance of the Gandharva Davini, of his heavy armour, washes his lacerated breast and arm, and pours down his lips a draught of Amrita, or celestial elixir vitae, which preserves his life, but prolongs his insensibility.

In one interval of dreamy consciousness, which broke, for a brief period, this salutary state of lethargy, he heard the following hymn chanted in the deep [Page 95] tones of Satyavrata, or Manu, surnamed Vaivasvata, the "Child of the Sun": —

HYMN OF SATYAVRATA IN THE ARK TO VISHNU,
AS THE ETERNAL ILLUMINATOR, AND SUPREME GURU,
OR SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR OF SOULS.

- 1 -

O thou, thro' whose favour spirits sick with the moils of the world,
Which hath its roots in self-consciousness disturbed by primordial error,
Here find an asylum, to whom they attain, the bestower of freedom,
Thou art, Oh! Lord, our Guru, our Spiritual Teacher — Supreme.

- 2 -

This race of men un-illumined, bound by their own past deeds,
From desire of pleasure — give themselves up to action, productive of
only pain.
He, by whose service man shaketh off this evil bent of his mind, He
only may cleave that knot, the heart, He is our Guru Supreme.

- 3 -

He, by whose service, as gold thro' fire, man casting away his filth, [Page
96]
The darkness clouding his spirit — resumeth his native brightness,
Let that inexhaustible one, that Lord, become our transcendent Teacher
of teachers !

- 4 -

He, the least atom of the ten thousandth part of whose favour
To man, all other Gods and Teachers, united together,
Are insufficient to work of themselves, to that Lord, to thee, for refuge I
fly.

- 5 -

As an eyeless man made leader unto the blind,
Even so to the ignorant man is an un-illumined guide,
Thou the Sun-eye itself, which illuminateth all eyes,
Art the chosen Guide of us, who seek the way unto thyself.

- 6 -

Man teacheth unto man a wisdom that is false,
Whereby he goeth forward to the darkness of dread perdition;
But thou art Wisdom divine itself, inexhaustible and fruitful,
Whereby man instantly goeth to his own (long lost) dignity.

- 7 -

Thou art of all mankind the Friend, and the loving Lord, [Page 97]
The Spirit, the Guide, the Wisdom, the accomplishment desired;
Yet man, ever blind of heart, and enchained by desire,
Knoweth thee not, tho' existing within his very heart.

- 8 -

To thee, the chief and the all-transcending God,
I come for illumination:
Cleave, Lord, asunder, with words, burning as lamps of truth,
The knots in my heart existing, and thine own self reveal.

[This whole hymn, which is put into the mouth of Satyavrata in the account of the deluge given in the Bhagavata (Skandha, viii Adhyaya, 24), is a very remarkable production. It shows that, in the very heart of the wildest and most apparently childish portions of the Hindu mythology, there is a deep vital mysticism, and aspiration after divine union, which could hardly be fruitless.]

The word translated "mankind" and "man" is Loka, which may also be rendered the "world". This stanza has a very great analogy to these words of John — "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. He

was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not”.]

What further happens — what becomes of the Shell demon, the Fish, the Ark and the Rishis in the dream — [Page 98] he cannot tell. When he recovers his consciousness in that dreaming world, he finds himself on the little Isle of Palms, near Lanka, lying in a chamber within the castle of the Kamatur Rakshas, attended by a strange wizard from the north — surrounded by the clamorous lamentations of all his wives — but quietly and tenderly waited on by his chief queen, Mandodari.

“Ah!” said Mandodari, “it is at such times only that we are appreciated”. Sita would have been of little use there, I fancy. Amid sunshine and green trees, gay cavalcades, and brave plumery — among chaplets, and music, and lights, Sita is all in all, and Mandodari is forgotten. But in darkness and sickness; among vials and gallipots, and plasters, and poultices, poor Mandodari becomes some one once more. [Page 99]

Here, to the astonishment and horror of the whole court, a rich deep voice began to sing, in mocking reply, as it were, to the observation of Mandodari, the satirical song of the poet Amrita Raya upon wives: —

Of the money, of the money the woman is the wife,
And never, ah ! never of the man;

- 1 -

As long as he makes money, and enricheth her with children,
So long she will caress him and be sweet —
Of the money, of the money.

- 2 -

If broken down in health, or means, or mad, or deaf, or crazed,
When she sees him, the Virago she will play —
Of the money, of the money.

- 3 -

Amrita Raya declareth unto thee,
From personal experience I can vouch,
Of the money, of the money the woman is the wife,
And never, ah ! never of the man. [Page 100]

This insolent interruption proceeded from Madhavi, surnamed Pankaja,

or, as the ladies of the court softened it in their pronunciation, Panza, a title of honour he had received from Ravan, in consequence of his fine voice and rich humour. He was a very short, stout individual, who held the office, and enjoyed all the privileges of Vidushaka, or Court Buffo-poet, and Pasquin. The word Pankaja signifies etymologically “mud-sprung”, but is the commonest name of the lotus, or water-lily, which, as every one conversant with Hindu literature knows, is applied as an enhancing epithet to everything in which there is any excellence; thus lotus-eyes, lotus-hands, etc.. Madhavi prided himself both on his honorary surname, and his office at court; and had himself formally announced in all the subordinate circles [Page 101] in Lanka as, “Madhavi, the Water-lily, the Court Buffo-poet”.

Happening, however, one day, on his return from court in the wet season, in full court costume, to sink so deeply in the gutter, that he was only able to extricate himself by laying hold of the tail of a buffalo that was floundering out, the witty boys of Lanka changed the name “Pankaja” into “Panka-magna”, or “stuck-in-the-mud”; and, ever afterwards, when he was seen in the streets, they would follow him shouting, “Madhavi, the stuck-in-the-mud, the Court Buffo-poet” — an announcement which occasioned roars of laughter, in which the squat buffo himself very good-humouredly joined.

“Madhavi! you are a privileged person”, said Mandodari; “no one heeds anything proceeding from you. Your fine voice and your wit atone for [Page 102] a thousand slanders, and, in you, impertinence is termed the freedom of your office. Were it otherwise, it were sufficient reply to the scandalous sentiments expressed in that song to say, that it is written by a man: and before we can receive his testimony, I should like to know how he behaved to his own wife”.

“It is written, moreover”, said Ravan, soothingly, “of wives as existing in the Kali Yuga; and is wholly inapplicable to our excellent partners of this better age, which has not yet degenerated so far”.

“Madhavi Panza”, said the sly Gupta, the mischievous companion of Mandodari, “has a good word ready for every one. After this complimentary opinion of the faithful attachment of wives, I should like to hear his panegyric upon friends of his own sex. [Page 103] They can hardly fare better at his hands”.

“You shall have it”, said the Water-lily, gaily, “but mind! it is the poet Hara Suta, or as he sometimes calls himself, Hari Tanaya, who speaks, and not I. For my part, when I think as a philosopher, which I always do after dinner, I discover there are two sides to every question: two aspects of every relation in life; and good and bad in each. But in my vocation as

Vidu-shaka, I must necessarily prefer that which is most satirical, most humorous, and capable of yielding most entertainment. The dream of the king is so full of sad and grave images, that a little fun is absolutely necessary to relieve the painful tension of all our minds”.

So saying he carolled forth, in his fine bass voice, Hari Suta's song on [Page 104] friends, which is not a whit more complimentary than Amrita Raya's upon wives

'Tis money, 'tis money that draweth friends,
And never the cord of love.

- 1 -

As long as your person is gilded with wealth,
So long their affection expands.
'Tis money, 'tis money.

- 2 -

In the hour of your danger, in the day of your decline,
With clapping hands they publish your disgrace.
'Tis money, 'tis money.

- 3 -

Hari Tanaya, Sirs ! tells you this proof,
In my own person I've had experience of the truth.
'Tis money, 'tis money that draweth friends,
And never the net of love.

“To me”, said the earnest and beautiful Sulochana, “all this levity — at a time when so many hearts in Lanka mourn for the fallen brave, when a [Page 105] crisis seems impending over the fate of the city and the monarchy, and when the king himself is relating a dream of the most mournful presages — seems ill-timed and unfeeling. Proceed, dear Father-in-law! I am impatient to hear what happened after you were restored to consciousness, and found yourself lying in the Castle of the Kamatur Rakshas”.

The conclusion of the dream we give in Ravan's own words: —

Gently Mandodari crept
To the chamber where I lay alone;
And silent beside my couch she wept,
And you heard but her sob and moan.

Then all at once shrieked out, in one universal wail,
The eighty thousand women that were standing round my bed;
Their eyes were red with weeping, their cheeks with watching pale,
They tore their hair dishevelled, and cast ashes on their head. [Page
106]

And, smiting their bosoms with force, They
lifted their voices shrill and hoarse, And
screamed a lament in alternate course, Like
a mourning dirge for the dead.

LAMENT OF THE LANKA WOMEN

STROPHE

Who was it wounded King Ravan ?
Was it Rama, the Prince of Ayoud,
Or Laxmana, youthful archer proud ?
Was it Pahlavi, Barbar, or Yavan ?

ANTISTROPHE.

'Twas I, said Shankasur, the Demon-Shell,
Who move in the sea like a vorticell,
I opened my valve, and in he fell.
'Twas I that wounded King Ravan;
Not Rama, the Prince of Ayoud,
Not Laxmana, youthful archer proud,
Nor Pahlavi, Barbar, or Yavan.

STROPHE.

Who saw the great Titan fall,
Bowing his figure, majestic and tall,
Like tower erect, or fortalice wall,
Smitten down by Astra magical ?

ANTISTROPHE.

'Twas I, said Vaivasvata, Manu — my Ark
Was rushing along like a hurricane bark;

I saw the great Titan fall,
Bowing his figure, majestic and tall,
Like tower erect, or fortalic wall,
Smitten down by Astra magical. [Page 107]

STROPHE.

Who caught the king by his mantle brown,
Ere he went utterly, utterly down ?

ANTISTROPHE.

'Twas I, said the Rakshas Surang,
When his armour sonorous rang
 Against Haya-Griva's adamant jaw,
 As into the dread Asura's maw
He fell with a horrible clang.
I stretched forth my brawny Rakshas arm,
 And caught the King by his mantle brown,
 Ere he went utterly, utterly down.
And came to more desperate harm.

STROPHE.

Who lifted the wounded Ravan up,
And held to his lips the amrita cup ?

ANTISTROPHE,

'Twas I, said the merciful Muni Ke;
As helpless, and bleeding, and fainting he lay,
 I lifted the wounded Titan up,
 I held to his lips the amrita cup,
And bade him to drink ere he swooned away.

STROPHE.

Who was it healed King Ravan ?
Was it Shaka, or Pahlavi, Barbar, or Yavan,
Who stanch'd the bleeding arm,
 By medical drug, or magical charm? —
Was it he, the compassionate Muni Ke,
Who lifted the wounded Titan up, [Page 108]
And held to his lips the amrita cup,
 And bade him to drink ere he swooned away ?—
Or was it Gandharva Davini ?—

Or the twin physicians of heaven, Ashvini ?
 Was it one of the Rishis three,
 Who in Manu's bark still roam the sea ? —
 Was it Moreshvar the wise,
 The towers of whose hermitage rise
 In the forest of Grantha Nagari ? —
 Was it Vatsa, or Valinshal,
 His disciples who dwell in the hermit's hall,
 And learn his lore and alchemy ?
 Who was it healed King Ravan? —
 Shaka, or Pahlavi, Barbar, or Yavan ?

ANTISTROPHE.

'Twas I, said the Pahlavi Muni Bhims,
 Thaumaturgos of wounded and broken limbs,
 Of legs and of arms, of fingers and toes,
 Luxated jaws, and disjointed nose,
 Of men, and of peacocks, of women and cows,
 Kids, children, and horses, and buffaloes.
 'Twas I healed Ravan's arm,
 By amulet tavis, and charm;
 By mantra, and tantra, and drug.
 Essence of blood-sucker, ottar of bug;
 By the honey-bag of Brahmar bee,
 The leathern wing of the vampire bat,
 The pounded ears of mummied cat,
 The tail of grey-haired bandicoot
 Dug out of his homestead under the root
 Of aged Banian tree:
 By the claw of lizard, the scorpion's sting, [Page 109]
 The flying fox's hooked wing;
 The tarantula's legs, the centipedes' feet,
 The dust scraped up where seven roads meet,
 The small white spider's gossamer thread,
 The little ant-lion's shovel head,
 The spectre grasshopper's long green legs,
 Queen ant's mandibles, cockatrice eggs,
 The parasite gochar, that lives and grows
 Fat on the hide of living cows;
 The eye of the insect pulled out by crows
 From the ears of afflicted buffaloes;
 Scrapings of nilgay's horns and hoofs,
 White ants taken out of mouldering roofs;
 The gekho's eyelash, the cobra's fang,
 Poppy-juice, majum, hemp, and bhang;

The down from blushing maiden's cheek,
 The dew from the lip of widow weak,
 Who dreading the fire, and running away,
 Would not be canonised and mourned —
 Worshipped first, and after burnt —
 Upon her immolation day.
 The nails of misers that grew old
 In hoarding up their cankered gold;
 The saddest tear by woman shed,
 For the first grey hair on her poor little head;
 The last black tufts that straggling grow
 On whisker side of faded beau;
 Raja's liver, Brahman's gall,
 Pounding, boiling, stirring all,
 In a witch's cauldron sure,
 I accomplished Ravan's cure.
 Not Rishi Ke, nor Gandharva Davini,
 Nor the twin physicians of heaven, Ashvini;
 Nor Nala Siddh — nor the wandering Muni —[Page 110]
 Nor Moreshvar, Vatsa, nor Valinshal;
 'Twas I alone—apart from all,
 I healed King Ravan.

STROPHE.

Who was it nursed King Ravan ?
 Was it Shurpanakh—with her basket nails ?
 Or Sulochana sad, with her widow's sighs,
 And streaming tears and sorrowful wails
 For Indrajit, and those beautiful eyes,
 From which the anchorite, if wise,
 And Yogi, in desperation flies,
 And Mum turns, and Rishi quails.
 Was it female Barbar, or Yavan ?

ANTISTROPHE.

