

THE  
**VISHNU PURANA**

**BOOK VI**

TRANSLATED  
FROM THE ORIGINAL SANSKRIT,  
AND  
ILLUSTRATED BY NOTES  
DERIVED CHIEFLY FROM OTHER PURANAS,  
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LONDON,

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURRAY,  
ALBEMARLE STREET.

[1840]

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## CHAP. I.

Of the dissolution of the world: the four ages: the decline of all things, and deterioration of mankind, in the Kali age.

MAITREYA. – You have narrated to me, illustrious sage, the creation of the world, the genealogies of the patriarchs, the duration of the Manwantaras, and the dynasties of princes, in detail. I am now desirous to hear from you an account of the dissolution of the world, the season of total destruction, and that which occurs at the expiration of a Kalpa [\*1].

PARAS'ARA. – Hear from me, Maitreya, exactly the circumstances of the end of all things, and the dissolution that occurs either at the expiration of a Kalpa, or that which takes place at the close of the life of Brahma. A month of mortals is a day and night of the progenitors: a year of mortals is a day and night of the gods. Twice a thousand aggregates of the four ages is a day and night of Brahma [\*2]. The four ages are the Krita, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali; comprehending together twelve thousand years of the gods. There are infinite successions of these four ages, of a similar description, the first of which is always called the Krita, and the last the Kali. In the first, the Krita, is that age which is created by Brahma; in the last, which is the Kali age, a dissolution of the world occurs.

MAITREYA. – Venerable sir, you are able to give me a description of the nature of the Kali age, in which four-footed virtue [\*3] suffers total extinction.

PARAS'ARA. – Hear, Maitreya, an account of the nature of the Kali age, respecting which you have inquired, and which is now close at hand.

The observance of caste, order, and institutes will not prevail in the Kali age, nor will that of the ceremonial enjoined by the Sama, Rik, and Yajur Vedas. Marriages in this age will not be conformable to the ritual, nor will the rules that connect the spiritual preceptor and his disciple be in force. The laws that regulate the conduct of husband and wife will be disregarded, and oblations to the gods with fire no longer be offered. In whatever family he may be born, a powerful and rich man will be held entitled to espouse maidens of every tribe. A regenerate man will be initiated in any way whatever, and such acts of penance as may be performed will be unattended by any results [\*4]. Every text will be scripture that people choose to think so [\*5]: all gods will be gods to them that worship them; and all orders of life will be common alike to all persons. In the Kali age, fasting, austerity, liberality, practised according to the pleasure of those by whom they are observed, will constitute righteousness. Pride of wealth will be inspired by very insignificant possessions. Pride of beauty will be prompted by (no other personal charm than fine) hair. Gold, jewels, diamonds, clothes, will all have perished, and then hair will be the only ornament with which women can decorate themselves. Wives will desert their husbands, when they lose their property; and they only who are wealthy will be considered by women as their lords. He who gives away much money will be the master of men; and family descent will no longer be a title of supremacy. Accumulated treasures will be expended on (ostentatious) dwellings. The minds of men will be wholly occupied in acquiring wealth; and wealth will be spent solely on selfish gratifications. Women will follow their inclinations, and be ever fond of pleasure. Men will fix their desires upon riches, even though dishonestly acquired. No man will part with the smallest fraction of the smallest coin [\*6], though entreated by a friend. Men of all degrees will conceit themselves to be equal with Brahmans. Cows will be held in esteem only as they supply milk [\*7]. The people will be almost always in dread of dearth, and apprehensive of scarcity; and will hence ever be watching the appearances of the sky: they will all live, like anchorites, upon leaves and roots and fruit, and put a period to their lives through fear of famine and want. In truth there will never be abundance in the Kali age, and men will never enjoy pleasure and happiness. They will take their food without previous ablution, and without worshipping fire, gods, or guests, or offering obsequial libations to their progenitors. The women will be fickle, short of stature, gluttonous: they will have many children, and little means:

scratching their heads with both hands, they will pay no attention to the commands of their husbands or parents: they will be selfish, abject, and slatternly: they will be scolds and liars: they will be indecent and immoral in their conduct, and will ever attach themselves to dissolute men. Youths, although disregarding the rules of studentship, will study the Vedas. Householders will neither sacrifice nor practise becoming liberality. Anchorets will subsist upon food accepted from rustics; and mendicants will be influenced by regard for friends and associates [\*8]. Princes, instead of protecting, will plunder their subjects; and, under the pretext of levying customs, will rob merchants of their property. In the Kali age every one who has cars and elephants and steeds will be a Raja [\*9]: every one who is feeble will be a slave. Vais'yas will abandon agriculture and commerce, and gain a livelihood by servitude or the exercise of mechanical arts. S'udras, seeking a subsistence by begging, and assuming the outward marks of religious mendicants, will become the impure followers of impious and heretical doctrines [\*10].

Oppressed by famine and taxation, men will desert their native lands, and go to those countries which are fit for coarser grains [\*11]. The path of the Vedas being obliterated, and men having deviated into heresy, iniquity will flourish, and the duration of life will therefore decrease. In consequence of horrible penances not enjoined by scripture, and of the vices of the rulers, children will die in their infancy. Women will bear children at the age of five, six, or seven years; and men beget them when they are eight, nine, or ten. A man will be grey when he is twelve; and no one will exceed twenty years of life [\*12]. Men will possess little sense, vigour, or virtue, and will therefore perish in a very brief period. In proportion as heresy extends, so, Maitreya, shall the progress of the Kali age be estimated by the wise. In proportion as the number of the pious, who adhere to the lessons of the Vedas, diminishes – as the efforts of individuals who cultivate virtue relax – as the first of males becomes no longer the object of sacrifices – as respect for the teachers of the Vedas declines – and as regard is acknowledged for the disseminators of heresy – so may wise men note the augmented influence of the Kali age [\*13].

In the Kali age, Maitreya, men, corrupted by unbelievers, will refrain from adoring Vishnu, the lord of sacrifice, the creator and lord of all; and will say, "Of what authority are the Vedas? what are gods or Brahmans? what need is there of purification with water?" Then will the clouds yield scanty rain: then will the corn be light in ear, and the grain will be poor, and of little sap: garments will be mostly made of the fibres of the San [\*14]: the principal of trees will be the Sami [\*15]: the prevailing caste will be the S'udra: millet will be the more common grain: the milk in use will be chiefly that of goats: unguents will be made of Usira grass. The mother and father-in-law will be venerated in place of parents; and a man's friends will be his brother-in-law, or one who has a wanton wife. Men will say, "Who has a father? who has a mother? each one is born according to his deeds:" and therefore they will look upon a wife's or husband's parents as their own. Endowed with little sense, men, subject to all the infirmities of mind, speech, and body, will daily commit sins; and every thing that is calculated to afflict beings, vicious, impure, and wretched, will be generated in the Kali age. Then shall some places follow a separate duty [\*16], devoid of holy study, oblations to fire, and invocations of the gods [\*17]. Then, in the Kali age, shall a man acquire by a trifling exertion as much eminence in virtue as is the result of arduous penance in the Krita age, or age of purity [\*18].

### Footnotes

^621:1 Two kinds of great or universal dissolution are here intimated; one occurring at the end of a Kalpa, or day of Brahma, to which the term Upasanhriti is applied in the text, and Atyantika laya by the commentator; and the other taking place at the end of the life of Brahma, which is termed a great or elemental dissolution: Maha pralaya and Prakrita pralaya.

^621:2 These measures of time are more fully detailed in the first book: see <page 22>.

^622:3 This is an allusion to a popular notion, originating probably with Manu: "In the Krita age the genius of truth and right stands firm on his four feet; but in the following ages he is deprived successively of one foot," &c. I. 81, 82.

^622:4 'Such an act is just what it is;' that is, it may be attended by inconvenience to the individual, but is utterly inefficacious for the expiation of sin.

^622:5 Whether it is conformable or contradictory to the Vedas and the law. The passage may be rendered also, 'The doctrine or dogma of any one soever will be scripture.'

^623:6 He will not part with the half of the half of half a Pana; that is, with ten Cowries; a Pana being equal to eighty Cowries, or small shells. Five Panas are equal to one Ana, or the sixteenth of a Rupee; and, at two shillings the Rupee, ten Cowries are equal to about one-seventh of a farthing.

^623:7 They will be valued for their individual use only, not from any notion of their generic sanctity.

^623:8 The Bhagavata has, "Religious students will be regardless of vows and purification; householders will beg, not give alms; anchorites will dwell in villages; and mendicants will be desirous of riches."

^624:9 That is, princes and warriors will be so no longer by virtue of their birth and caste.

^624:10 Most of the mendicant orders admit members without distinction of caste; but probably Buddhists especially are here intended. The Bhagavata repeatedly alludes to the diffusion of heretical doctrines and practices, the substitution of outward signs and marks for devotion, and the abandonment of the worship of Vishnu. The S'aiva mendicant orders are probably those especially in view. The same probably are intended by our text in the subsequent allusion to unauthorized austerities, and sectarian marks.

^624:11 'Gavedhuka (Coix barbata) and other bad sorts of grain;' Another reading is, 'Countries growing wheat, barley, and the like.' But to place wheat and barley amongst inferior grains, and to rank them lower than rice, is a classification that could have occurred to a native of Bengal alone.

^624:12 The Vayu says three and twenty; the Bhagavata, from twenty to thirty.

^625:13 The complaints of the prevalence of heterodox doctrines, and neglect of the practices of the Vedas, which recur in the Bhagavata and our text, indicate a period of change in the condition of the Hindu religion, which it would be important to verify. If reference is made to Buddhism, to which in some respects the allusions especially apply, it would probably denote a period not long subsequent to the Christian era; but it is more likely to be of a later date, or in the eighth and ninth centuries, when S'ankara is said to have reformed a variety of corrupt practices, and given rise to others. See As. Res. vol. XVI. p. la.

^625:14 *Crotolaria juncea*.

^625:15 The silk cotton, *Bombax heptaphylla*.

^625:16 The expression Kwachil-loka, 'a certain place,' is explained by the commentator, Kikata, &c.; confirming the inference that Buddhism is especially aimed at in the previous passages; for Kikata, or south Behar, is the scene of S'akya's earliest and most successful labours.

^625:17 Several of the Puranas contain allusions to the degeneracy of the Kali age, [p. 626] but none afford more copious details. The description in the Bhagavata is much shorter; that of the Vayu is much the same, and employs many of the same verses and illustrations.

^626:18 This might be suspected of being said ironically, referring to what had been just observed of places where a religion prevailed that required neither study nor sacrifice. The commentator, however, understands it literally, and asserts that allusion is here made to the Vaishnava faith, in which devotion to Vishnu or Krishna, and the mere repetition of his name, are equally efficacious in

the Kali age with the penances and sacrifices of the preceding ages: therefore he concludes the Kali, by this one property, is the best of all the ages. This interpretation is confirmed by the following chapter.

## CHAP. II.

Redeeming properties of the Kali age. Devotion to Vishnu sufficient to salvation in that age for all castes and persons.

UPON this subject, Maitreya, you shall hear what the wise Vyasa has related, as it is communicated truly by me.

It was once a matter of dispute amongst the sages, at what season the least moral merit obtained the greatest reward, and by whom it was most easily displayed. In order to terminate the discussion, they went to Veda Vyasa to remove their doubts. They found the illustrious Muni, my son, half immersed in the water of the Ganges; and awaiting the close of his ablutions, the sages remained on the banks of the sacred stream, under shelter of a grove of trees. As my son plunged down into the water, and again rose up from it, the Munis heard him exclaim, "Excellent, excellent, is the Kali age!" Again he dived, and again rising, said in their hearing, "Well done, well done S'udra; thou art happy!" Again he sank down, and as he once more emerged they heard him say, "Well done, well done, women; they are happy! who are more fortunate than they?" After this, my son finished his bathing, and the sages met him as he approached to welcome them. After he had given them seats, and they had proffered their respects, the son of Satyavati said to them, "On what account have you come to me?" They replied, "We came to you to consult you on a subject on which we entertain some doubt; but that may be at present suspended: explain to us something else. We heard you say, 'Excellent is the Kali age! Well done, S'udra! Well done, women!' Now we are desirous to know why this was said, why you called them repeatedly, happy. Tell us the meaning of it, if it be not a mystery. We will then propose to you the question that occupies our thoughts."