'Twas I, said a dusky form in tears,
 For I loved King Ravan these hundred years,
 'Twas I, said the Queen Mandodari,
 Seated upon my bearskin godari
 I nursed King Ravan —
 Not Shurpanakh — with her basket nails,
 Nor Sulochana sad, with her widow's sighs,
 And streaming tears and sorrowful wails
 For Indrajit, and those beautiful eyes,

From which the anchorite, if wise,
And Yogi, in desperation flies,
And Muni turns, and Rishi quails;
Nor female Barbar, nor Yavan.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Hark to the sorrowful cry
That rises o'er ocean, earth, and sky,
From all the immortal races! [Page 111]
All weep and hide their faces.
The Daityas, Danavas, Asuras.
Pause in their warfare with the Suras, The
Yaksha, the Raksha, the Rakshas, Calleth
in grief to the Brahma-Rakshas, The
Bhutas turn from their banquet foul. And
raise in the charnel a mournful howl.
Rakshani screecheth to Bhutini,
Yakshini wailleth to Dakini.
The Pisacha rejects his skull full of blood,
The Naga spreadeth his spectacled hood;
The Kinnura droops his horse's head,
The Sidhas on clouds no longer tread;
The Yakshas their treasure cease to guard,
The Guhyakas keep no longer ward;
The Gandhava no longer melodious sings,
Or scatters perfume from his Zephyr wings
The Apsara, that from lake or sea
Like a mist, the morning sun to greet,
Up rising, dances so beauteously,
Suddenly stilleth her twinkling feet.
The sage Vidhyadharas cease to ply
Their magical formula on high;
The sorrowful Rudras, who ever weep
The Uragas on their breasts that creep;
All joined in the terrible cry of grief
That rose from the wounded Titan chief.
Even nature uttered a pitying voice,
For the Titan was a child of her choice,
The very rocks from their hearts of stone
Were heard to shudder and utter a groan;
The trees gave forth a sorrowful moan.
The loving sweet-briar drooped its head,
The violet sad its petal shed; [Page 112]
The cowslip turned aside and wept,
The moon-flower shut up its leaves and slept.

All the naiads and kelpies in fountain and flood,
All the dryads and fauns in forest and wood,
All the fairies and brownies fell a-sighing and sobbing
When they heard the disaster of poor King Ravan !

Here, amid the sobs of Mandodari, terminates the mysterious dream of Ravan. Its interpretation commences in the fourth Kanda. The third, on which we shall next enter, is devoted to the Kamatur Rakshas, and the supernatural weapons.

PART - 3 -

THE KAMATUR RAKSHAS AND THE SUPERNATURAL WEAPONS

WHEN Ravan mentioned the name of the Kamatur Rakshas, a smile full of meaning passed round the assembly. Kamatur signifies “sick with love”; or “madly in love”; and since his [Page 113] hallucination about Sita, the epithet of Kamatur Rakshas, or “the love-sick Titan”; had been stealthily applied to himself in all the gossiping coteries that formed round the Court of Lanka. For then, as now, though subjects would fight loyally, and die bravely for their monarch, they would freely canvass his faults. Indeed, the nickname was first tauntingly given him by his own virtuous brother, Bibbishana, who, though most devotedly attached to his person and his government, never ceased to protest against his injustice in detaining Sita, and to warn him of the fatal results of persevering in such a course. But there was another reason for the furtive merriment. Among the auditors of the dream, standing in his place among the ancient Senapatis, or military chiefs, was the genuine Kamatur Rakshas [Page 114] himself, to whom Ravan's narrative alluded. He was the oldest friend and companion of the Titan king, and was a general favourite at the Rakshas' court; but of so humorous a turn of mind, and so eccentric in his conduct, that the mere introduction of a name so constantly associated with fun, into a recital so sombre, and almost tragic in its general character, produced a contrast of ideas that was too violent for the gravity of the assembly. The original name of this Titan was Kopadana, a title indicative of the combination in his character of anger and generosity; but since he had held the government of the pearl-fisheries, it had been changed to Kamatur. For while exercising this government he had once entertained for some months, a group of beautiful Apsaras, those celestial nymphs that dance like mists upon the [Page 115] sunbeams — whose virtue was equal to their beauty — and became passionately attached to one of the number, named Ramaniya, [RAMANA signifies, in Sanscrit, a husband, a lover, a sporter, player, tumbler RAMANI, a wife, sweetheart, agreeable woman. female player,

dancer, from the root RAM, to sport. There can be no doubt this is the true origin of the terra ROMANI. by which the Gypsies designate both a Gypsy and a husband. Their language, with a great portion of modern Hindu dialects, contains many words of pure Sanscrit, such as SHAKA (vegetable); KASHTA (wood), etc..] or the “Charmer”. His love, however, was as chivalric as it was ardent; and, not being returned by the fair object of his passion, except by a grateful friendship, he limited the expression of his passion to keeping vigil at night (in full armour) outside the tower in which Ramaniya's chamber was situated, and driving away all the Yakshas and Pishachas that infested the neighbourhood, with the intention of carrying off the beauty.

One of the remarkable peculiarities [Page 116] about the Kamatur Rakshas was his (apparent) love for the brute creation. He collected together all the animals and birds of every description that he could lay his hands on — fed them sumptuously, erected extensive Pashu-shalas (the same as the modern Pinjura-purs, or animal hospitals of Surat and Bombay) for their accommodation, and passed a great part of his time in their company; so that he was as well known and beloved among the deer, wild boars, sheep, kids, peacocks, herons, doves, etc., as a Buddhist priest or a Muni living in forest hermitage. A friar, indeed, of the Buddhist order actually assisted him in these beneficent ministrations to the animals and birds; but, strange to say, all this attachment was, on his part, wholly deceptive. One after another, he slaughtered and feasted on his favourites, not [Page 117] only without remorse, but with a cruel zest that betrayed the latent Titan. The true solution of the inconsistency was this: he was a firm believer in the metempsychosis. But on this general doctrine he had engrafted a theory of his own, that the happiness of the wandering soul, after each emigration, depended on its condition (happy or otherwise) at the moment of making its exit from one sphere of living being into another. So that the greatest possible mercy that could be shown to any animal was to cut it off when it was in the full flush of good feeding, and rolling in clover. The misery in which old and diseased animals linger out a wretched existence in the Pinjara-purs, or animal hospitals, had probably suggested this theory, and certainly afforded it no small justification. But it was found also to harmonise [Page 118] admirably with a very proper Titanic relish for good fat saddles of gram-fed mutton, haunches of venison, and boars roasted whole.

Another peculiarity was his power of using the “Mohan-Astra”, and the delight which he took in it. The Astras are, as we may inform our readers, a kind of weapons that one constantly meets in the ancient Hindu legends, and which at first are very puzzling. They sometimes have a palpable shape, and from their effects in burning the enemy, etc., we are led to imagine, that they are nothing but rockets or shells, and

that the ancient Hindus were well acquainted with the use of gunpowder. But a further acquaintance corrects this idea. We find the operator folding his arms on the field of battle, and, by mere inward meditation, despatching the Astra, which is [Page 119] to arrest or consume the hostile army. We find such elemental Astras as "Wet Thunderbolt", "Dry Thunderbolt", "Rain Astra", "Drought Astra", "Frost Astra", such spiritual Astras as "Fascination", "Allurement", "Maddening", or "Intoxication", "Trembling", or "Panic"; such physiological Astras as "Overpowering with Sleep", "Quieting", and "Paralysing"; and we are forced ultimately to conclude, that the whole armoury is spiritual, and is to be interpreted by three analogies in the European sphere of thought and experience — namely, magic, mesmerism, and the modern electro-biology. We subjoin here a curious list of these weapons, taken from the Ramayana. The manuscripts vary a good deal: even the printed editions of Schlegel and Gorresio differ somewhat as to the [Page 120] order, the number, and the names of the Astras. There is, however, a sufficient agreement, on the whole. Gorresio's edition, the typography of which is beautiful, but in which the text is, in general, less carefully and correctly edited than Schlegel's, contains the fuller list of the two. We have constructed the subjoined catalogue of the magical armoury from a comparison of both:

LIST OF ASTRAS, OR SUPERNATURAL WEAPONS,

DELIVERED BY THE SAGE VISIHVAMITRA TO RAMA, FOR HIS COMBAT WITH THE TITANS.

HAMAYANA — ADI — KANDA — SARGA XXIX, — ED. SCHLEGEL — XXX. ED OORRESIO.

The 'Brahm Astra'; terrible to the three collected worlds.
 The Astra, or Discus of 'Judgment'; which causes the extermination of the people.
 The Astra, or Discus, of Dharma (nemesis) — like fate itself.
 The irresistible Astra, or Discus of Fate.
 The ethereal Discus of Vishnu; the cruel Discus of Indra. [Page 121]
 The 'Thunderbolt', hard to resist; the excellent 'Trident of Shiva'.
 The terrible 'Brahman's Head'; the 'arrow-resembling' Astra.
 The 'Brahmanical Astra', incomparable; the 'Shankar-Astra', with flaming mouth.
 The two beautiful clubs Modaki and Shikara.
 The iron-headed club of Vishnu — Kaumodaki.
 The 'Noose of Law', and the 'Noose of Fate'.
 The most wonderful 'Noose of Varuna' (God of the water).
 The two Thunderbolts of Indra, 'Dry' and 'Wet'.
 The Astra of the Trident-bearer, and the 'Narayan-Astra'.

The fiery Astra, called 'Point', and the windy Astra, called 'Whirl-about'.
The Astras 'Pounding to Atoms', ' Shaking to Pieces', and 'Tearing asunder of Enemies'.

The 'Horse's head' Astra; the 'Hammer', the 'Heron's beak'.

The two-powers (or spears), 'Not sped in vain', and 'Victorious'.

The terrible 'Skeleton Pestle', the 'Bracelet of Skulls', and the 'Tinkling Waist-Chain of Rattling Bones', worn by the Titans.

The great Astra, called 'the Delighting' of the Vidhyadharas (Who ascend to heaven by holding a magical pill in their mouths).

The 'Casting into a deep sleep' Astra, the 'Thoroughly quieting', and the 'Paralysing' Astras.

The 'Solar' Astra, the 'Rain', and the 'Drought' Astras. [Page 122]

The "Burning-up' and the 'Smearing-over' Astras.

The 'Allurement' and the ' Maddening' [Or "Intoxication"] Astras, dear to Cupid.

The cherished Astra of the Gandharvas, called 'Mohana,' or 'Fascination'.

The Sura Astra, which steals away lustre and beauty; the 'Blasting of enemies'.

The 'Paishacha', or Devil's Astra; called 'Red-flesh-eater'.

The 'Kubera' Astra (for showering gold).

The 'Rakshas', or Titan Astra, which destroyeth the fortune, the courage, and life of one's foes.

The 'Fainting' Astra, the 'Whipping', the 'Trembling', the 'Drawing along of Enemies'.

The 'Diluvial' Astra, the 'Whirlpool', the 'Paviour.'

The 'Truth' and the 'Lying' Astras; the Astra of 'Maha-Maya', or 'Great magical illusion'.

The 'Heroism' Astra; the 'Splendour', the ' Abstraction of other's splendour'.

The 'Moon' and the 'Frost' Astras; the 'Twashtara', or ' Chaos-demon' Astra, powerful to enemies.

The invincible 'Smiting' Astra; the 'Daitya', the 'Danava' Astras.

And the 'Cold-pointed arrow;' the peculiar Astra of man.

The purely spiritual nature of these [Page 123] weapons, that they are summoned and embodied by magical incantation, dwell in the mind alone, and perform their service by inward volition, or mental summons, is evident from the following passage, which succeeds the enumeration of the Astras:—

Then, turning with his face to the east, and purified, the eminent Muni Gave unto Rama, well pleased, the incomparable assemblage of Astras; The apprehension of which is hard to the gods themselves.

Those Astras, then well pleased, to Rama he orally delivered,

While the Muni, muttering, repeated the whole collection of Mantras (or spells),

The Artras appeared in embodied shape, and stood in attendance upon the Prince.

And all those Astras, rejoicing, to Rama said, with hands submissively joined,

“Here we are, most generous Raghava ! Thy servants are we — command us”.

Rama, accepting them graciously, and touching them with his hand [Schlegel renders it — “taking them each by the hand” — Singulos manu prehensens]

He thus commanded them all —

“DWELL YE WITHIN MY MIND;

AND, BEING REMEMBERED, SERVE ME”. [Page 124]

When, by a mere volition and word spoken, the professor of biology makes his victim not only believe that it freezes, but actually shiver with cold in the midst of summer, he merely launches the “Frost Astra” at him from his mind. When he forces him to take shelter under the table from the pelting of the pitiless storm, it is “Wet Thunderbolt” and the “Rain Astra”. When he causes him to feel the taste of wine from a draught of pure water, and to reel and stagger from its effects, it is the “Intoxication Astra”. When he nails his foot to the floor with a word, or shuts his eyes so that he cannot open them, it is the “Paralysing Astra”.

The “casting into deep sleep”, the “thoroughly quieting”, and the “Paralysing Astras” have their co-relatives in mesmerism, also, to which biology evidently bears some relation. [Page 125]

In the “burning”, “whipping”, “pounding to atoms”, “shaking to pieces”, and other Astras of physical torture, we are reminded of the plagues with which the magician, Prospero, threatens to visit the refractory Caliban, according to the well-known practice of his profession. The Astras of “allurement”, “fascination”, “bewitching”, “maddening with love”, are amongst the recognised powers of magic; love itself being, indeed, an admitted magical and mesmeric power, acting through the eyes. The power of affecting the BRAIN through the optic nerve, by fixing the eye on one point, if luminous so much the better, to which the biologist resorts, and which is only another form of Mr. Braid's HYPNOTISING, and of Jacob Behmen's looking into the bright tin dish to bring on ecstasy, has been exercised, time out of mind, by the ecstatic [Page 126] schools of India: many of the Yogis, following the advice of Krishna, in the Gita, and gazing downward on the tips of their own noses, while others squint upwards at the corner of their eyebrows. But this is a very different matter from the “fascination” produced by two eyes looking intently and immovably into other two eyes of a different sex, and in which the soul itself is affected. Upon the very natural employment, and the result of this process in love-making, we need not dwell. But the modern adoption

of this very method to induce the mesmeric sleep is more curious, and shows that there is an undoubted relation, which it would be worth while to understand, between magic, mesmerism, fascination, and love. What renders the adoption of this mode of mesmerism by the fascination of the eye more curious, is, that we find this also [Page 127] mentioned as having been practised in India, more than two thousand years ago, for the purpose of fascinating and paralysing a woman; and, singular to say, in order to preserve her from the counter fascinations of a lover.

A disciple named Vipula, left in solemn charge of his master's beautiful wife, and finding her inclined to give too great heed to the compliments and flattery of a celestial visitor, who comes peacocking in all his plumery during her husband's absence from his hermitage, mesmerises and paralyses her powers so completely that she can neither speak nor move, by looking steadily into her two eyes. The story is given in the Mahabharata in the Anushasana Parva, Adhyaya XL., and is one of the greatest curiosities in the whole circle of Hindu literature. What is not a little singular, although the [Page 128] method adopted by Vipula, and the effects produced upon the woman, correspond exactly with those of mesmerism, the theory is quite different, and peculiarly Hindu. It is this, that the spirit or intelligence of Vipula forsakes his own frame, and enters that of the woman through the eyes and mouth; his own body remaining, as it were, inanimate the while. Here is the story — it is only necessary to state that Shakra is another name for Indra; the Jupiter Pluvius and Tonans of the old elemental Hindu Pantheon, but a very secondary deity — a mere angel of thunder and rain, in that form of Hinduism which superseded the Vedic, and has now reigned, with some modifications, for nearly three thousand years. He is as great a rake as Olympian Jove, whose prototype, indeed, in this respect, he is; but is more consistently represented as [Page 129] a beautiful celestial youth — a Giovanni descended from Swarga. He is the discomfited lover in the tale.