Being thus addressed by the Munis, Vyasa smiled, and said to them, "Hear, excellent sages, why I uttered the words 'Well done, well done.' The fruit of penance, of continence, of silent prayer, and the like, practised in the Krita age for ten years, in the Treta for one year, in the Dwapara for a month, is obtained in the Kali age in a day and night: therefore did I exclaim, 'Excellent, excellent, is the Kali age!' That reward which a man obtains in the Krita by abstract meditation, in the Treta by sacrifice, in the Dwapara by adoration, he receives in the Kali by merely reciting the name of Kes'ava. In the Kali age a man displays the most exalted virtue by very little exertion; therefore, pious sages, who know what virtue is, I was pleased with the Kali age. Formerly the Vedas were to be acquired by the twice-born through the diligent observance of self-denial; and it was their duty to celebrate sacrifices conformably to the ritual. Then idle prayers, idle feasts, and fruitless ceremonies, were practised but to mislead the twice-born; for although observed by them devoutly, yet, in consequence of some irregularity in their celebration, sin was incurred in all their works, and what they ate, or what they drank, did not effect the fulfilment of their desires. In all their objects the twice-born enjoyed no independence, and they attained their respective spheres only with exceeding pain. The S'udra, on the contrary, more fortunate than they, reaches his assigned station by rendering them service, and performing merely the sacrifice of preparing food, in which no rules determine what may or may not be eaten, what may or may not be drunk. Therefore, most excellent sages, is the S'udra fortunate.

"Riches are accumulated by men in modes not incompatible with their peculiar duties, and they are then to be bestowed upon the worthy, and expended in constant sacrifice. There is great trouble in their acquisition; great care in their preservation; great distress from the want of them; and great grief for their loss. Thus, eminent Brahmans, through these and other sources of anxiety, men attain their allotted spheres of Prajapati and the rest only by exceeding labour and suffering. This is not the case with women: a woman has only to honour her husband, in act, thought, and speech, to

reach the same region to which he is elevated; and she thus accomplishes her object without any great exertion. This was the purport of my exclamation, 'Well done!' the third time. I have thus related to you what you asked. Now demand the question you came to put to me, in any way you please, and I will make you a distinct reply."

The Munis then said to Vyasa, "The question we intended to have asked you has been already answered by you in your reply to our subsequent inquiry." On hearing which, Krishna Dwaipayana laughed, and said to the holy persons who had come to see him, whose eyes were wide open with astonishment, "I perceived, with the eye of divine knowledge, the question you intended to ask, and in allusion to it I uttered the expressions, 'Well done, well done.' In truth, in the Kali age duty is discharged with very little trouble by mortals, whose faults are all washed away by the water of their individual merits; by S'udras, through diligent attendance only upon the twice-born; and by women, through the slight effort of obedience to their husbands. Therefore, Brahmans, did I thrice express my admiration of their happiness; for in the Krita and other ages great were the toils of the regenerate to perform their duty. I waited not for your inquiry, but replied at once to the question you purposed to ask. Now, ye who know what virtue is, what else do you wish me to tell you?"

The Munis then saluted and praised Vyasa, and, being freed by him from uncertainty, departed as they came. To you also, excellent Maitreya, have I imparted this secret, this one great virtue of the otherwise vicious Kali age. The dissolution of the world, and the aggregation of the elements, I will now describe to you [\*1].

### Footnotes

^629:1 The illustration of the efficacy of devotion to Vishnu given in this chapter is peculiar to this Purana, but the doctrine is common to it and the Bhagavata. It is repeatedly inculcated in that work. The parallel passage in the twelfth book is the following. "Purushottama, abiding in the hearts of men, takes away all the sins of the Kali age, produced by place or property. Bhagavan, abiding in the heart, and heard, repeated, read of, worshipped, or honoured, dissipates the ills of men for ten thousand births. As fire, entering into the substance of gold, purifies it from the alloy with which it is debased in the mine, so Vishnu, united with the devotee, is the refiner from all that is evil. By learning, penance, suppression of breath, friendship, pilgrimage, ablution, mortification, gifts, prayer, the soul attains not that exceeding purity which it derives from the presence of Vishnu. Therefore, with all your soul, O king, hold Kes'ava ever present in your heart. Let one about to die be most careful in this; for so he goes to supreme felicity. Let the name of the supreme god, Vishnu, be repeated diligently by all in their last moments; for he who desires liberation shall attain it by the frequent repetition of the name of Krishna. Final felicity is derived in the Krita age from holy study; in the Treta, from religious rites. In the Dwapara it is attained by pious services; but in the Kali age it is secured by repeating the name of Hari." Similar doctrines are taught in the Gita, and other Vaishnava works. See As. Res. vol. XVI. p. 116.

## CHAP. III.

Three different kinds of dissolution. Duration of a Pararddha. The Clepsydra, or vessel for measuring time. The dissolution that occurs at the end of a day of Brahma.

THE dissolution of existing beings is of three kinds, incidental, elemental, and absolute [\*1]. The incidental is that which relates to Brahma, and occurs at the end of a Kalpa: the elemental is that which takes place after two Pararddhas: the absolute is final liberation from existence.

MAITREYA. – Tell me, excellent master, what is the enumeration of a Pararddha, the expiration of two of which is the period of elemental dissolution [\*2].

PARAS'ARA. – A Pararddha, Maitreya, is that number which occurs in the eighteenth place of figures, enumerated according to the rule of decimal notation [\*3]. At the end of twice that period

elemental dissolution occurs, when all the discrete products of nature are withdrawn into their indiscrete source. The shortest period of time is a Matra, which is equal to the twinkling of the human eye. Fifteen Matras make a Kashtha; thirty Kashthas, one Kala; fifteen Kalas, one Nadika. A Nadika is ascertained by a measure of water, with a vessel made of twelve Palas and a half of copper, in the bottom of which there is to be a hole made with a tube of gold, of the weight of four Mashas, and four inches long [\*4]. According to the Magadha measure, the vessel should hold a Prastha (or sixteen Palas) of water. Two of these Nadis make one Muhurttā; thirty of which are one day and night. Thirty such periods form a month; twelve months make a year, or a day and night of the gods; and three hundred and sixty such days constitute a year of the celestials. An aggregate of four ages contains twelve thousand divine years; and a thousand periods of four ages complete a day of Brahma. That period is also termed a Kalpa, during which fourteen Manus preside; and at the end of it occurs the incidental or Brahma dissolution. The nature of this dissolution is very fearful: hear me describe it, as well as that which takes place at the elemental dissolution, which I will also relate to you.