Vipula, the ascetic Muni, mesmerises his Preceptor's Wife (Ruchi), in order to prevent her from giving heed to the fine speeches of Indra, or Shakra.

That Vipula, mighty ascetic, SEATED NEAR his Preceptor's wife, FASCINATED, with all his might, the beautiful woman SEATED BEFORE HIM. WITH HIS TWO EYES UPON HER TWO EYES, RAYS UNITING WITH RAYS, Vipula entered her body, even as the wind pervadeth the empty space, HER SIGHT WITH HIS SIGHT, and HER MOUTH WITH HIS MOUTH (pervading) [These are the very remarkable words of the original: Guru-patnim samasino Vipulaha sa mahatapaha Upasinam-anindyangim yatharthe samal obhayat. Netrabhyam netrayorasya, rashnirn sanyojya rashmibhihi,

Vivesha Vipulaha kayam-akasham pavanoyatha.
 Lakshanam lakshane naiva. vadanam vadanenacha.]
 Motionless, then, the Muni remained, like a shadow vanishing inward:
 Then Vipula, taking under his own control the body of his Preceptor's
 wife,
 Abode therein, intent upon keeping her safe; but SHE WAS NOT AWARE OF
 HIS PRESENCE.
 He guarded her all the time, O King, his Preceptor remained away;
 Till the mighty of spirit, having accomplished his sacrifice, home
 returned. [Page 130]
 Once about then, the Lord of the Devas, assuming a body of heavenly
 form,
 Thinking “now is the time for me”, that hermitage approached.
 Making his beauty beyond compare, and much to be loved, the lord of
 mankind,
 Becoming most lovely to look upon, entered that hermitage.
 There he beheld that body of Vipula Muni seated,
 Motionless and with fixed eye, as if to a statue turned!
 And Ruchi, with beautiful side-long glances, with rounded form, and
 bosom replete with milk,
 With eyes like the lotus-leaf and large, and a face that shone like the
 moon at its full.

She, as soon as she looked upon him, desired to rise up precipitate,
 At his beauty astonished, and wishing to say to him, “Who art thou ?”
 BUT THE MATRON DESIROUS OF RISING UP, BY VIPULA WAS RESTRAINED;
 BOUND DOWN, O King of men, SHE FELT UNABLE TO MOVE.
 Her the Lord of the Devas addressed, in tender speech, surpassingly
 sweet —
 “Know me, O purely smiling, the Lord of the Devas, come hither on thy
 account,
 Suffering anguish from love, the result of my passion for thee.
 That me behold in thy presence — O haste ! the time is passing away”.
 [Page 131]

That Shakra, as he addressed her thus, the Muni Vipula heard;
 Within the body housed of his master's wife, he beheld the Lord of the
 Devas.
 And that unslandered woman, O King, WAS UNABLE TO GET UP:
 NOR WAS SHE ABLE TO UTTER A WORD, HELD BY VIPULA UNDER CONTROL.
 THE SON OF BHRIGU, LOOKING WITHIN THE FRAME OF HIS MASTER'S WIFE.
 THE MOST LUMINOUS SAGE, ABOUNDING IN POWER, BY YOGA, O SOVEREIGN,
 BOUND HER DOWN;
 HE FASTENED DOWN, BY THE BONDS OF YOGA, ALL HER ORGANS OF SENSE.
 The husband of Sachi, seeing her void of emotion, again
 Addressed her abashed, O King, AS FASCINATED SHE SAT BY POWER OF

YOGA.

Then she wished to reply to him — “Come, O come!”

But Vipula CHANGED THAT SPEECH OF HIS MASTER'S WIFE,

And, “Pray, Sir, what is the cause of your coming ?” This reply,

Adorning her matron purity, went forth from her moon-like mouth.

But she was abashed, HAVING UTTERED THAT SPEECH WHILE UNDER ANOTHER'S CONTROL;

And the Shaker of Cities, standing there, became perplexed exceedingly.

That King of the Devas, O lord of men, perceiving this her aversion,

The Thousand-eyed One, then giving a glance with his [inward] celestial eye, [Page 132]

Beheld the Muni within her body, visible before him,

Like an image within a mirror, reflected him within the body of his

Preceptor's wife;

With terrific mortification armed, the Shaker of Cities beholding,

Then trembled he, Sovereign, greatly alarmed, and dreading his terrible curse:

But, releasing the wife of his ghostly Preceptor, Vipula, glorious ascetic,

Entering his proper body again, thus spoke to the terrified Shakra —

“O slave of thy senses, evil-disposed, sin-breathing Shaker of Cities!

Not long will the gods and men continue to worship thee!

What! Shakra, hast thou forgotten, is it not fixed in thy mind,

That thou by Gautama wert let go, branded all over with marks of shame ?

I know thee, the lord of the boyish intellect, and the spirit uncollected:

Fool ! this woman by me is guarded — begone as thou camest, mischievous wretch !

Thee let me not, O foolish of spirit, this day consume with my holy radiance.

Feeling compassion, I do not wish, O Vasava, to burn thee.

But if the more terrible Lord of Mind, the Preceptor, see thee sin-devising,

He will this day consume thee utterly with an anger enkindled eye:

And, Shakra, thou oughtest not to act thus again; but shouldest respect the Brahmans. [Page 133]

He, whom the Scripture calleth 'my son and minister', smites with the power of God:

And for that thou goest forward [to sin] confiding in this idea, ' I am immortal'.

Beware and do not despise ! there is nothing whatever too hard to accomplish by penitential austerities”.

Shakra, on hearing this speech of Vipula, mighty in spirit,

Without uttering a single word, abashed, vanished on the spot.

To return, however, from this tale of fascination to the Astras. Among the list of these spiritual weapons, one, it will be observed, is described as preeminently the human Astra, and that is “the cold pointed arrow”. This, it must be confessed, looks very like the “cold steel” which was such a favourite resource with our illustrious countryman, Lord Gough, and we are almost tempted to doubt its spirituality. But some undoubtedly spiritual are of a very formidable class. We have the “Smiting” or “Killing” Astra, like [Page 134] that exercised by the professors of black magic; the “Trembling” Astra, which scattered panic among an enemy; the Astra of “Fainting” or “Insensibility”, which struck the victim senseless in a moment — the “blasting of enemies”, some reminiscence or presentiment of which is expressed in the language of popular execration among ourselves.

Then, again, we have a class of goblin Astras, which must have operated terribly upon the imagination, such as the Devil's Astra, “red flesh-eater”, and the Rakshas Astra of “Kankala-Mushala”, which Schlegel translates the “bone-breaking pestle” —“horrendum pistillum ossifragum”— but which should really be rendered “Skeleton-pestle”, which harmonises it completely with its two companions, “Skull-bracelet” and [Page 135] “Tinkling waist-chain of rattling bones”, such as the Titans delight to wear.

But there is one spiritual weapon of a nature more original and more truly formidable than any power of infliction which western supernatural art has hitherto conceived. It is called “Dharma-pasha”, which, in harmony with Schlegel, we render the NOOSE OF LAW!

“Tunc LEGIS LAQUEUM, fatigue laqueum invictum,
Varuni quoque laqueum do tibi celebratissimum”.

The European magician or witch may scatter blights, plagues, and pains from his or her fingers' ends. The American biologist may subject his patient to alternate heat and cold, drench him in rain, chill him with frost, and pelt him with hail and thunder. It was reserved for the subtle and original genius of Hindu magic to invest [Page 136] its adept with a power which would enable him, while sitting at ease in his own chamber, by a mere effort of his “astric” volition, to involve his enemy in the terrible “Noose of Law”, to make him suffer all the harassing anxieties and penalties, the delays, the vexations, the losses, and the tremendous costs of an imaginary suit in Chancery! This was the sublime of magical revenge.

[Are these Astras, after all, we may ask parenthetically — real, real spiritual powers, which higher orders of intelligences than man may and do exercise? The word Astra is derived from the root As, to throw or send

forward — it is a spiritual arrow thrown or dispatched. Is there not in this some analogy to the messengers or ANGELS of death, plague, judgment, etc., which we read of in Scripture ? [Page 137]

When we read of the spirit who said, “ I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets”, are we not reminded of the “Lying” Astra? When the angels smite the persecutors of Lot, etc., with blindness and delirium, have we not a power put forth like the Astras of “senselessness”, and “madness”, and “illusion” ? In that most sublime image of the angel of the Lord looking out of the pillar, and TROUBLING THE HOST OF THE EGYPTIANS, have we not a supernatural influence darted against them resembling the Astra of “trembling” or “panic” ?

Finally, in the angel of judgment, before whom the host perished — the wrath that WENT FORTH to destroy, do we not painfully realise the “Astra of judgment, which causes the extermination of the people”? These things merit grave consideration.] [Page 138]

We now return, after a long but not wholly unnecessary digression, to the Kamatur Rakshas: — The Astra which, in this wild tale, he is represented as exercising, is that of the Gandharvas, the “Mohan” or “Fascination” Astra, and the occasion and mode of his exercising it are very innocent and amusing. The Kamatur had a favourite story about two giants, called “Amuk” and “Tamuk”, which, like other veteran Senapatis, he was very fond of relating, as he figured in it considerably himself, and he had told it over and over again so often, that every one knew it by heart, and was tired of eternally hearing it. The moment, therefore, he began with, “ I remember one day Amuk saying to Tamuk”, every one, even his old friend Ravan, who bore more patiently with him than any one else, made off as fast as [Page 139] possible. This annoyed the Kamatur; for the story of Amuk and Tamuk had now grown to be a necessity of his existence. After thinking some time over the matter, he mounted his grey horse, Wayu-bhaksha, or Wind-eater, and rode over to the Rishi Maricha.

Maricha was an ascetic sage that dwelt in a hermitage in one of the southern forests, and divided his time between the three great pursuits of Hindu transcendental wisdom. The first, which we may term summarily self-conquest, consists again of three branches — TYAGA, or the renunciation of the world, and abandonment of all things; VAIRAGYA, or the attainment of passionless indifference and disinterestedness, by the silencing of every passion and desire; and TAPA, or heroic self-mortification, by the endurance of long-continued, painful [Page 140] penances. The second, contemplation, also consists of three stages — YOGA, or the re-uniting of the scattered spirit by rigid self-restraint, and withdrawing it from the windows of the senses which look upon the

external world; SAMADHI, the mystic inward trance, or wakening into the spiritual world, which is the result of this prolonged self-concentration; and DNYANA, gnosis, intuitive knowledge, or clairvoyance, the original condition of the spirit, the restoration of which is the fruit of the previous discipline.

The third, SIDDHI, or thaumaturgic power, is said to consist of eight branches; but the different enumerations of these, even omitting all the purely mental ones, such as satisfaction of mind, freedom from desire, freedom from grief, etc., and those physical ones which are negative, [Page 141] such as exemption from disease, pain, heat, cold, the influence of the elements, etc., raise the positive thaumaturgic powers to, at least, thirteen, as may be seen in the following —

LIST OF THE SIDDHIS, OR SUPERNATURAL POWERS

Self-nutrition. — Or the power of instant and spontaneous evolution of the juices, producing nutrition and healthy life without external nutriment.

Rest. — The power of reposing any where, at any time, and under any conditions.

Equality. — The power of enjoying a tranquil sameness of condition, and life under all circumstances.

Minuteness. — Or the power of reducing one's self to the smallness of an atom; so as to be invisible, and penetrate solid bodies.

Magnitude. — Or the power of illimitable self-extension, so as to be able to touch the moon and stars with your finger.

Buoyancy. — Or the power of divesting yourself of all gravity, so as to walk on the waters, and rise to the clouds.

Gravity. — Or the power of increasing your weight infinitely, so as to be immovable to any power of traction. [Page 142]

Rapidity. — Or the power of being in any spot in an instant of time, by mere volition.

Acquisition. — Or the power of obtaining all that one desires.

Metamorphosis. — Or the power of assuming any shape at will.

Subjection. — Or the power of swaying, and holding in subjection the will of others.

Fiat. — Or irresistible will.

Lordship.—Or supremacy and the luminous radiance of celestials.

Maricha was already master of all these, except the three last. He was in appearance a Panjara or Cage, i.e., a mere skeleton, in food a Wayubhaksha, or Winder, in power a Khe-chara, or Sky-goer. With all his eminent qualities he was timid and scrupulous in religious matters, and his better judgment often yielded to his spiritual fears. Thus, when Ravan first resolved to carry off Sita, he visited Maricha, and asked him to assume the form of a beautiful deer, and lure Rama and Lakshmana far from the hermitage [Page 143] where she abode. He at first refused, but on Ravan threatening to kill him, he complied, and thus became the accomplice of his crime; not, however, from the earthly fear of death, but upon this somewhat selfish calculation of spiritual profit and loss.

“If, assuming the shape of a golden deer, I am shot by an arrow from the bow of the divine Rama I shall attain instant emancipation; shall transcend for ever this sea of phenomenal illusion, and never again return to the wretched sphere of birth and death. If, on the other hand, I meet death at the sinful hands of this Titan, my future comings and goings, my births and deaths into and out of this illusive world, may be infinite. I can never hope for escape from the ocean of Maya”.

He, according, obeyed the behests of the Titan; and, becoming a deer [Page 144] before Rama and Lakshmana, lured them far from the bower which sheltered Sita, and thus became an accessory in carrying her off.

The Kamatur Rakshas knew both the thaumaturgic powers and the timorous character of the Rishi. He endeavoured, at first, to prevail upon him, by the most respectful entreaties, and every blandishment of which he was master, to grant him the Mohan Astra or Gandharva's power of fascination. The good Rishi, however, knowing to what evil purposes this power could be abused, especially in Titanic hands, was deaf alike to his entreaties, his flatteries, and his caresses. The Kamatur Rakshas saw there was no hope but from his religious scruples. He ordered the Buddhist friar before mentioned, who was in constant attendance upon him, to assemble in a green [Page 145] enclosure in front of the Rishi's hermitage, the whole of his splendid menagerie.

FIRST came the wilder tribe — the black boars, fresh from the jungle, and still half wild — whetting their tusks against the trees; the large black-coated bears from the hills, muzzled and whining; royal tigers,

spotted chitas, small black lions from Kattiwar, hyenas and large red wolves; all chained and guarded.

Next came the gentler races — the elephants, with their majestic tread, blowing clouds of fine dust from their trunks over their backs, to drive away the insects; the leisurely, long-striding camels, with their noiseless footsteps, and their heads, expressive at once of weary endurance, and an inclination towards revenge; graceful, slender coursers from the Yavan lands, beyond [Page 146] the seas; others of smaller size and still slenderer make, with silken skins, and beautifully spotted, from the regions of Achin; little horses from Nepaul, not larger than a shepherd's dog; square barrel-built ponies from Pegu; stout tunnucs from the Western Ghauts; vicious tatoos, red, grey and piebald, from the Dakshina; the homely cows, the friends of man, with their moist noses and odoriferous breath; the heavy, lazy, slate-blue, mud-loving buffaloes, with their long, low, protruded heads, wide-spreading horns, and wild-looking eyes; the nilgays, or, as the name implies, blue cows — half-cow, half-deer; the sambhars, or Indian elks; crowds of speckled deer — some varieties with boar's tusks; white or spotted kids, with pendants under their throats like the drops of an earring, making impossible jumps sideways; [Page 147] brown mungoses with their bushy tails, enemies of the serpent race; jambuks, shrigals, jackals, vranjari, paria, and other varieties of dogs; flying squirrels, and black monkeys with white faces, from the sandal-wood mountains of Malabar; grey bonkas and black chapas from one only spot in the Isle of Palms; and striped squirrels, called CHANIS, that love to sport on the banyan-tree.