At the end of a thousand periods of four ages the earth is for the most part exhausted. A total dearth then ensues, which lasts a hundred years; and, in consequence of the failure of food, all beings become languid and exanimate, and at last entirely perish. The eternal Vishnu then assumes the character of Rudra, the destroyer, and descends to reunite all his creatures with himself. He enters into the seven rays of the sun [\*5], drinks up all the waters of the globe, and causes all moisture whatever, in living bodies or in the soil, to evaporate; thus drying up the whole earth. The seas, the rivers, the mountain torrents, and springs, are all exhaled; and so are all the waters of Patala, the regions below the earth. Thus fed, through his intervention, with abundant moisture, the seven solar rays dilate to seven suns [\*6], whose radiance glows above, below, and on every side, and sets the three worlds and Patala on fire. The three worlds, consumed by these suns, become rugged and deformed throughout the whole extent of their mountains, rivers, and seas; and the earth, bare of verdure, and destitute of moisture, alone remains, resembling in appearance the back of a tortoise. The destroyer of all things, Hari, in the form of Rudra, who is the flame of time, becomes the scorching breath of the serpent S'esha, and thereby reduces Patala to ashes. The great fire, when it has burnt all the divisions of Patala, proceeds to the earth, and consumes it also. A vast whirlpool of eddying flame then spreads to the region of the atmosphere, and the sphere of the gods, and wraps them in ruin. The three spheres shew like a frying-pan amidst the surrounding flames, that prey upon all moveable or stationary things. The inhabitants of the two upper spheres, having discharged their functions, and being annoyed by the heat, remove to the sphere above, or Maharloka. When that becomes heated, its tenants, who after the full period of their stay are desirous of ascending to higher regions, depart for the Janaloka [\*7].

Janarddana, in the person of Rudra, having consumed the whole world, breathes forth heavy clouds; and those called Samvartta, resembling vast elephants in bulk, overspread the sky, roaring, and darting lightnings. Some are as black as the blue lotus; some are white as the water-lily; some are dusky, like smoke; and some are yellow; some are of a dun colour, like that of an ass; some like ashes sprinkled on the forehead; some are deep blue, as the lapis lazuli; some azure, like the sapphire; some are white, as the conch or the jasmine; and some are black, as collyrium; some are of bright red, like the ladybird; some are of the fierceness of red arsenic; and some are like the wing of the painted jay. Such are these massy clouds in hue: in form some resemble towns, some mountains, some are like houses and hovels, and some are like columns. Mighty in size, and loud in thunder, they fill all space. Showering down torrents of water, these clouds quench the dreadful fires which involve the three worlds, and then they rain uninterruptedly for a hundred years, and deluge the whole world. Pouring down in drops as large as dice, these rains overspread the earth, and fill the middle region, and inundate heaven. The world is now enveloped in darkness, and all things, animate or inanimate, having perished, the clouds continue to pour down their waters for more than a hundred years.

## Footnotes

^630:1 The first is called Naimittaka, 'occasional' or 'incidental,' or Brahmya, as occasioned by the intervals of Brahma's days; the destruction of creatures, though not of the substance of the world, occurring during his night. The general resolution of the elements into their primitive source, or Prakriti, is the Prakritika destruction, and occurs at the end of Brahma's life. The third, the absolute or final, Atyantika, is individual annihilation; Moksha, exemption for ever from future existence. The Bhagavata here notices the fourth kind, of which mention occurred in a preceding passage (<page 56>), Nitya or constant dissolution; explaining it to be the imperceptible change that all things suffer in the various stages of growth and decay, life and death. 'The various conditions of beings subject to change are occasioned by that constant dissolution of life which is rapidly produced by the resistless stream of time, taking every thing perpetually away.' The Vayu describes but three kinds of Pralaya, omitting the Nitya.

^630:2 Maitreya has a rather indifferent memory (see <page 22>); but the periods specified in the two places do not agree. In the first book two Pararddhas, as equal to one hundred years of Brahma, are 311.040.000.000.000 years of mortals.

^630:3 Counting according to this mode of enumeration, a Pararddha is represented by 100.000.000.000.000.000. The Vayu Purana has a term for each of these decimal values. Das'a, 10; S'atam, 100; Sahasram, 1000; Ayutam, 10.000; Niyutam, 100.000; Prayutam, 1.000.000; Arvudam, 10.000.000; Nyurvudam, [p. 631] 100.000.000; Vrindam, 1.000.000.000; Param, 10.000.000.000; Kharvam, 100.000.000.000; Nikharvam, 1000.000.000.000; S'ankham, 10.000.000.000.000; Padmam, 100.000.000.000.000; Samudram, 1.000.000.000.000; Madhyamam, 10.000.000.000.000.000; Pararddham, 100.000.000.000.000.000. In the first book the Pararddham, as the half of Brahma's life, is but 155.520.000.000.000, fifteen instead of eighteen places of figures.

^631:4 The description of the Clepsydra is very brief, and wanting in precision. One of the commentaries is more explicit: 'A vessel made of twelve Palas and a half of copper, and holding a Prastha, Magadha measure, of water, broad at top, and having at bottom a tube of gold of four Mashas weight, four fingers long, is placed in water, and the time in which the vessel is filled by the hole in the bottom is called a Nadika.' The term S'alaka generally means a needle or stake, but it must here denote a pipe. The common measure of the Nadi is a thin shallow brass cup, with a small hole in the bottom. It is placed on the surface of water, in a large vessel, where nothing can disturb it, and where the water gradually fills the cup, and sinks it. As. Res, vol. V. p. 87.

^632:5 See <page 236>. n. .

^632:6 These also have their several appellations: the commentator quotes the Vedas as the authority: Araga, Bhraja, Patala, Patanga, Swamabhak, Jyotishmat, and Savibhasa.

^632:7 The passage may also be understood, 'Those go to Janaloka who are desirous of obtaining Brahma, or final liberation, through the ten stages of perfection – devotion, penance, truth, &c.' In the Vayu Purana more details are specified. Those sainted mortals who have diligently worshipped Vishnu, and are distinguished for piety, abide, at the time of dissolution, in Maharloka, with the Pitris, the Manus, [p. 633] the seven Rishis, the various orders of celestial spirits, and the gods. These, when the heat of the flames that destroy the world reaches to Maharloka, repair to Janaloka in their subtle forms, destined to become reembodyed, in similar capacities as their former, when the world is renewed, at the beginning of the succeeding Kalpa. This continues throughout the life of Brahma; at the expiration of his life all are destroyed: but those who have then attained a residence in the Brahmaloaka, by having identified themselves in spirit with the supreme, are finally resolved into the sole-existing Brahma.

## CHAP. IV.

Continuation of the account of the first kind of dissolution. Of the second kind, or elemental dissolution; of all being resolved into primary spirit.

WHEN the waters have reached the region of the seven Rishis, and the whole of the three worlds is one ocean, they stop. The breath of Vishnu becomes a strong wind, which blows for more than a hundred years, until all the clouds are dispersed. The wind is then reabsorbed, and he of whom all things are made, the lord by whom all things exist, he who is inconceivable, without beginning of the universe, reposes, sleeping upon S'esha, in the midst of the deep. The creator, Hari, sleeps upon the ocean, in the form of Brahma – glorified by Sanaka And the saints who had gone to the Janaloka, and contemplated by the holy inhabitants of Brahmaloaka, anxious for final liberation – involved in mystic slumber, the celestial personification of his own illusions, and meditating on his own ineffable spirit, which is called Vasudeva. This, Maitreya, is the dissolution termed incidental, because Hari, in the form of Brahma, sleeps there, as its incidental cause.

When the universal spirit wakes, the world revives; when he closes his eyes, all things fall upon the bed of mystic slumber. In like manner as a thousand great ages constitute a day of Brahma, so his night consists of the same period; during which the world is submerged by a vast ocean. Awaking at the end of his night, the unborn, Vishnu, in the character of Brahma, creates the universe anew, in the manner formerly related to you [\*1].

I have thus described to you the intermediate dissolution of the world, occurring at the end of every Kalpa. I will now, Maitreya, describe to you elemental dissolution. When by dearth and fire all the worlds and Patalas are withered up, and the modifications of Mahat and other products of nature are by the will of Krishna destroyed, the progress of elemental dissolution is begun. Then, first, the waters swallow up the property of earth, which is the rudiment of smell; and earth, deprived of its property, proceeds to destruction. Devoid of the rudiment of odour, the earth becomes one with water. The waters then being much augmented, roaring, and rushing along, fill up all space, whether agitated or still. When the universe is thus pervaded by the waves of the watery element, its rudimental flavour is licked up by the element of fire, and, in consequence of the destruction of their rudiments, the waters themselves are destroyed. Deprived of the essential rudiment of flavour, they become one with fire, and the universe is therefore entirely filled with flame, which drinks up the water on every side, and gradually overspreads the whole of the world. While space is enveloped in flame, above, below, and all around, the element of wind seizes upon the rudimental property, or form, which is the cause of light; and that being withdrawn, all becomes of the nature of air. The rudiment of form being destroyed, and fire deprived of its rudiment, air extinguishes fire, and spreads resistlessly over space, which is deprived of light when fire merges into air. Air then, accompanied by sound, which is the source of ether, extends every where throughout the ten regions of space, until ether seizes upon contact, its rudimental property; by the loss of which, air is destroyed, and ether remains unmodified: devoid of form, flavour, touch, and smell, it exists unembodied and vast, and pervades the whole of space. Ether, whose characteristic property and rudiment is sound, exists alone, occupying all the vacuity of space. But then the radical element egotism devours sound, and all the elements and faculties are at once merged into their original. This primary element is consciousness, combined with the property of darkness, and is itself swallowed up by Mahat, whose characteristic property is intelligence; and earth and Mahat are the inner and outer boundaries of the universe. In this manner, as in the creation were the seven forms of nature (Prakriti), reckoned from Mahat to earth [\*2], so, at the time of elemental dissolution, these seven successively reenter into each other. The egg of Brahma is dissolved in the waters that surround it, with its seven zones, seven oceans, seven regions, and their mountains. The investure of water is drunk up by fire: the stratum of fire is absorbed by that of air: air blends itself with ether: the primary element of egotism devours the ether, and is itself taken up by intellect, which, along with all these, is seized upon by nature (Prakriti). Equilibrium of the three properties, without excess or deficiency, is called

nature (Prakriti), origin (Hetu), the chief principle (Pradhana), cause (Karana), supreme (Param). This Prakriti is essentially the same, whether discrete or indiscrete; only that which is discrete is finally lost or absorbed in the indiscrete. Spirit also, which is one, pure, imperishable, eternal, all-pervading, is a portion of that supreme spirit which is all things. That spirit which is other than (embodied) spirit, in which there are no attributes of name, species, or the like – which is one with all wisdom, and is to be understood as sole existence – that is Brahma, infinite glory, supreme spirit, supreme power, Vishnu, all that is; from whence the perfect sage returns no more. Nature (Prakriti), which I have described to you as being essentially both discrete and indiscrete, and spirit (which is united with body), both resolve into supreme spirit. Supreme spirit is the upholder of all things, and the ruler of all things, and is glorified in the Vedas and in the Vedanta by the name of Vishnu.

Works, as enjoined by the Vedas, are of two kinds, active (Pravritta) and quiescent (Nivritta); by both of which the universal person is worshipped by mankind. He, the lord of sacrifice, the male of sacrifice, the most excellent male, is worshipped by men in the active mode by rites enjoined in the Rik, Yajur, and Sama Vedas. The soul of wisdom, the person of wisdom, Vishnu, the giver of emancipation, is worshipped by sages in the quiescent form, through meditative devotion. The exhaustless Vishnu is whatever thing that is designated by long, short, or prolated syllables, or that which is without a name. He is that which is discrete, and that which is indiscrete: he is exhaustless spirit, supreme spirit, universal spirit, Hari, the wearer of universal forms. Nature, whether discrete or indiscrete, is absorbed into him, and (detached) spirit also merges into the all-diffusive and unobstructed spirit. The period of two Pararddhas, as I have described it to you, Maitreya, is called a day of that potent Vishnu; and whilst the products of nature are merged into their source, nature into spirit, and that into the supreme, that period is termed his night, and is of equal duration with his day. But, in fact, to that eternal supreme spirit there is neither day nor night, and these distinctions are only figuratively applied to the almighty. I have thus explained to you the nature of elemental dissolution, and will now expound to you which is final [\*3].

### Footnotes

^634:1 The Naimittika Pralaya is described in the Vayu, Bhagavata, Kurma, and other Puranas, to the same effect, and very commonly in precisely the same words.

^635:2 See <page 14>.

^637:3 The Bhagavata notices the Prakrita pralaya much more briefly, and it is omitted in the Vayu.

## CHAP. V.

The third kind of dissolution, or final liberation from existence. Evils of worldly life. Sufferings in infancy, manhood, old age. Pains of hell. Imperfect felicity of heaven. Exemption from birth desirable by the wise. The nature of spirit or god. Meaning of the terms Bhagavat and Vasudeva.