With these flocked many varieties of birds — screaming cranes and herons; tall, stalking, stupid adjutants; white paddy birds, contemplating the growing rice crops as if they were intent on making a Jamabandi, or revenue settlement; high-crested cockatoos, screaming like angry old women; peacocks trumpeting and waving their trains of green and gold to the rumble of the thunder-clouds; speckled guinea fowls, with white and scarlet tippets, ever [Page 148] pursuing each other, singly or in groups; turtle doves, with their low ringing co-ôo, bringing reminiscences of solitude and far-away valleys; screeching parrots, with blue or crimson rings round their green or greyish necks and lories, with every colour of the rainbow — of all the feathered race the most splendid in the hues of their plumage, and of all the most affectionate; fitly selected, therefore, to carry Kandarpa, the deity of love.

When Maricha beheld this splendid collection of animals and birds, he imagined the Kamatur Rakshas designed to make a last trial of his virtue, by-offering it to him as a propitiatory gift, and steeled himself, accordingly, for further resistance. No sooner, however, had all the animals entered the enclosure, than the Rakshas closed the gate; and

taking his bow in his hands, and [Page 149] emptying out upon the ground before him all the arrows in his two quivers (for the warriors of ancient Ind carried generally two, one behind each shoulder), he threatened Maricha, that, unless he delivered to him the Mohan Astra, he would instantly commence slaughtering all the creatures before him, and the guilt of their blood would lie upon his, the Rishi's head. This blow, unexpected as it was terrible, was irresistible to the humane and scrupulous Rishi. He laid his hand beseechingly on the arm of the Kamatur Rakshas, entreated him to forbear his bloody purpose, and yielded to a request thus cruelly enforced; stipulating only for a promise, that he would never employ the Astra for the destruction of life, the subversion of right, or the injury of innocence: this he gave without hesitation. The animals and birds were [Page 150] then sent back to the park of the Kamatur Rakshas, under the care of the Buddhist friar, who had been as much frightened as Maricha; and the Rishi, leading the Rakshas into a deep woody recess at the back of his hermitage, began delivering to him, with all solemnity of form, the coveted Mohan Astra.

First he taught him the TANTRA, the magical formula of ACT; this was twofold. The first branch consisted in throwing some leaves of the ASCLEPIAS GIGANTEA on a chafing-dish filled with live embers, till the fumes rose in a white cloud above their heads. The second, in pouring from a small vial some "Sankalp-odaka" — i.e., AQUA MIRABILIS, or water of magical volition — with which the thaumaturgic operator must sprinkle both himself and the party to be fascinated. [Page 151]

Next he delivered to him the MANTRA, or magical formula of WORD; in other words, the incantation or spell.

Telling the Kamatur Rakshas to repeat after him carefully, the Rishi turned with his face to the east, and slowly pronounced

The Mantra, or Spell of the Mohan Astra.

Hram ! Hrârñ ! Hrim ! Hraum !
 Kling !
 Yusmabhihi Mohanam bhavatu!
 Glaum !
 San-Mohanam bhavatu!
 Spheng !
 Pari-Mohanam bhavatu;
 Sphing !

Kshrang! kshrang! kshring ! kshrung !
 Kshreng! kshraing ! kshrong ! kshraung !

Svaha ?

EI ! PHHPHJ !

Phat!

Of this formidable incantation, the third, fifth, and seventh lines contained the command, “Be ye fascinated”, varied slightly at each repetition. The [Page 152] short syllables in M and NG, were irresistible adjurations to the Devatas, or Astric powers invoked. But the “Kila”, or “bolt”, of the spell, which clenched it, and upon which its whole force depended, was the difficult and mysterious formula in black letter; and, while all the rest might be uttered mentally, this must be pronounced aloud.

The Kamatur Rakshas succeeded very well in pronouncing all the rest; but when he came to the “BOLT”, he could not manage it at all, declaring emphatically to Maricha, that nothing but a sneezing camel could utter such a sound. Maricha was nonplussed for a moment; but, reflecting a little, he went to a bottle-bird's nest that hung from a tree adjoining the hermitage, and took out of it a little crystal casket called “Gogalgai”, containing [Page 153] grains of a light, silvery powder, varying in bulk from the size of a cummin seed to that of a marble; this was “Kalabhasma”, or magical Time-powder. It was composed of an equal quantity of condensed consciousness and duration, and its effect, when exploded, was to expand in time, and occupy as large a portion thereof as was originally condensed in the grain; so that the act, word, or thought, proceeding when the explosion took place, though really occupying only a minute, seemed to him under whose nose the Time-powder was exploded, to endure a whole day, month, or year — nay, a whole lifetime, century, or age, according to the mass of the powder exploded. Maricha, putting a cat's-eye ring on his finger, threw one of the smallest grains upon the chafing-dish in front of the Kamatur Rakshas, at the same [Page 154] moment pouring from his Arghya, or ablution-vase, some water upon his bare head. The cat's-eye ring prevented the Rishi himself from being affected by the explosion, which was perfectly noiseless; but the effect upon the Rakshas was, to make him experience a three day's drenching of rain, which brought on a severe cold in the head, and set him sneezing violently, in the course of which he came to pronounce the important “EI-PHNPHJ” with perfect ease, and thus became master of the Mantra, and consequently of the Mohan Astra. He now took leave of Maricha in high spirits; but, before doing so, took an opportunity, while the Rishi's back was turned for a moment, to dip his fingers into the crystal casket, and purloin one of the largest grains of Time-powder it contained. As, however, no evil act ever [Page 155] goes without retribution in the long run, he forgot all about the cat's-eye ring, which

was necessary to the safe use of the magical powder; and thus his ungrateful theft, though proceeding only from his predominant love of fun, was eventually punished.

As soon as he got home, he made instant preparations for a grand entertainment, to which he invited Ravan, his brother, Bibhishana, and all the grandees of the Titan court; and for this feast he caused to be slaughtered many of those very animals and birds whom the Rishi vainly imagined to have saved by conceding the Mohan Astra. So rarely does weak compliance, even with a good purpose, produce the intended result! As soon as the banquet had been concluded, and wine began to unlock the tongues of the assembly, and inspire each guest [Page 156] with a desire of telling some tale in which he himself was, of course, the hero, — the Kamatur Rakshas, who had his Buddhist friar in attendance behind him, with the chafing-dish, Asclepias leaves, and a vial of the Sankalp-odaka, or aqua mirabilis, all in readiness, took the opportunity of a break in the general conversation; and, fixing a steady eye, full of wicked meaning, upon Ravan, began, as it were, quite carelessly: “That reminds me, by the way, of what once happened to me in the time of my uncle, Sarva-Varta. I remember Amuk coming up one day into the eastern sky chambers, and saying to Tamuk” — the moment these fatal names were heard, a look of meaning passed round the circle of guests; and Ravan, catching the eyes of the principal chiefs — as in modern days the lady of the house telegraphs [Page 157] her fair guests, when about to rise and retire — got up from the seat of honour, his example being followed by all present, and said, with grave courtesy, “Farewell, brave Kamatur — it is now late, and we all need rest; for there will be hard work with Hanuman and his monkeys tomorrow”.

Before the King had finished these words, the Kamatur had mentally pronounced all the incantation but the “BOLT” : the white cloud of the asclepias leaf was curling over their heads; and the Kamatur, signalling to his friar to pour out the aqua mirabilis, sprinkled himself and the assembled guests, and finally uttered aloud the formidable “EI-PHNPHJ !” Ravan and his friends thought the Kamatur had merely got a fit of sneezing, and were going off under cover of the lucky diversion, as they thought it. But they were [Page 158] soon undeceived. From the moment that potent word was uttered, the spell took effect. None of them could stir hand, foot, or tongue. They could not even resume their seats; but each was transfixed and compelled to remain, like a silent statue, in the very attitude in which he had been surprised; while the Kamatur, glorying in this attainment of his long-deferred revenge, drew his seat coolly, so as to face them all at his ease, and then fixing his glittering eye upon them — like that other “Ancient Mariner” — began the off-told tale of Amuk and Tamuk; and went on with a cruel deliberation, mocking the moral torture they were enduring, and prolonging their misery by

occasional pauses. When he saw their rigid attention begin to slacken, or any symptom of the force of the spell wearing out, he renewed its force [Page 159] by casting fresh leaves upon the chafing-dish, and sprinkling the assembly anew with the miraculous water. Thus kept he them enchained till sunrise; and in addition to the physical pain of being retained so long in one attitude, their ears and minds were pounded incessantly through that long and woeful night, by the ever-recurring names of Amuk and Tamuk — what they thought, and said, and did to each other. This purgatory was sufficient. He did not, on this occasion, resort to the Time-powder, not wishing to exhaust all his resources at once. But when the sun was just visible above the eastern hills, casting a last handful of leaves on the chafing-dish, and sprinkling them, for the last time, with the Sankalpodaka, so as to fix them there some time longer, he withdrew, with his friar, from the banquet-hall to his own private apartments. [Page 160]

Resentment was for some days the predominant feeling on the part of the Titans, who found themselves released about an hour after sunrise, and crawled home, half-dead with fatigue, and stupified with the torturing iteration of Amuk and Tamuk. After a few days' sore feeling, however, they came to view the whole matter in its true light, as a very capital and original piece of fun; and became fonder than ever of the eccentric planner of such a truly Titanic joke.

It was agreed, at the same time, among all, to keep the events of that night, and the power of the Kamatur, a profound secret.

All who had suffered on that night listened ever after with the most perfect good breeding, and the most patient good-nature, to the Kamatur's eternal and oft-repeated tales. As sure, however, [Page 161] as he tried them upon parties not in the secret, he was compelled to have recourse to the Mohan Astra; and every fresh exercise of this power was a new source of diversion to the Court.

Such was the eccentric Kamatur Rakshas, in whose castle on the seashore Ravan found himself in his dream, when he recovered from the insensibility produced by drinking the Amrita.

PART - 4 -

ANANTA RISHI COMMENCES THE SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM — A HINDU SAGE'S VIEWS OF HUMAN LIFE — GLIMPSES OF VEDANTIC PHILOSOPHY

THE morning following the night on which Ravan had concluded the narration of his dream, rose with that full flush of orient splendour which is only [Page 162] to be witnessed in the East; where the magnificence and grateful coolness of the hours of sunrise and sunset, and the pearly lustre of the clear moonlight nights, come, in accordance with that remarkable principle of compensation which pervades all the arrangements of the universe, to atone for the dazzling glare, the oppressive heat, and the listless monotony of the tropical day.

Long before the first glimmer of the dawn reddened the tops of the eastern hills, or flung a glow upon the waters, the symptoms of the coming day began to show themselves. The flying foxes, or supposed vampire bats, that had been out all night preying upon the ripening custard-apples and other fruit in the orchards round the city, or stealing the toddy or palm wine from the gourd-vessels in which it was extracted, [Page 163] as by so many cupping-glasses, from the incised tops of the palm-trees, now flocked screeching home to the old banyan and other trees that surrounded the tanks and temples of Lanka; and hanging themselves up in the branches, by the hooks attached to the extremity of their leathern wings, with their heads downward, gave themselves up to an unmolested sleep for the day.

The long thin earthworms, leaving their holes, could be seen by the early traveller crossing all the roads and bypaths outside the city, all laboriously winding along in one direction, as if performing some painful penance, renewed daily before the dawn.

Flocks of pigeons, waking up from their slumber, covered the tops of the houses and temples, or winged their flight to the gardens.

Here and there, upon the roof of [Page 164] house or temple, a peacock might be seen stalking in his gorgeous beauty, or heard screaming from his metallic throat.

The water-carriers, with their bell-collared bullocks, trudged hastily through the dusky streets, anxious to fill their water-skins at the tanks and fountains of the city ere the sun rose.

The Titan youth galloped out, or drove their war-chariots to the plains outside the city wall, to exercise their steeds, or practise archery; while at every well and tank throughout and round the city were gathered crowds of early women, youthful and aged, withering and blooming, come to fill their pitchers; and mixed with them crowds of Brahmins, young and old, performing their ablutions without taking off the garments that cinctured their waists and descended to their [Page 165] ankles, and intent on contemplation; for, as already remarked, the Titanic court attracted to its

neighbourhood crowds of priests, and devotees, and holy men, anxious, doubtless, to convert such eminent sinners.

The outposts of the two armies were now near each other; and as the sun became visible above the hills, deep rolls of the nagara drum, and a simultaneous burst of martial music rose from either camp to greet its appearance; and this was soon followed by the whole auxiliary army of monkeys, who lay encamped next to the Titan forces, singing the Bhupali, or morning hymn, in honour of Rama, and their own enterprising leader, Hanuman.

THE CHORUS OF MONKEYS SINGING THE BHUPALI, OR MATIN HYMN,
TO KAMA.

Rama in his whole body of an azure hue !
Yellow ornaments of gold thereon ! [Page 166]
There the sparkling of many gems !
There jewels beautifully show !

A yellow tiara cresting a yellow crown:
Yellow saffron on his forehead streaked.
The splendour of yellow earrings;
Yellow wreaths of wild flowers round his neck.

A garment of yellow silk around his loins:
A yellow bangle on his ankle — worn as a badge of excellence:
The clash of yellow bells therefrom depending:
Yellow armlets tinkle.

A yellow medal beautifies his arm.
A yellow hero's bracelet on his wrist.
Wearing yellow signet rings;
A yellow bow and arrows in his hand.

A yellow pavilion wide outspread;
Therein a yellow throne.
Rama, Sita, Lakshmana seated thereupon;
Dasa their servant sings their attributes.

[Dasa, which signifies slave or devoted worshipper, is also the name of the author. The yellow complexion of this hymn has probably a mystic, as well as pictorial, sense for Dnyanadeva, in describing the successive phases of, or stages of transit to, the beatific vision of spirit, makes the last and central one yellow, thus —
“Red, white, grey, blue, the colour .
Yellow saffron in the midst”]

This note of defiance was answered by the Rakshas warriors singing, in [Page 167] return, the Bhupali, or matin hymn in honour of Krishna, the eighth and greatest Avatar, who had not yet appeared on earth.

Since the two armies had come into this close vicinity, the Titan chiefs had from policy studied to imitate all the discipline, the regular ordinances, and the religious observances of the hostile army, which brought with it to the south of the peninsula all the institutions of the Aryan or Brahminical civilisation, and introduced them even among the auxiliary army of monkeys whom Sugriva, the king of Monkeydom, and Hanuman, his prime minister, led on to the assistance of Rama. [In these fighting, debating, and devout monkeys, we see probably the wild aboriginal tribes of Southern India, whom Rama in his march southward from Oude encountered, won over to [Page 168] a state of semi-civilisation, attached to his person, and engaged in his aid in his expedition against Ravan, the giant monarch of Lanka, or Ceylon. Their descendants may still be seen in the Bheels, Colis, and other hill-tribes, who possess still the wild habits and agility of their monkey ancestors.]