THE wise man having investigated the three kinds of worldly pain, or mental and bodily affliction and the like [\*1], and having acquired true wisdom, and detachment from human objects, obtains final dissolution. The first of the three pains, or Adhyatmika, is of two kinds, bodily and mental. Bodily pain is of many kinds, as you shall hear. Affections of the head, catarrh, fever, choleric, fistula, spleen, hemorrhoids, intumescence, sickness, ophthalmia, dysentery, leprosy, and many other diseases, constitute bodily affliction. Mental sufferings are love, anger, fear, hate, covetousness, stupefaction, despair, sorrow, malice, disdain, jealousy, envy, and many other passions which are engendered in the mind. These and various other afflictions, mental or corporeal, are comprised, under the class of worldly sufferings, which is called Adhyatmika (natural and inseparable). That pain to which, excellent Brahman, the term Adhibhautika (natural, but incidental) is applied, is every kind of evil which is inflicted (from without) upon men by beasts, birds, men, goblins, snakes, fiends, or reptiles; and the pain that is termed Adhidaivika (or superhuman) is the work of

cold, heat, wind, rain, lightning, and other (atmospherical phenomena). Affliction, Maitreya, is multiplied in thousands of shapes in the progress of conception, birth, decay, disease, death, and hell. The tender (and subtle) animal exists in the embryo, surrounded by abundant filth, floating in water, and distorted in its back, neck, and bones; enduring severe pain even in the course of its development, as disordered by the acid, acrid, bitter, pungent, and saline articles of its mother's food; incapable of extending or contracting its limbs; reposing amidst the slime of ordure and urine; every way incommoded; unable to breathe; endowed with consciousness, and calling to memory many hundred previous births. Thus exists the embryo in profound affliction, bound to the world by its former works.

When the child is about to be born, its face is besmeared by excrement, urine, blood, mucus, and semen; its attachment to the uterus is ruptured by the Prajapati wind; it is turned head downwards, and violently expelled from the womb by the powerful and painful winds of parturition; and the infant losing for a time all sensation, when brought in contact with the external air, is immediately deprived of its intellectual knowledge. Thus born, the child is tortured in every limb, as if pierced with thorns, or cut to pieces with a saw, and falls from its fetid lodgment, as from a sore, like a crawling thing upon the earth. Unable to feel itself, unable to turn itself, it is dependent upon the will of others for being bathed and nourished. Laid upon a dirty bed, it is bitten by insects and mosquitoes, and has not power to drive them away. Many are the pangs attending birth, and many are those which succeed to birth; and many are the sufferings which are inflicted by elemental and superhuman agency in the state of childhood. Enveloped by the gloom of ignorance, and internally bewildered, man knows not whence he is, who he is, whither he goeth, nor what is his nature; by what bonds is bound; what is cause, and what is not cause; what is to be done, and what is to be left undone; what is to be said, and what is to be kept silent; what is righteousness, what is iniquity; in what it consists, or how; what is right, what is wrong; what is virtue, what is vice. Thus man, like a brute beast, addicted only to animal gratifications, suffers the pain that ignorance occasions. Ignorance, darkness, inactivity, influence those devoid of knowledge, so that pious works are neglected; but hell is the consequence of neglect of religious acts, according to the great sages, and the ignorant therefore suffer affliction both in this world and in the next.

When old age arrives, the body is infirm; the limbs are relaxed; the face is emaciate and shrivelled; the skin is wrinkled, and scantily covers the veins and sinews; the eye discerns not afar off, and the pupil gazes on vacuity; the nostrils are stuffed with hair; the trunk trembles as it moves; the bones appear beneath the surface; the back is bowed, and the joints are bent; the digestive fire is extinct, and there is little appetite and little vigour; walking, rising, sleeping, sitting, are all painful efforts; the ear is dull; the eye is dim; the mouth is disgusting with dribbling saliva; the senses no longer are obedient to the will; and as death approaches, the things that are perceived even are immediately forgotten. The utterance of a single sentence is fatiguing, and wakefulness is perpetuated by difficult breathing, coughing, and painful exhaustion. The old man is lifted up by somebody else; he is clothed by somebody else; he is an object of contempt to his servants, his children, and his wife. Incapable of cleanliness, of amusement, or food, or desire, he is laughed at by his dependants, and disregarded by his kin; and dwelling on the exploits of his youth, as on the actions of a past life, he sighs deeply, and is sorely distressed. Such are some of the pains which old age is condemned to suffer. I will now describe to you the agonies of death.

The neck droops; the feet and hands are relaxed; the body trembles; the man is repeatedly exhausted, subdued, and visited with interrupted knowledge; the principle of selfishness afflicts him, and he thinks what will become of my wealth, my lands, my children, my wife, my servants, my house? the joints of his limbs are tortured with severe pains, as if cut by a saw, or as if they were pierced by the sharp arrows of the destroyer; he rolls his eyes, and tosses about his hands and feet; his lips and palate are parched and dry, and his throat, obstructed by foul humours and deranged vital airs, emits a rattling sound; he is afflicted with burning heat, and with thirst, and with hunger; and he at last passes away, tortured by the servants of the judge of the dead, to undergo a renewal of

his sufferings in another body. These are the agonies which men have to endure when they die. I will now describe to you the tortures which they suffer in hell.

Men are bound, when they die, by the servants of the king of Tartarus with cords, and beaten with sticks, and have then to encounter the fierce aspect of Yama, and the horrors of their terrible route. In the different hells there are various intolerable tortures with burning sand, fire, machines, and weapons; some are severed with saws, some roasted in forges, some are chopped with axes, some buried in the ground, some are mounted on stakes, some cast to wild beasts to be devoured, some are gnawed by vultures, some torn by tigers, some are boiled in oil, some rolled in caustic slime, some are precipitated from great heights, some tossed upwards by engines. The number of punishments inflicted in hell, which are the consequences of sin, is infinite [\*2].

But not in hell alone do the souls of the deceased undergo pain: there is no cessation even in heaven; for its temporary inhabitant is ever tormented with the prospect of descending again to earth. Again is he liable to conception and to birth; he is merged again into the embryo, and repairs to it when about to be born; then he dies, as soon as born, or in infancy, or in youth, or in manhood, or in old age. Death, sooner or later, is inevitable. As long as he lives he is immersed in manifold afflictions, like the seed of the cotton amidst the down that is to be spun into thread. In acquiring, losing, and preserving wealth there are many griefs; and so there are in the misfortunes of our friends. Whatever is produced that is most acceptable to man, that, Maitreya, becomes a seed whence springs the tree of sorrow. Wife, children, servants, house, lands, riches, contribute much more to the misery than to the happiness of mankind. Where could man, scorched by the fires of the sun of this world, look for felicity, were it not for the shade afforded by the tree of emancipation? Attainment of the divine being is considered by the wise as the remedy of the threefold class of ills that beset the different stages of life, conception, birth, and decay, as characterized by that only happiness which effaces all other kinds of felicity, however abundant, and as being absolute and final [\*3].

It should therefore be the assiduous endeavour of wise men to attain unto god [\*4]. The means of such attainment are said, great Muni, to be knowledge and works. Knowledge is of two kinds, that which is derived from scripture, and that which is derived from reflection. Brahma that is the word is composed of scripture; Brahma that is supreme is produced of reflection [\*5]. Ignorance is utter darkness, in which knowledge, obtained through any sense (as that of hearing), shines like a lamp; but the knowledge that is derived from reflection breaks upon the obscurity like the sun. What has been said by Manu, when appealing to the meaning of the Vedas with respect to this subject, I will repeat to you. There are two (forms of) spirit (or god), the spirit which is the word, and the spirit which is supreme. He who is thoroughly imbued with the word of god obtains supreme spirit [\*6]. The Atharva Veda also states that there are two kinds of knowledge; by the one, which is the supreme, god is attained; the other is that which consists of the Rich and other Vedas [\*7]. That which is imperceptible, undecaying, inconceivable, unborn, inexhaustible, indescribable; which has neither form, nor hands, nor feet; which is almighty, omnipresent, eternal; the cause of all things, and without cause; permeating all, itself unpenetrated, and from which all things proceed; that is the object which the wise behold, that is Brahma, that is the supreme state, that is the subject of contemplation to those who desire liberation, that is the thing spoken of by the Vedas, the infinitely subtile, supreme condition of Vishnu. That essence of the supreme is defined by the term Bhagavat [\*8]: the word Bhagavat is the denomination of that primeval and eternal god: and he who fully understands the meaning of that expression, is possessed of holy wisdom, the sum and substance of the three Vedas. The word Bhagavat is a convenient form to be used in the adoration of that supreme being, to whom no term is applicable; and therefore Bhagavat expresses that supreme spirit, which is individual, almighty, and the cause of causes of all things. The letter Bh implies the cherisher and supporter of the universe. By ga is understood the leader, impeller, or creator. The dissyllable Bhaga indicates the six properties, dominion, might, glory, splendour, wisdom, and dispassion. The purport of the letter va is that elemental spirit in which all beings exist, and which exists in all be-

ings [\*9]. And thus this great word Bhagavan is the name of Vasudeva, who is one with the supreme Brahma, and of no one else. This word therefore, which is the general denomination of an adorable object, is not used in reference to the supreme in a general, but a special signification. When applied to any other (thing or person) it is used in its customary or general import. In the latter case it may purport one who knows the origin and end and revolutions of beings, and what is wisdom, what ignorance. In the former it denotes wisdom, energy, power, dominion, might, glory, without end, and without defect.

The term Vasudeva means that all beings abide in that supreme being, and that he abides in all beings [\*10], as was formerly explained by Kes'idhwaja to Khandikya, called Janaka, when he inquired of him an explanation of the name of the immortal, Vasudeva. He said, "He dwelleth internally in all beings, and all things dwell in him; and thence the lord Vasudeva is the creator and preserver of the world. He, though one with all beings, is beyond and separate from material nature (Prakriti), from its products, from properties, from imperfections: he is beyond all investing substance: he is universal soul; all the interstices of the universe are filled up by him: he is one with all good qualities; and all created beings are endowed with but a small portion of his individuality. Assuming at will various forms, he bestows benefits on the whole world, which was his work. Glory, might, dominion, wisdom, energy, power, and other attributes, are collected in him. Supreme of the supreme, in whom no imperfections abide, lord over finite and infinite, god in individuals and universals, visible and invisible, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty. The wisdom, perfect, pure, supreme, undefiled, and one only, by which he is conceived, contemplated, and known, that is wisdom; all else is ignorance."

### Footnotes

^638:1 The three kinds of affliction, inseparable, incidental, and superhuman, are fully described in the commentary on the first verse of the Sankhya Karika, p. 8, in a similar strain as that which is adopted in the text.

^641:2 Some further particulars of the different hells, and the punishments inflicted in them, have been given before: see <page 207>.

^641:3 All this is conformable to the Sankhya doctrines in particular, although the same spirit pervades all Hindu metaphysics.

^641:4 Tasmāt Tat praptaye yatna kartavya [p. 642] panditairnaraiḥ. The expression Tat praptaye, 'for the obtaining of that,' refers to the phrase immediately preceding, Bhagavatprapti, 'obtaining of,' or 'attaining to, Bhagavat,' the lord.

^642:5 Brahma is of two kinds; S'abda-Brahma, spirit or god to be attained through the word, that is, the Vedas and the duties they prescribe; and Para-Brahma, spirit or god to be attained through reflection, by which the difference between soul and matter is ascertained.

^642:6 This seems intended as a quotation from Manu, but it has not been found in the code; it is .

^642:7 The commentator quotes other passages from the Vedas of a similar tendency, intimating, however, the necessity of performing acts prior to attaining knowledge; as, 'The decoction (preparatory process) being digested by rites, thereafter knowledge is the supreme resource.' 'Having crossed the gulph of death by ignorance (ceremonial acts), man obtains immortality by (holy) knowledge.'

^643:8 According to the comment, allusion is here made to the twelve syllable Mantra, or mystic formula addressed to Vishnu: 'Om Bhagavate Vasudevaya nama; 'Om! salutation to Bhagavat Vasudeva;' the repetition of which, by those devoted (bhakta) to Vishnu, is the easy mode of securing their liberation." The mysticism is, however, no doubt older than the worship of Vishnu; and the term Bhagavat is defined in the text according to the interpretation of the Vedas.

^643:9 The commentator says these interpretations are from the Nirukta, the glossary of the Vedas. The more etymological derivation of the term is, Bhaga, 'power,' 'authority,' and vat possessive affix.

^643:10 From the root Vas, 'abiding,' 'dwelling' See p. <page 1> and <page 9>.

## CHAP. VI.

Means of attaining liberation. Anecdotes of Khandikya and Kes'idhwaja. The former instructs the latter how to atone for permitting the death of a cow. Kes'idhwaja offers him a requital, and he desires to be instructed in spiritual knowledge.

HE, Purushottama, is also known by holy study and devout meditation; and either, as the cause of attaining him, is entitled Brahma. From study let a man proceed to meditation, and from meditation to study [\*1]; by perfection in both supreme spirit becomes manifest. Study is one eye wherewith to behold it, and meditation is the other: he who is one with Brahma sees not with the eye of flesh.