But as all the songs and hymns in the invading force were connected with praise and worship of Rama as the seventh Avatar of Vishnu, the wily counsellors of Ravan advised him at to counteract the effect of this religious enthusiasm in favour of Rama, and to disparage him in the eyes of the Titans, if not of his own troops, by celebrating with constant and ostentatious honours and worship that greater Avatar, Krishna, who was to succeed Rama, and surpass him by the totality of his divinity. [Page 169]

The result was, that while the Titans were fighting against one manifestation of Vishnu, they were singing hymns in honour of the other. And never was Krishna worshipped with so much ardour by devout men, while upon earth, as he was, before he was born, by this generation of Titans [naturally the enemies of all the celestials], from pure enmity to Rama,

Hatred, or rather political rivalry, hath blinded their intellects, and they perceived not that Rama and Krishna — and Hari, and Narhari, and Vamana — are all but different names of the one eternal Vishnu, the pervading and immanent spirit, who assumes many forms on earth for the sake of his sincere worshippers, the extirpation of evil and Titanic oppression, the maintenance of virtue and religion, and the protection of cows and Brahmins, [Page 170] from the eternal Bhagavata, and from Maricha and his clairvoyant disciples, who could look with clearness into futurity, and transport themselves at pleasure into any age — and in this instance made it their special business to instruct them — they knew all the predestined events of Krishna's life, were familiar with all his words

to his beloved friend and disciple Arjuna; and with the songs and hymns that in future ages should be sung in his praise by his young playfellows the Gopals, or herdsmen; by the enamoured Gopis, or herdswomen of Gokula, and by pious men through all succeeding time.

From these they selected, on this occasion, the following Bhupali, or matin hymn, which his foster-mother Yashoda in after ages sung to his cradle, and which to this day is often sung by the sari-clad maidens and matrons of [Page 171] Hindustan as their morning tribute of devotion, after they have darkened their eyelashes with powder of antimony, and adorned their hair with a circlet of white jasmine flowers, or pale yellow blossoms from the beautiful and fragrant champa: —

THE CHORUS OF TITANS SING THE BHUPALI, OR MATIN HYMN, TO
KRISHNA.

Arise! arise! dear wearer of the wild-flower garland,
Fondle thy mother's cheek.
The sun has risen above the orient hills,
The dark night has ended.

- 1 -

The cows for their calves are lowing;
The birds in the trees are pouring forth their notes.
At the door thy playfellows stand waiting,
They call for thee! oh, Yadu Raja!
Arise! arise ! dear wearer, etc.

-2-

Awake thou whose colour is the dark purple of the thunder-cloud, [Page
172]
My beloved, the delight of my soul!
Haste and look at Balirama [thy brother],
Thou abode of the virtues ! thou brother of the meek!
Arise! arise ! dear wearer, &c.

- 3-

Arise quickly, ray darling,
Full of perfections ! my dark-blue petling Kanha !
Haste to drink the milk from my bosom,
And bestow on me thy kisses.
Arise! arise ! dear wearer, etc.

- 4 -

Hearing his own mother's voice,
Shri Hari [Krishna] soon awoke;
He began to suck the breast,
And all were filled with joy.
Arise ! arise I dear wearer, &c.

- 5 -

They beheld his form full of perfection, and beautiful,
They saw his brother, Balirama near;
Yashoda's fortune blossomed forth,
Beholding her son the Lord of Life.
Arise ! arise ! dear wearer, etc. [Page 173]

[In this piece we have many phrases which are constantly applied to Krishna, some in a double sense. Thus Vanamali, the wearer of the forest garland; Megha Shama, the thunder-cloud, dark-blue in colour. Yadu Raja, the Yadu King, or chief of the tribe of that name; and Kanha, or Kanhoba, the youth, are common substitutes for his own name. The term Atmarama, soul-delighter, or soul of the soul, employed in the second line of stanza ii, besides its ostensible, has a mystic sense, which, is here meant to be insinuated under the affectionate utterances of Yashoda; soul of my soul is in this sense equivalent to "soul of the universe which lives and moves in my own soul. The phrase Saguna also, rendered "Full of Perfection" in stanzas 3 and 5, has a double mystic sense — viz , the deity manifested with all perfections, or attributes, as contradistinguished from that ultimate and inaccessible depth of divine being, in which there is neither form, passion nor attribute [in this latter point curiously agreeing with some of the European mystics treated of in the writings of Bossuet]: and which is accordingly distinguished as nirakara, without form, nirguna, without property or attribute; and nirvikara, without change or passion. The term used in the last stanza to signify Lord of Life, Jivana, Suta, also indicates, by an equivocal frequent in these lyrics, the name of the author]

As the last echo of this matin hymn died away, a loud rustle was heard in the wood skirting the Rakshas outposts, and a stir was perceived among the branches. The Rakshas sentinel imagining it was an ambushade of the monkeys, fired an arrow into the thicket; but to his astonishment and terror, it came back, and glanced close to his cheek. Thinking it must be a powerful Yaksha, or treasure-guarding [Page 174] goblin that inhabited the wood, the sentinel threw down his bow, and was about to fly, when a voice called out, "It is only Vayu, the king's messenger". Ravan has subdued and enslaved all the elemental deities,

and compelled them to serve as domestic servants in his establishment. Thus Agni, or Fire, was his cook; Varuna, the Water Deity, his dhobi, or washerman; and this Vayu, or Wind, he made a sort of hamaul. In the morning he was compelled to sweep the floors and brush the furniture of the palace with invisible brooms and brushes; and all the day afterwards he either wheeled about his Vimana, or air-chariot, or pulled an invisible punka, or large Indian fan, to cool him, or ran on errands and messages through his kingdom and to his army. Speculation was immediately at work as to the destination [Page 175] or object of Vayu's present mission; and the Titan warriors addressed him in a song which Madhavi Pankaja had composed, and which was well known and often chanted in camp,

THE RAKSHAS WARRIORS' INVOCATION OF VAYU.

Nought stirreth around,
 Yet, hark! to that sound;
 "Swoo-oo" and "Ai-yu !"
 Oh, bodiless Vayu!
 Pause and come hither,
 And whisper us whither
 Thou speedest along !
 Invisible wending,
 The heather-tops bending,
 Before us thou sweepest,
 Behind us thou creepest;
 By our ears rushing,
 O'er our cheeks brushing;
 Gliding by gholefully,
 Murmuring dolefully,
 Wailing Aeolefully,
 Dirges of song.
 With "Swoo-oo" and "Ai-yu !"
 Oh! bodiless Vayu,
 Pause and come hither,
 And whisper us whither
 Thou speedest along ? [Page 176]

THE VOICE OF VAYU.

Warriors, stop me not; I flee
 On the Rakshas King's behest
 Thither in the glowing west,
 Where the eight-fold banyan tree,
 Girt with broad and green banana,
 Forms a sacred hermitage;

Thence to bring the holy sage,
Ananta Rishi Yajamana.

Following the Aeolian murmurs of Vayu, we arrive at the hermitage called Ashta Vati, or "The Eight Banyan Trees". In point of fact there was but one parent tree; but seven of the suckers, which it had originally thrown down to take fresh root in the earth, had now grown into massive trunks, sweeping in an irregular octagon round the central stem, and joined to it and to each other by picturesque arches, from each of which again descended fresh slender shoots towards the ground, which some had already penetrated, and others only [Page 177] approached, the rudiments of a future still more massive and extended arcade of foliage. The descending suckers fell so thick as to form almost a continuous curtain between the arches, and to shelter the centre of the retreat; and with the aid of one or two thick groups of broad-leaved plantain trees judiciously planted, and a mass of green creepers dotted with large trumpet-shaped white, or small and delicate scarlet and violet flowers, the sanctuary of the Rishi was complete and impenetrable to the eye. It stood on a long high ridge of ground, and occupied nearly the whole breadth between two loose stone-walls enclosing cottages on either side, inhabited by his friends, admirers, and disciples. In front, descending by a gradual slope, spread a vast plain, green with the growing rice-crops, dotted here [Page 178] and there with solitary clumps of mango-trees of a century's growth, and terminating in groups, and at last in a dense grove, of feathered palm.

Behind, the ground descended abruptly into a still lower plain of less extent, breaking down at no great interval into a deep valley, and in the distance, through one of the more open arches of the banyan-tree, you could see the blue Antapa mountains, and glimpses of the sea, flowing in to fill up the recesses of its dentated base. Upon the plain between the hermitage and the mountain, an army had once been encamped, and a great battle had been fought in the valley beyond. Even now, after nightfall, spectre battalions were sometimes seen to march along the ground; and from the direction of the valley and the sides of the mountain a strange knocking was often [Page 179] heard at midnight, which some alleged was caused by the fishermen in the creeks repairing their boats, but others maintained to proceed from the valley where the remains of the slain warriors reposed.

The whole circuit of the hermitage resounded with the songs and various cries of many species of birds, the larger of whom walked boldly up to the very entrance, while the smaller built their nests in the leafier branches of the eight banyan-trees, and twittered all day overhead. A fat cow lay lazily chewing the cud on one side of the hermitage; a small white mare grazed quietly in front; a tame gazelle, with a garland of flowers round its

neck, galloped playfully about. A white cockatoo, a blue and scarlet lori, and two green parrots, climbed up the leafy columns and screamed by [Page 180] turns. In this retreat dwelt the Rishi Ananta, surnamed Yajamana, or as the court ladies softened it, Ezamana, i.e., the sacrificer, from his long devotion to the solemn offerings and stately ceremonials of religion. He was an intimate friend of the Rishi Maricha, and yet totally different from him: different in the taste which guided his choice of a retreat, in personal appearance, and in tone of mind.

The hermitage of Maricha was in the centre of a dense forest, corresponding strictly to the injunctions given by Krishna to Arjuna regarding

THE YOGI'S APPROPRIATE RETREAT

A place in which Sadhakas, or practisers of particular discipline for attaining spiritual and thaumaturgic perfection, have been in the habit of dwelling; but where the footfall of other men is never heard. Where trees sweet as amrita, or immortal [Page 181] nectar, to the very roots, crowd thickly together, ever bearing fruit. Where, at every footstep, are waters of surpassing clearness, even without the autumnal season; where springs abounding are easy to be found. Where the broken sunshine falls at intervals, and yet which is cool with shade; where the wind, scarcely moving, softly blows in intermitting airs. Devoid in general of sound; so thick that the beasts of prey penetrate it not; no parrot, no humble bee is there (to disturb with its scream or hum). Close to the water may dwell swans and a few flamingoes; the kokila also, or black cuckoo, may alight occasionally there. Peacocks should not abide there constantly but should a few come and go at intervals, let them, I forbid them not.

Thou art without fail, oh ! son of Pandu, to seek out and find such a place; there let thy profoundly embowered hermitage be, or oratory dedicated to Shiva.

Maricha again was a skeleton: his features intersected with millions of needle-like wrinkles; his shrivelled skin smeared with ashes; his beard reached down to his girdle; his head was covered with a pyramid of coiled [Page 182] up, grizzled, sun-scorched hair; and his garments consisted of shreds of dingy, tattered bark. Ananta, on the contrary, though advanced in years, had a fresh and almost roseate look. His features, naturally handsome, wore the impress of a loving as well as a reverential nature, and the holy calm of a spirit at peace crowned their blended expression of dignity and sweetness. His beard and head were close shaven: and round the latter were wound with graceful negligence two or three folds of unbleached cloth, the end of which hung down on one side like a veil; a streak of fresh sandal unguent marked his forehead horizontally; and

his garments were of a snowy whiteness, and even fine in their texture. Ananta differed considerably from his friend Maricha in his spiritual exercises. Like him, he was a follower of the [Page 183] ascetic and contemplative life; but the pursuit of the Siddhis, or miraculous faculties, though he did not absolutely condemn it in others, he utterly avoided himself, pronouncing it a road beset with dangers, and often leading to the profoundest darkness. But even in the details of the ascetic and contemplative paths, he was distinguished from his fellow Rishi. As far as the discipline of Vairagya, or utter conquest over and freedom from passion, desire, and self-interest of every kind, he went fully along with him; and had come to be absolutely devoid of self. In the doctrine of Tyaga, or renunciation of all things, he also coincided in the principle, but he applied it less to the letter, and more to the spirit and intention. Thus while Maricha scrupled on account of his vow of renunciation to wear any clothing [Page 184] but woven bark, and even renounced all action itself, Ananta wore fine and clean cotton garments, without being attached to or taking any pride in them; and took his part in useful action without looking to a reward; holding with the Gita, sect, xviii., that

“He is properly a Tyagi who is a forsaker of the fruit of action”.

The practice of Tapa, or severe penitential austerities, was carried to excess by Maricha, who had stood on his head for a series of years; for a similar period upon one leg; hung suspended by one toe from a tree, with his head down, for one decade; for another, stood gazing on the sun, so motionless that, in the rainy season, the creeping plants grew up around him, the white ants constructed their clay galleries all over his body, and the birds, seeing in him no longer any [Page 185] duality, ceased to fear him, and at last perched freely upon his head, and built their nests among the foliage with which he was entwined. But the most extraordinary penance he underwent was carrying for forty years on one hand, a flower-pot, containing a Tulsi, or basil plant, sacred to Vishnu. His nails not being cut, grew out at last like the claws of a vulture, piercing the flower-pot, and curling back till they grew into his flesh; so as to lock the hand, the plant, and the flowerpot together. While undergoing this singular penance, he obtained the name of Tulsi Bava, or the Holy Father Basil, and upon him the sarcastic Water-lily composed the following song; —

TULSI BAVA —THE MAN TREE.

For forty long years, in yon ruinous hut
 Dwells a withered ascetic, whose arm is shrunk,
 And devotees flock, to the sacred Muth, [Page 186]
 To kiss the feet of the blossoming monk.

His eyes with weeping are red and ferrety;
 His sun-scorched hair all matted and caroty;
 His body is smeared with a pale yellow crust
 Of funeral ashes and charnel dust:
 He lives upon leaves, and berries and haws,
 And doses with opium, his spirit to calm;
 His nails are grown like a vulture's claws,
 And, inward curling, have pierced his palm;
 On which he supporteth, by night and by day,
 O torment of wonder ! — for ever, for ever,
 Sleeping or waking, a flower-pot of clay,
 Which he must, living, relinquish never.
 Within the red flower-pot a Tulsi is seen,
 A blossoming basil, that's sacred and green;
 Twixt the growth of his claws and the force of his vow,
 The hand, the vase, and the plant are now
 So locked together, 'tis hard to scan
 'Twixt the talking shrub and the sprouting man.
 If he walk, you behold a moving bower;
 If he speak, 'tis the awful voice of a tree;
 In springtime you meet with a man in flower,
 And wondering ask, what can it be ?
 For forty long years, this penance he's borne,
 Through autumn's rain and through summer's sun,
 In age and in feebleness — weary and worn,
 And still must bear, till his race is run.
 Some live on the summit of pinnacles high,
 Some hook themselves up, and swing over a fire,
 Some drop themselves into the Ganges and die, [Page 187]
 Some mount, all undaunted, the funeral pyre;
 But here, in this Cingalese land we see,
 Expiation is wrought on a different plan;
 The sinner grows holy by fettering a tree,
 And the innocent shrub is enchained for the man.

Ananta Rishi, though interiorly a man of mortified spirit, avoided all such
 excesses; for he considered them often to spring from spiritual pride, or
 fanatic zeal; and he followed the maxims of the Gita, which says, sect. vi.
 : —

“The Yogi, or he who energises himself to recollect and reunite his
 scattered self by internal contemplation, is more exalted than the
 Tapasvis, those zealots who harass themselves in performing penances”.

Even in the performance of Yoga, or the internal contemplation and self-
 union, he differed from Maricha. The latter, following his mystic,

thaumaturgic bent, was full of internal visions and revelations. Sometimes, according to the mystic school of Paithana, sitting cross-legged, meditating at midnight [Page 188] at the foot of a banyan-tree, with his two thumbs closing his ears, and his little fingers pressed upon his eyelids, he saw rolling before him gigantic fiery wheels, masses of serpent shapes, clusters of brilliant jewels, quadrats of pearls, lamps blazing without oil, a white haze melting away into a sea of glittering moonlight, a solitary fixed swan-like fiery eye of intense ruddy glare, and, at length, the splendour of an internal light more dazzling than the sun or the whole star-paved court of heaven. An internal, spontaneous, unproduced music [anahata] vibrated on his ear; and sometimes a sweet mouth, sometimes a majestic nose, sometimes a whole face of exquisite beseeching beauty, would rise out of a cloud before his inward gnostic eye, look into his soul, and advance to embrace him. [Page 189]

At other times, he followed the path laid down by the more ancient and profounder school of Alandi, and sought to attain, and sometimes deemed that he had attained, the condition of the illumined Yogi, as described by Krishna to his friend Arjuna, in the 6th Adhyaya of that most mystic of all mystic books, the Dnyaneshvari.

THE ILLUMINED.

When this path is beheld, then thirst and hunger are forgotten: night and day are undistinguished in this road.

Whether one would set out to the bloom of the East or come to the chambers of the West, without moving, oh ! holder of the bow ! is the travelling in this road?

In this path, to whatever place one would go, that town (or locality) one's own self becomes ! how shall I easily describe this ? Thou thyself shall experience it.

The ways of the tubular vessel (nerves) are broken; the nine-fold property of wind (nervous tether) departs: on which account the functions of the body no longer exist. [Page 190]

Then the moon and the sun, or that supposition which is so imagined, appear; but like the wind upon a lamp, in such manner as not to be laid hold of.

The bud of understanding is dissolved; the sense of smell no longer remains in the nostrils; but, together with the POWER, retires into the middle chamber. [This extraordinary power, who is termed elsewhere the “World Mother” — the “Casket of Supreme Spirit” — is technically called Kundalini, which may be rendered serpentine, or annular. Some things related of it would make one imagine it to be electricity personified.]

Then with a discharge from above, the reservoir of moon-fluid of immortality (contained in the brain), leaning over on one side, communicates into the mouth of the POWER.

Thereby the tubes (nerves) are filled with the fluid: it penetrates into all the members; and in every direction the vital breath dissolves there into.

As from the heated crucible all the wax flows out, and then it remains thoroughly filled with the molten metal poured in;

Even so, that lustre (of the immortal moon-fluid) has become actually moulded into the shape of the body: on the outside it is wrapped up in the folds of the skin.

As, wrapping himself up in a mantle of clouds, the sun for a while remains; and afterwards, casting it off, comes forth arrayed in light; [Page 191]

Even so, above is this dry shell of the skin, which, like the husk of grain, of itself falls off.

Afterwards, such is the splendour of the limbs, that one is perplexed whether it is a self-existing shaft of Cashmere porphyry, or shoots that have sprouted up from jewel seed:

Or a body moulded of tints caught from the glow of evening, or a pillar formed of the interior light:

A vase filled with liquid saffron; or a statue cast of divine thaumaturgic perfection molten down. To me beholding, it appears QUIETISM itself, personified with limbs:

As a painting of divine bliss; a sculptured form of the sovereign happiness; a grove of trees of joy, erectly standing:

A bud of golden champa; or a statue of ambrosia: or a many-sprinkled herbarium of fresh and tender green.

Or is it the disk of the moon, that, fed by the damps of autumn, has put forth luminous beams ? or is it the embodied presence of Light, that is sitting on yonder seat ?

Such becomes the body, what time the serpentine [or annular] POWER drinks the moon [fluid of immortality descending from the brain], then, oh! friend, Death dreads the shape of the body.

Then disappears old age, the knots of youth are cut to pieces, and THE LOST STATE OF CHILDHOOD REAPPEARS !

His age remains the same as before; but in other respects he exhibits the strength of [Page 192] childhood; the greatness of his fortitude is beyond comparison.

As the golden tree at the freshly-sprouting extremities of its branches puts forth jewel-buds daily new; even so, new and beautiful nails sprout forth (from his fingers and toes).

He gets other teeth also; but these shine beyond all measure beautiful, as rows of diamonds set on either side.

Like grains of tiny rubies, minute perhaps as atoms, so come forth over the whole body tips of downy hair.

The palms of the hands and soles of the feet become like red lotus flowers; the eyes grow inexpressibly clear.

As when, owing to the cramped state of its interior, the pearls can no longer be held in by the double shell, then the seam of the pearl oyster rim bursts open;

So, uncontainable within the clasp of the eyelids, the sight, expanding, seeks to go outward; it is the same, indeed, as before, but is now capable of embracing the heavens.

The body becomes of gold in lustre, but it has the lightness of the wind: for of water and of earth no portion is left.

Then he beholds the things beyond the sea, he hears the language of paradise, he perceives what is passing in the mind of the ant!

He taketh a turn with the wind; if he walk, his footsteps touch not the water; for such and such like conjunctures he attains many supernatural faculties. [Page 193]

Finally —

When the light of the POWER disappears, then the form of the body is lost — then he becomes hidden to the eyes of the world.

In other respects, indeed, just as before, he appears with the members of his body; but he is as one formed of the wind!

Or like the (delicate) core of the plantain tree, standing up divested of its mantle of outward leaves, or as a cloud from which limbs have sprouted out.

Such becomes his body; then he is called KHECHARA, or SKY-GOER; this step being attained is a wonder among people in the body

Behold the Sadhaka (the thaumaturgic saint) departeth; but the talk of his footsteps remains behind; there in various places invisibility and the other supernatural faculties become acquired.

Ananta, without condemning such visions, and the [Rosicrucian ?] pursuit after such a transfiguration and rejuvenescence without expressing disbelief, or daring to pronounce them to be hallucinations, simply declared that his own experience had furnished him with none such. Admitting the infinite possibilities of the spiritual world and the internal life, he looked with wonder [Page 194] and respect on Maricha, but contented himself with the humbler exercise of fixing the contemplations of his spirit on the infinite moral beauty and goodness of the divine nature, and endeavouring, by contemplation, to transform himself to some likeness of the eternal love.

Maricha, notwithstanding the natural timidity of his nature, came down from the mount of contemplation with a wild and terrible splendour on his brow, and a crazed, unearthly expression, which scared his fellow-men. Ananta, with a glow of sweetness and love, that encouraged and drew them towards him.

Thus Maricha Rishi was a scarecrow to all: the ladies of the court pronounced him an absolute fright, and the little children ran from him as from a goblin. Ananta Rishi, on the other [Page 195] hand — or, as he was familiarly termed, “dear Ezamana” — was a general favourite. Respected by the men, revered, trusted, and beloved by the women, he was absolutely idolised by the children, of whom he was intensely fond. He loved, indeed, every tree and flower; he felt a glad sympathy with all living creatures; but little children were his delight — and above all little

girls. Among these he had one especial favourite, named Ghanta Patali, or “Bell Trumpet Tower”, who was constantly about him. Ravan, on his return from his failure in the contest for the hand of King Janaka's [adopted] daughter Sita, who was won by Rama from all competitors by his breaking the bow of Shiva, which none of the others could even bend, found this little girl and her brother Ratnakara lying, apparently abandoned, [Page 196] among the beds of pink jhinga flowers that fringe the straits separating the island of Lanka from the main land, across which Rama and the monkeys afterwards built Rama's bridge. In the same neighbourhood may still be seen a well of fresh water, springing up in the very midst of the estuary, and covered at flood tides by the salt waves. Its site is marked by a crowd of red and white flags and streamers, indicating that a local water-goddess is there worshipped. It is called among the barbarous fishermen that inhabit that region Sita-Hrad, or “Sita's Well”: for a tradition prevails there, that Sita also was found in the neighbourhood, in one of the furrows among the same jhinga beds. For it is well known that Sita had no mother, and was not born in the ordinary way; but was found by her reputed parent [Page 197] Janaka in the furrow of a field or garden, and was thence named Sita, or Furrow-found, from Sit, a furrow.

What was no less singular, the little Ghanta Patali exhibited the most remarkable resemblance in her features and manner to Sita, which struck Ravan more forcibly every day, and attached him very strongly to the child. He handed over Ratnakara to Maricha for his education, and Ghanta Patali to the gentler Ananta; but the latter was often sent for, and was a good deal about the court; was made much of by the good Mandodari, whom she always called her “white mother”; though she was of a very deep shade of brown, approaching indeed to black; and was treated like a little sister by the affectionate Sulochana, to whom she clung like a second self. Her innocent, wild, joyous nature, and a certain innate [Page 198] delicacy and grace that attended every word and movement, made her the darling and delight of the whole court; and when Sita was made a captive in the Ashoka grove, all presents, and all communications of a kind and courteous intent, were sent to her through Ghanta Patali, who soon became so charmed by, and attached to, the beautiful stranger, whom she herself so greatly resembled, that the good Mandodari became almost jealous. Sita loved her in return, and often wiled away the sad hours of her captivity by conversing with the tender, sweet-faced little orphan girl; teaching her to embroider, to string garland flowers, and to sing to the saramandal, or Indian dulcimer. Such was the pupil of Ananta Rishi. At the moment of Vayu's arrival she was sitting up, very happy, on the roof of one of the [Page 199] cottages that lay beside the hermitage, watching with delight the process of re-roofing. A spotted cat was lying flat and obedient to her beck on a little wooden car beside her, and a white kid, with green ribbons round his neck, was

playfully butting against her shoulder. But her head was just then turned aside, and her attention directed to a tree, in which she had hung up the Rishi's vina, or lyre, to catch on its strings the sweet and wild vibrations of the wind, which almost maddened her with delight. Just at this moment it had begun to utter an unusually loud, screaming wail, which she had heard before, and which she knew announced the arrival of Vayu, or Wind, himself.

Concluding rightly from this, that the Rishi had been summoned to court, whither she always accompanied him, [Page 200] she descended hastily from her high eyry, and ran joyfully into the hermitage, followed by her two favourites, who came galloping after her.

The summons of the King delivered, the Rishi, accompanied by Ghanta Patali, took his seat in the Vimana, or aerial chariot, which gods, demi-gods, and divine sages always have in attendance. That of Ananta was in shape like a large shell of the paper nautilus, resembling an antique barge rather than the chariots used for war. It was composed entirely of the fragrant grass called dkarba, or kas-kas, neatly plaited together, bound by fillets of red wool, and spangled all over with the green and glittering wings of the Deccan beetle and large firefly, which sparkled like emeralds against the pale dull yellow of the grass; and all round it was edged with a fringe formed of [Page 201] the ends of peacocks' feathers, giving it at once richness and buoyancy.

As soon as they were seated, the invisible Vayu recommenced his loud, humming murmur. The car rose in the air lightly; the tops of the trees bent before it; and after a short and pleasant excursion through the air, they alighted at the palace of Ravan. A group of female slaves was in attendance to receive Ghanta Patali, and carry her off to the chamber of Mandodari. Ananta was greeted respectfully by a crowd of learned and religious men, and conducted immediately to the council-chamber, where he found the Rishis in deep consultation, and exchanging troubled glances with each other. The imperious injunction of the Titan to interpret the dream had thrown them all into consternation, for all agreed that it foreshadowed great [Page 202] disaster, which it might be perilous to communicate. The majority considered that it foreboded no less than the death of Ravan, and the fall of Lanka. Maricha, however, who sat on the ground, throwing ever and anon a handful of cowrie shells on the pavement, and observing carefully the number that fell with the mouths upward, and the number in which the mouths were down, as well as the order which they assumed in their fall, shook his head mysteriously, and asserted that, although these disasters were certainly written in the future, they did not form, but preceded, the real interpretation; that the precise misfortunes indicated in the dream related to a far future state of existence, in which Ravan would probably

not believe. The council of sages was not only divided on this point, but felt that, whichever [Page 203] interpretation they should agree to adopt, it would be equally hazardous to deliver it boldly to the Titan, since each must point, directly or indirectly, to his own destruction. In this dilemma they sought counsel of Ananta.

“Sages”, replied Ananta, with modesty, after listening patiently to their appeal, “since the recital of the dream by the King, I have meditated profoundly upon its signification; and seeking, according to my wont, not for the occasional individual application of its symbols, but for their universal and eternal meaning, I have found revealed in this singular dream a series of the profoundest spiritual truths, with an admirable application to Ravan's present position, which, if they but penetrate his heart, may lead him at once to send back Sita, and thus terminate this unhappy war, and preserve his life [Page 204] and kingdom. I will, if ye command me, encounter, and perhaps turn aside, the first rough edge of his violent temper, by this allegorical interpretation. If he yield to the lessons to be drawn from it, it is well; if not, it will at least gain time, and allow you adequate leisure to decide, after further consultation with the venerable Maricha upon the precise shaping and limits of the prophetic interpretation, and to prepare for its prudential utterance through his lips”.

This proposal of Ananta Rishi was received with delight. It might render all further reply from them unnecessary: at all events, it averted the present danger, and gave time; and this, in the temper of the Rakshas monarch, was a great point.

The circle was accordingly arranged for the solemn delivery of the sage's [Page 205] utterance, as at the Kirtanas, or usual religious oratorios, where the preachers, entitled Haridasas or Ramadasas, according as they may be devoted more especially to Krishna (Hari), or to Rama, blend moral and religious instruction with music, lyric poetry, mythical narrative, and a dash, now and then, of proverbial wisdom, or amusing anecdote.

The Rishis stood up opposite the throne in a wide semi-circle, in the centre of which, but a little in advance, stood Ananta and Maricha, as the chief spokesmen, wearing each a long garland of flowers round his neck. A little behind the two Rishis, forming a small semi-circle in rear of the larger one, stood the musical chorus, consisting of one player of the vina, or Indian lyre, to pitch the key (which instrument the speakers also, for form sake, carried on [Page 206] their left arms); two players of the mridang, or small mellow drum; and four youths carrying in their hands two little convex cymbals, or rather shallow cups of silver called tala, bound together by a long string, with which they gently beat time as

they sang, and led the chorus, in which the whole larger semicircle of Rishis were accustomed to join.

All being ready, Maricha despatched his disciple Ratnakara to inform the king; and, in a few minutes after, the royal procession entered the council-chamber, amid a loud flourish of trumpets, and a deep roll on the large nagara drum, used only to announce the presence of deities and kings.

Ravan entered first, accompanied by his brother Bibhishana, his ministers, and Senapatis, and all took up their posts, standing to the left of the [Page 207] monarch's throne, except the Prince Bibhishana, who sat on a lower seat upon his left. Immediately next to Bibhishana stood the privileged Kamatur Rakshas, and behind the latter the court poet Madhavi, the Water-lily. The ministers and other commanders circled off to the left. Next entered the train of Queen Mandodari, who sat, surrounded by her standing attendant ladies, on a high throne, placed to the right of Ravan's. On the right of the good Mandodari, and on the same throne, sat the beautiful-eyed, noble-hearted Princess Sulochana, the little Ghanta Patali being seated snugly on a cushion between them. On her left stood the subtle and witty Gupta. The corpulent Mahodari, the shrill-voiced Anunasika, the heavy Pankamagná, and the other court ladies, stood in a circle round [Page 208] the throne of Mandodari. Maricha, as the senior Rishi, sprinkled the assembly with water, pronouncing the benediction "Kalyanam bhavatu !" — "May happiness attend you !"

The mellow mridangs beat a soft measure; the silver bell-shaped cymbals were gently struck together as a signal and prelude; and then, amid the deepest silence, and the breathless attention of the whole court, and surrounded by an expression of seriousness on every countenance, that gave a tinge of sadness even to the sweet face of little Ghanta Patali, and banished from the features of the hilarious Water-lily and the Kamatur Rakshas their habitual smile, Ananta Rishi opened his solemn discourse, and thus began: — [Page 209]

THE SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM.

Through all the scenes and incidents, oh Titan ! pictured in the succession of visions — for it is vision upon vision which compose thy mysterious dream — there is a foreshadowing and representation of real events, that lie embosomed in the far future, far beyond the precincts of thy present life, but a representation that is dim and indistinct, wrought out in the capricious lines and hues that constitute the hieroglyphic language of fantasy, into which the events of this outer, solid world must

generally be translated, before they can be either foreshadowed or reproduced in the phantasmal sphere of dreams.

For know, oh Titan! the true nature of man, and the various conditions [Page 210] of being under which he exists, and of consciousness under which he perceives.

These are represented to us in the Vedanta system under three distinct aspects, which, however, contain really one and the same idea, more summarily expressed, or more fully developed.

In the first, most summary view, man is a duality; he comprises two modes of existence — one natural, one reversed. The original, normal, and true mode of his being, and which is therefore characterised by the term SVA-RUPA, or OWN-FORM, is the SPIRIT-CONDITION (atma-dasha): in this his substance or being is consolidated Being — Thought — Bliss — in one [sach chid-anandaghana]. His state eternal Turya, or ecstasy. The opposite or reversed mode of his being is the LIFE-CONDITION (Jiva-dasha), comprising a [Page 211] subtle inward body or soul, and a gross outward body of matter, existing in the two states of dreaming and waking. Between these two conditions lies a gulf of Lethe, or total unconsciousness — a profound and dreamless sleep.

In the second view, which is given in the Tattva Bodha, and many other works, the idea is further expanded: man is there represented as a prismatic trinity, veiling and looked through by a primordial unity of light — gross outward body; subtle internal body or soul; a being neither body nor soul, but absolute self-forgetfulness, called the cause-body, because it is the original sin of ignorance of his true nature which precipitates him from the spirit into the life-condition. These three bodies, existing in the waking, dreaming, sleeping states, are all known, [Page 212] witnessed, and watched, by the spirit which standeth behind and apart from them, in the unwinking vigilance of ecstasy, or spirit-waking.

This prepares us for, and conducts us to, the complete and fully-developed view of man as a quaternity, in explaining which we must retread the same ground we have already gone over, but with more care and deliberation.

THE FOUR STATES AND TABERNACLES OF MAN.

There are four spheres of existence, one enfolding the other — the inmost sphere of Turya, in which the individualised spirit lives the ecstatic life; the sphere of transition, or Lethe, in which the spirit, plunged in the ocean of Adnyana, or total unconsciousness, and utterly forgetting its real self, [Page 213] undergoes a change of gnostic tendency [polarity ?];

and from not knowing at all, or absolute unconsciousness, emerges on the hither side of that Lethean boundary to a false or reversed knowledge of things (viparita dnyana), under the influence of an illusive Pradnya, or belief in, and tendency to, knowledge outward from itself, in which delusion it thoroughly believes, and now endeavours to realise: — whereas the true knowledge which it had in the state of Turya, or the ecstatic life, was all within itself, in which it intuitively knew and experienced all things. And from the sphere of Pradnya, or out-knowing, — this struggle to reach and recover outside itself all that it once possessed within itself, and lost, — to regain for the lost intuition an objective perception through the senses and understanding, — in which the spirit [Page 214] became an intelligence, — it merges into the third sphere, which is the sphere of dreams, where it believes in a universe of light and shade, and where all existence is in the way of Abhasa, or phantasm. There it imagines itself into the Linga-deha (Psyche), or subtle, semi-material, ethereal soul, composed of a vibrating or knowing pentad, and a breathing or undulating pentad. The vibrating or knowing pentad consists of simple consciousness, radiating into four different forms of knowledge — the egoity or consciousness of self; the ever-changing, devising, wishing mind, imagination, or fancy; the thinking, reflecting, remembering faculty; and the apprehending and determining understanding or judgment. The breathing or undulating pentad contains the five vital aerae — namely, the breath of life, [Page 215] and the four nervous aethers that produce sensation, motion, and the other vital phenomena.

From this subtle personification and phantasmal sphere, in due time, it progresses into the fourth or outermost sphere, where matter and sense are triumphant; where the universe is believed a solid reality; where all things exist in the mode of Akara, or substantial form; and where that, which successively forgot itself from spirit into absolute unconsciousness, and awoke on this side of that boundary of oblivion into an intelligence struggling outward, and from this outward struggling intelligence imagined itself into a conscious, feeling, breathing nervous soul, prepared for further clothing, now out-realises itself from soul into a body, with five senses or organs of perception, and five organs [Page 216] of action, to suit it for knowing and acting in the external world, which it once held within, but now has wrought out of itself. The first or spiritual state was ecstasy; from ecstasy it forgot itself into deep sleep; from profound sleep it awoke out of unconsciousness, but still within itself, into the internal world of dreams; from dreaming it passed finally into the thoroughly waking state, and the outer world of sense. Each state has an embodiment of ideas or language of its own. The universal, eternal, ever-present intuitions that be eternally with the spirit in the first, are in the second utterly forgotten for a time, and then emerge reversed, limited and translated into divided successive intellections, or

gropings, rather, of a struggling and as yet unorganised intelligence, having reference to place [Page 217] and time, and an external historical world, which it seeks, but cannot all at once realise outside itself. In the third they become pictured by a creative fantasy into phantasms of persons, things, and events, in a world of light and shade within us, which is visible even when the eyes are sealed in dreaming slumber, and is a prophecy and forecast shadow of the solid world that is coming. In the fourth the outforming or objectivity is complete. They are embodied by the senses into hard, external realities in a world without us. That ancient seer [Kavi Purana] which the Gita and the Mahabharata mention as abiding in the breast of each, is first a prophet and poet; then he falls asleep, and awakes as a blindfold logician and historian, without materials for reasoning, or a world for events, but groping [Page 218] towards them; next a painter, with an ear for inward phantasmal music too; at last a sculptor carving out hard, palpable solidities. Hence the events destined to occur in this outer world can never be either foreshown or represented with complete exactitude in the sphere of dreams, but must be translated into its pictorial and fantastical language.

But besides this dim, prophetic character, referring to isolated events in time, thy dream, like all other dreams, has a more universal and enduring significance, setting forth, as it does, in a series of vivid symbols, a crowd of spiritual truths and allegories that are eternally true to the human soul. The prophetic hieroglyphics it is not given me to read. That may lie within the compass of Maricha's powers, for he treads the difficult and [Page 219] dangerous paths of thaumaturgy, and ventures on the perilous gaze into the dread future. Mine be it simply to unfold before thine eyes, oh king! the symbolic and moral interpretations of the vision, which, if thou be wise, will have for thee a profounder, because a more eternal interest, than the mere foretelling of transitory events.

THE SILENT AND DESOLATE LAND

That desolate land in which thou didst wander, oh Titan! with thy beautiful and mysterious companion, where silent cities strewed the desert, in which no life stirred, and no voice was heard in the streets, but all was death and desolation; where everything lay still or petrified; where gigantic ruins lay around, and the colossal forms of a by-gone life stared out on thee from stone, with an impress [Page 220] of solemn and eternal beauty, uttering a moan to the first beams of the rising sun, offers a true type of this mournful world. For what, in truth, is this earth but one immense ruin, or heap of ruins — a land of death and desolation — a desert strewn with the fragments of an extinct past ?

If we contemplate external nature, we find in its stupendous mountain-chains, its gigantic volcanic peaks shooting up aloof into the sky — its abrupt masses of scarped rock and table-lands — its scattered, solitary, gigantic stones, far from their parent mountains — its tremendous clefts, and chasms, and valleys, the evidences and traces of immense convulsions in past ages. The whole earth appears a vast assemblage of sublime ruins. When we consult more closely the materials which form these ruins, we [Page 221] find with astonishment that they too are composed of other ruins; we find everywhere the marks of an extinct world. A gigantic vegetation of consummate beauty in its forms; broken fragments, too, of a creation of living creatures, colossal in size, wonderful in structure, and awful in power, surround us everywhere. The dead faces of extinct organisations look out on us from stone on every side with their sad, eternal beauty; and, as every fresh sun dawns upon the world of ruins, a mournful plaint is wailed forth from all past creations to greet his rising, which recalls to them their own former being.

THE CHORUS SINGS

Even thus, oh sun ! in thy eternal youth,
 Thou once didst rise on us !
 While we as yet were young, and seemed, like thee,
 To flourish in our strength.[Page 222]
 And thus ten thousand years, ten thousand ages hence,
 Shalt thou arise unchanged;
 When those, that now appear to bloom and live,
 Like us, have passed away !
 Then shall they sadly greet thy morning rising,
 From their dark stony chambers,
 As we do now, oh sun !
 Oh sun for ever young!

If we turned, continued the Rishi, from external nature to what is called the living world, we look in vain for life. Death meets us at every turn. The terrible Yama is everywhere. The whole animal creation appears upon the scene, merely to pass away by some form of violent death. To the peaceful herds grazing on the hillside, Yama comes in the guise of the tiger; to the innocent bleating sheep, as wolf or hyena. The snake seizes the frog from his moist bed, and him into his hole, or his drags crevice among the stones, crushing his limbs in [Page 223] the traction. The hawk pierces with his cruel beak the poor sparrow; the sparrow, in turn, transfixes or carries off the grub. Bird preys on bird; fish on fish, as it is written in the Maha-bharata: —

The stronger fishes, after their kind, prey on the weaker fish.
This is ever our means of living, appointed to us eternally.

But man himself is the most terrible incarnation of Yama. He plunges with a savage joy into the thicket of bamboo or sugar-cane, to attack and slay the boar. He pursues over the plain the timid and graceful antelope; his arrows outstrip his fleetness; and the exhausted creature, that erst bounded in beauty and freedom, falls sobbing to the earth, and expires in torture. He gathers the dumb and patient sheep, and the helpless lambs, from the pastures where they bleated [Page 224] in joy, and consigns them to the slaughter-house. Behold yon porters passing even now the court gate with baskets on their heads full of the beautiful plumage of the Cingalese cocks gathered from the villages round Lanka, sitting happy together, all unconscious of their coming doom. They are bearing them to the camp to feed thy military followers. The festivity of man is the signal of death to the humbler creatures of the earth: he rejoices, or weds, and they die as the materials of his joy, victims immolated to his household gods. Even those creatures, upon whose flesh he has not yet learned to feed, he harasses to death by more protracted and painful means. The horse, that in his youth bore him in the day of battle or the pompous ceremonial, is, when age advances, and his fire abates, consigned [Page 225] to the merciless Vaisha, who trades in hired chariots, and you behold thousands of those wretched creatures, lean, lacerated, and panting, driven by male Durgas (furies) through the city, without respite from sunrise till midnight, till at last they drop and expire in harness, or are rudely taken out and cast aside into some corner to die unseen and unpitied. And the dog, the honest friend of man; and the cat, self-adorning, playful, capricious, coy, timid, watchful, secretive, house-loving, but ever affectionate when gently treated, the friend and — be not offended, good Mandodari, for thou knowest their strong attachments — in some respects the type of woman, and the playfellow of children, the household Numen, and hieroglyphic of domestic life, — what becomes of these ? Who sees their end ? Into what by-way [Page 226] solitudes, what holes and corners do they creep, led by a mournful Instinct of nature to conceal their agonies and yield up their breath ? Ah ! how many tragedies of animal agony daily take place not far from the dwelling of man, and he knows it not, or knowing, lays it not to heart, or laughs in scorn of sympathy for animal suffering ! And yet all creatures, Manu teaches, have their life in that awful Spirit in whom man, too, lives, and in them as in man that Spirit liveth —

Sarvabhuteshu chatmanam, sarvabhutani chat-mani
Saman pashyan.

In all creatures the SPIRIT, and all creatures in the SPIRIT,
Alike beholding.

And let us look at man himself. Is life to be found in his dwelling ? Alas ! from the cradle to the cemetery where [Page 227] his body is laid upon the pyre, is not his course one long cry of suffering, and sorrow, and terror — one long reminiscence and foretaste of death ? The householder in the prime of manhood, and his blooming, comely matron, who stand on the mid ridge of life, look down on either side upon two valleys of mourning. In one are the cherished memories of beloved parents; she weeping for the beloved father, he for the poor tender mother. In the other, the idolised forms of children snatched prematurely from their arms, and wept alike by both; by her in loud lamentation, by him in stifled sobs and hidden tears. The mother dies giving birth to her babe, or lives to weep ere long over its corpse. Disease haunts man from his birth. Go into the mighty city of Lanka. In every street there passes [Page 228] you a funeral procession, with its red powder, its lugubrious flowers, its mournful rolling ululatus, and in its rear the mourning women stand before the door in a circle, beating their breasts. In every house there is a cry and a grief — an old man expiring; a child struggling; a strong man agonised; a woman weeping; a little girl with frightened and tearful face. And, as if the terrible avenger Yama had not imposed on humanity a sufficient measure of suffering and death, man goes forth himself in gold, and plumes, and gay caparisons, to crush the limbs, and dash out the brains, and pierce the heart and bowels of his fellow-man. And on the battle-field are left horrible sights, terrible cries, and fearful smells of death. And in the city the women weep, and break their bangles, and shave their heads, and put on [Page 229] grey unbleached or russet garments, and are thenceforth held to be of evil omen. Oh tragic man! whence is all this death in thy life ? Alas ! it is because an inward moral death reigns throughout all, that it must have this outward manifestation also. Men's souls are dead when they are born: this life is the autopsy, and the disease is made manifest to all. One died mad of pride; one phrenetic with anger; one leprous with sensuality; one had the fever of ambition; one suffered from the insatiable craving of greed; one from the malignant venom of revenge; one from the jaundice of jealousy; one from the eating cancer of envy; one from a surfeit of self-love; one from the paralysis of apathy. Many were the diseases, but death into this world the common result of all.

Yes, death is triumphant here — death, [Page 230] physical and moral. The dead bring forth the dead; the dead bear the dead to the funeral pyre; the dead walk about the streets and greet each other, and bargain, and buy and sell, and marry, and build — and know not all the time that they are but ghosts and phantasms ! That land of silence and shadows; of desolation and ruins; of sorrow and death, in which thy soul walked in the vision, oh Titan ! is the WORLD in which thy dead body now walks waking. Renounce and annihilate it, oh king ! by asceticism and divine gnosis, and thus return to real life.

THE THREE MIRAGES

Of the mirages which attracted thy observation on thy first entrance into the desert, and which again beset thy path after thou hadst forsaken the cavern of the Divars, and plunged into [Page 231] the silent wilderness, two have been already interpreted in thy own description. That blue Mrigajala, or deer-water, which mocks the weary hart, and deceives the human traveller, in the wilderness, typifies, indeed, those false rivers of delight and, delusive hopes of happiness, which the world spreads afar off before the longing pilgrim who is a wayfarer in this wilderness, to lure him on in the perpetual pursuit of an unreal content and joy, but which ever vanish as we approach, and mock the fainting soul in the very moment of expected fruition.

That white mirage which built up the Gandharva city of fairy palaces in the clouds, to melt again like mist into the air, is the emblem of that delusion which sets the blinded soul, instead of staying at home and attending to itself, and seeking its satisfaction there only [Page 232] where abiding peace is to be found, in itself, in seeking to know itself, and to recover its own true relation, a participation in the divine nature, — urges it for ever to depart far from itself, to forget itself, and its own high birthright; and build up for its solace vain projects in the distance — magnificent fairy castles and palaces in the clouds, or in the land of dreams, which ever dissolve as soon as built, and leave the soul in disappointment to begin afresh.

But the Kala Vivarta, that flittering black mirage, or mirage of Time, has a more special signification. This beset thee at the outset, to denote, that, in all the events that were to follow in thy dream—in all the visions which were shown, and all which in relation thereto may yet be called up before thee, as well as in all the voices of interpretation which shall be uttered to [Page 233] thee — Time shall stand in a reversed relation, its unities and succession be broken, its distinctions confounded. The far, far future shall become present or past, the past become future, the present be pictured as yet to come or long gone by. All distinction and succession shall be forgotten and lost in an eternal present. Without this indication from the black mirage, neither the dream nor its interpretation would be intelligible.

But such a confusion and total reversion were impossible, if these distinctions were in their own nature real and eternal; and here we at length reach the profounder and enduring signification of the mirages, which thou, oh Titan! art, perhaps, as yet scarcely prepared to receive.

The blue mirage, which operates in space, and alters its relations, which [Page 234] presents the lake water as close at hand, and then withdraws it

afar off; for ever deluding the eye with imaginary and ever-changing distances, typifies the temporary, delusive, and unreal nature of Space itself. Space has no real existence to Spirit. It is merely an order in which Spirit, when bound in the fetters of the intellect, shut up in the cell of the soul, and barred and bolted in securely within the prison of the body, is compelled to look out piecemeal on True Being, which is essentially one, in a broken, multitudinous, and successive way. Space is a mere How. It is not a WHAT. It is a method of analysis, an intervalling or ruling off, to enable the multitudinous figures by which the intellect is compelled to express diffusively the totality which is one, but which, from its own now fractional [Page 235] nature, it cannot contemplate in unity, to be severally set down.

Time, too, is a How, and not a WHAT, a method of analysis, intervalling, or ruling off, which intellect employs to enable it to contemplate in successive parts the one eternal, divine Thought, when broken into fractional, successive intellections; and the one eternal, divine Sentiment, when revealed to limited natures in history, or a succession of broken events. And this is what is indicated by the black mirage that to Spirit, Time has no real existence: it is only a necessary method and instrument of finite intellect.

What the blue image indicates as to Space, what the black as to Time, the white mirage, with its Gandharva fairy cities in the clouds, ever changing their form, and dissolving into nothing, [Page 236] typifies as to the multitudinous diversified forms of Matter in the universe. They have no real existence. They are the multitudinous, transient phenomena thrown off in space and time, by that which is ever one, constant, unchanging, and hath its being outside, and beyond both Space and Time — enfolding both: the current hieroglyphic writing in which it reveals itself, and in which alone it can be read by Spirit fallen into finite intellect, when it hath lost its pristine dignite and purity of nature.

And the same doctrine is applicable to individual personalities, which all arise and re-subside, like waves, into the infinite impersonal ocean of Being, but for the contemplation of this mystery thou art not yet fully prepared, oh Titan! nor has it any type in the three images, which typify only Space, [Page 237] Time, and multitudinous divided Matter. To sum up. To Spirit, or True Being, there is no Space, no Time, no diversified Matter, no multitudinous Personality, no successive Thought, no historical Event.

True Being is universal, uniform, constant, unchanging, and eternal: and is termed Sach-Chid-Ananda-Ghana, a compacted BEING, THOUGHT, JOY. BEING culminating to consciousness; conscious THOUGHT returning and entering into BEING with an eternal JOY. BEING worketh eternally in the

depths, but knoweth not itself. THOUGHT, generated in the eternal centre, giveth forth the GREAT UTTERANCE, and calleth out, I AM BRIMH. Being becometh thus revealed unto itself in Thought, and between the Thought and the Being, an eternal Joy ariseth: and these three are one Ghana, [Page 238] or solidarity of eternal life, filling all things, and yet minuter than an atom. That is the true Dneya, or object of wisdom; of it Krishna sayeth in the Gita, Lecture XIII : —

THE CHORUS SINGS THE OBJECT OF WISDOM

Without beginning and supreme — even BRIMH,
Which neither can be said to be, nor not to be,
All hands and feet; all faces, heads, and eyes; All
ears; it sitteth in the great world's centre,
Possessing the vast whole.— Exempt from organ,
It is the light which shineth through all organs.
Containing all things — unattached to any;
Devoid of properties — partaking all:
Inside and outside — the moveable and motionless,
Throughout all nature — Inconceivable
From the extreme minuteness of its parts.
It standeth at a distance, yet is present.
Is undivided, yet in all things standeth
Divided: — of all things it is the ruler.
That which destroyeth now, and now produceth.
The light of lights — declared exempt from darkness,
Wisdom, and wisdom's aim, and wisdom's fruit,
And within every breast presideth —THAT!

And thus is this inconceivable True [Page 239] Being described by Mukunda Raja, in the Viveka Sindhu, Lect. III. For, after first noticing the duality of Soul and God —

In the sky of OWN-FORM [or True-Being], in that which is devoid of property, ariseth an utterance of “JIV-ESHVARA”, Living creature and Lord” [or “Soul and God”] The eradication of this dual utterance from that place of unity, thou art to effect by self-realisation alone.

And then, laying down ecstatic concentration to be the great remedy for this disease called life: —

Wherefore this SUMADHI, or SELF-CONCENTRATION, is the divine tree of healing for those suffering under the disease of existence; by it is ended the anguish and the pain which belong to pleasure in sensible objects. He proceeds to describe True Being, the fountain of all existence: —

THE CHORUS SINGS THE FOUNTAIN OF EXISTENCE

That which, distinct from the Power-wheels [or Power-spheres], is all sense, without parts — that immaculate Own-bliss, understand to be Para-Brimh, or most high Brimh. [Page 240]

That wherein this trinity or three-fold relation — the seer, the object of sight, and the [medium or process of] vision, disappears, that know to be supreme Brimh, devoid of opposition,

That wherein this trio — the knower, the [medium or process of] knowledge, and the thing to be known, does not exist — that, my son, know to be supreme Brimh, undual.

If we would denominate it knowledge, there is there no knowing; if we would call it ignorance, there is there no not knowing; if we would term it nonentity, behold, it is a wonderful hidden treasure, without beginning being, even from all eternity.

Nonentity is nought. The opinion of those who contend for [Brimh being] nought, is vile. Happy they who in the world understand this, knowers of Brimh.

If we say it is, how are we to present it? If we say it is not, how are we to get rid of it? — In a word, this Brimh, let those know to whom it belongs.

It is what stirreth him who is asleep, what awakeneth him who is stirred, what causeth him who is awake to feel [pleasure and pain], but it is itself without act.

As the heart of the crystal rock has a solidarity without interval, so supreme Brimh is one compact mass of consciousness.

Or again, it is all hollow, like the ethereal space; pervasible, yet apart from the pervasion; beautifully shining with its own light; itself alone!

Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara, when [Page 241] they become exhausted carrying on their respective operations [of creation, preservation, and destruction], then use the house of rest— namely, OWN BRIMH. [These active energies no longer working, subside into Brimh — the sabbatical form of Divine Being, in which there is no action].

That wherein is neither science nor nescience; which cannot be compared to any other thing; which is to be known to itself alone; that know to be the divine science, the supreme Brimh, Own-Form.

Which even Sarv-Eshvara, or the All Lord himself, if he assume the egoity

of knowing, even he knoweth not the furthest limits of that OWN-FORM.

[i.e, if Brimh become Sarv-Eshvara; if going out of the infinite impersonal all consciousness, in which there is neither knowing, nor not knowing, he assume the egoity of knowing, and thus become the egoistic and personal God, the all Lord, as such he knoweth not, and cannot know, the limits of that essence from which he has come forth, of that OWN-FORM, which is pure Brimh]

Wherefore egoity vanishes there, imagination also disappears, that BRIMH itself only comprehendeth its own SELF-REALIZATION.

After comprehending and pervading a thousand universes, within and without, the SUPREME BRIMH OWN-FORM is over entire, without residue [or deficiency], and without interval [or separation of parts] [“ Spreads undivided, operates unspent”. — POPE.]

As the clouds melt into the ethereal space and [Page 242] cease to be, so in Own-Form the film of Maya: when that is dissolved, wholly Brimh [or the absolute] alone is.

Recurring again in Lecture v. to the duality of the Soul and God, into which this primordial unity is separated, he calls the former THOU, the latter THAT in this isolation, and thus he describes the divine principle which he calls THAT: —

THE CHORUS SINGS THE ETERNAL THAT

Without the word THAT, the Lord the word THOU (individual soul) hath no subsistence; hear then again regarding the word THAT.

He who is Param Atma, or Supreme Spirit; Mahan Vishnu, or the Great Pervader; Adi Purusha, the Primordial Soul; Bhagavana, the Glorious One; Sach-chid-ananda-ghana, the solidarity of Being, Thought, and Joy in one, He has been before declared unto thee.

He who is the All-Spirit, the All-Witness, the All-Lord, who is present within the bosom of every creature, who is never indifferent to his own servants;

That God without beginning and subtile [inapprehensible or unsearchable], who exhibits this universe, which is not; who again hideth [Page 243] it as a thing departed, though still in the same place.

Who, without ears, heareth; without eyes, seeth; without tongue, tasteth every flavour;

Who, without feet, walketh everywhere; without hands, taketh and giveth; who by a wish alone emancipates the soul;

Who, being close, is yet afar off; standing afar off, is yet within the soul; through whose power the organs are quickened to perform their own offices;

As the one sun shineth in every country, so the same Supreme Spirit illumineth every creature — life, or soul.

This delicate word THAT is a body of pure intelligence — without form, pervading all things; yet, for the sake of his own worshippers, assuming an external shape.

There the When is an eternal Now.

The Where an eternal Here.

The What and the Who are one. — A universal “That — I” — [So-Ham] — impersonal merging into personal, personal returning into impersonal, and feeling its identity with it.

But True Being is broken by the prism of Maya into a multitudinous phenomenal development, and it is [Page 244] then only it can be contemplated by Spirit become fractional itself, and fallen into finite intellect. As it is sung by the virgin poetess of Alandi —

A change, a mirage ariseth in True Being;
From the ONE, the many are evolving.

In this evolution, which is phenomenal only, the seed germinates into a thousand roots and shoots; the monad of light breaks into ten thousand rays. The sphere is spun out into an infinite thread; the lump of gold becomes broken into ten millions of jewels of infinite variety of make and pattern.

The SAT, Being, or substance of the Primordial Triad, is spread out into the phenomena of infinite material universes.

The one central CHIT, or Consciousness, into infinite personalities and lives.

The unity That-I [So-Ham] which [Page 245] is the experience of the original consciousness, becomes dissevered first into THAT and THOU, and then into infinite I's, and THOUS, and THATS.

The eternal Thought united with this Consciousness, into infinite successive cognitions, and systems of science, philosophy, and literature.

The ANANDA, its harmonious Joy, into infinite tones of sentiment and passion, which produce the result of tragic history.

The infinite Here is rolled into space.

The eternal punctual Now, into successive time.

And the divine, eternal, and round life of True Being becomes evolved and extended, and rolled out, as it were, into successive history.

And that prismatic Maya itself — But I fear, said the Rishi, seeing the [Page 246] bewildered faces of his audience — and feeling he was getting beyond their comprehension, — I fear I begin to grow unintelligible.

Ravan said nothing. He was completely mystified; and was just then puzzling himself in the endeavour to solve in his own mind the problem, whether he had ten heads, or one, or any head at all, on his shoulders, — if he had shoulders.

“I should like to know”, said the arch Gupta, in a low voice, as if speaking to herself, but quite loud enough to be overheard, as she intended, in the whole circle, “whether Madhavi Panza is a How or a WHAT”.

“In truth, good Rishi”, said the stout and simple Mandodari, with downright frankness, “I do not comprehend you. I cannot understand at all what you mean by the True Being [Page 247] being rolled out into space and history. Am I not, for example, a true being? Now I cannot for the life of me conceive myself being rolled out into any sort of history, or into space or time either, without disappearing altogether under such a process”.

“These matters, oh transcendent Ezamana!” said Sulochana reverentially, “are above the comprehension of us poor females; explain to us rather, great Rishi, the vision of Zingarel. As she is a woman, we may understand more of her than of such subtile matters as Time and Space”.

“Oh ! yes, dear Guru”, said little Ghanta Patali, clapping her tiny hands with a look of delight, “tell us all about that poor, dear Zingarel, and the terrible alligator, and that darling little cow of the sea”.

The Rishi was not sorry for this [Page 248] diversion. Perhaps he may have felt, if the truth could be seen, that he was getting out of his own depth, and becoming unintelligible even to himself. The ground of allegory, at all events, he thought, would be firmer and safer, than the transcendental metaphysics of the Vedanta philosophy. The moral, at least, would be clearer to the women; and he knew all their influence on history, even when refusing, like the good Mandodari, to be personally rolled out into it.