MAITREYA. – Reverend teacher, I am desirous of being informed what is meant by the term meditation (Yoga), by understanding which I may behold the supreme being, the upholder of the universe.

PARAS'ARA. – I will repeat to you, Maitreya, the explanation formerly given by Kes'idhwaja to the magnanimous Khandikya, also called Janaka.

MAITREYA. – Tell me first, Brahman, who Khandikya was, and who was Kes'idhwaja; and how it happened that a conversation relating to the practice of Yoga occurred between them.

PARAS'ARA. – There was Janaka, named Dharmadhwaaja, who had two sons, Amitadhwaaja and Kritadhwaaja; and the latter was a king ever intent upon existent supreme spirit: his son was the celebrated Kes'idhwaja. The son of Amitadhwaaja was Janaka, called Khandikya [\*2]. Khandikya was diligent in the way of works, and was renowned on earth for religious rites. Kes'idhwaja, on the other hand, was endowed with spiritual knowledge. These two were engaged in hostilities, and Khandikya was driven from his principality by Kes'idhwaja. Expelled from his dominions, he wandered with a few followers, his priest and his counsellors, amidst woods and mountains, where, destitute of true wisdom, he performed many sacrifices, expecting thereby to obtain divine truth, and to escape from death by ignorance [\*3].

Once whilst the best of those who are skilled in devotion, Kes'idhwaja, was engaged in devout exercises, a fierce tiger slew his milch cow [\*4] in the lonely forest. When the Raja heard that the cow had been killed, he asked the ministering priests what form of penance would expiate the crime. They replied that they did not know, and referred him to Kas'eru. Kas'eru, when the Raja consulted him, told him that he knew not, but that Sunaka would be able to tell him. Accordingly the Raja went to Sunaka; but he replied, "I am as unable, great king, to answer your question as Kas'eru has been; and there is no one now upon earth who can give you the information except your enemy Khandikya, whom you have conquered."

Upon receiving this answer, Kes'idhwaja said, "I will go, then, and pay a visit to my foe: if he kill me, no matter, for then I shall obtain the reward that attends being killed in a holy cause: if, on the contrary, he tell me what penance to perform, then my sacrifice will be unimpaired in efficacy." Accordingly he ascended his car, having clothed himself in the deer skin (of the religious student), and went to the forest where the wise Khandikya resided. When Khandikya beheld him approach, his eyes reddened with rage, and he took up his bow, and said to him, "You have armed yourself with the deer skin to accomplish my destruction, imagining that in such an attire you will be safe from me; but, fool, the deer, upon whose backs this skin is seen, are slain by you and me with sharp arrows: so will I slay you; you shall not go free whilst I am living. You are an unprincipled felon, who have robbed me of my kingdom, and are deserving of death." To this Kes'idhwaja answered, "I

have come hither, Khandikya, to ask you to solve my doubts, and not with any hostile intention: lay aside therefore both your arrow and your anger." Thus spoken to, Khandikya retired a while with his counsellors and his priest, and consulted with them what course to pursue. They strongly urged him to slay Kes'idhwaja, who was now in his power, and by whose death he would again become the monarch of the whole earth. Khandikya replied to them, "It is no doubt true that by such an act I should become the monarch of the whole earth: he, however, would thereby conquer the world to come; whilst the earth would be mine. Now if I do not kill him, I shall subdue the next world, and leave him this earth. It seems to me that this world is not of more value than the next; for the subjugation of the next world endures for ever; the conquest over this is but for a brief season. I will therefore not kill him, but tell him what he wishes to know."

Returning then to Kes'idhwaja, Khandikya desired him to propose his question, which he promised to answer; and Kes'idhwaja related to him what had happened, the death of the cow, and demanded to know what penance he should perform. Khandikya, in reply, explained to him fully the expiation that was suited to the occasion; and Kes'idhwaja then, with his permission, returned to the place of sacrifice, and regularly fulfilled every necessary act. Having completed the ceremony, with its supplementary rites, Kes'idhwaja accomplished all his objects: but he then reflected thus: "The priests whom I invited to attend have all been duly honoured; all those who had any request to make have been gratified by compliance with their desires; all that is proper for this world has been effected by me: why then should my mind feel as if my duty had been unfulfilled?" So meditating, he remembered that he had not presented to Khandikya the gift that it is becoming to offer to a spiritual preceptor, and, mounting his chariot, he immediately set off to the thick forest where that sage abode. Khandikya, upon his reappearance, assumed his weapons to kill him; but Kes'idhwaja exclaimed, "Forbear, venerable sage. I am not here to injure you, Khandikya: dismiss your wrath, and know that I have come hither to offer you that remuneration which is due to you as my instructor. Through your lessons I have fully completed my sacrifice, and I am therefore desirous to give you a gift. Demand what it shall be."

Khandikya having once more communed with his counsellors, told them the purpose of his rival's visit, and asked them what he should demand. His friends recommended him to require his whole kingdom back again, as kingdoms are obtained by prudent men without conflicting hosts. The reflecting king Khandikya laughed, and replied to them, "Why should a person such as I be desirous of a temporary earthly kingdom? Of a truth you are able counsellors in the concerns of this life, but of those of the life to come you are assuredly ignorant." So speaking, he went back to Kes'idhwaja, and said to him, "Is it true that you wish to make me a gift, as to your preceptor?" "Indeed I do," answered Kes'idhwaja. "Then," rejoined Khandikya, "as it is known that you are learned in the spiritual learning that teaches the doctrine of the soul, if you will communicate that knowledge to me, you will have discharged your debt to your instructor. Declare to me what acts are efficacious for the alleviation of human affliction."

### Footnotes

<sup>645:1</sup> Both study of the Vedas (Swadhyaya) and abstraction (Yoga) are to be practised: when a man is weary of one, he may apply to the other. The Yoga, however, limits the practical part to silent prayer. 'Wearied of meditation, let him pray inaudibly: weary of prayer, let him repeat meditation.' 'By the union of prayer and meditation let him behold soul in himself.'

<sup>645:2</sup> No such names occur amongst the Maithila kings of the Vishnu Purana (see <page 390>); but, as there noticed (note ), the Bhagavata inserts them. Janaka is used as a title. Kritadhwaja, in some of the copies, is read Ritadhwaja.

<sup>646:3</sup> The performance of rites as a means of salvation is called ignorance in the Vedas (see <page 642>, n. ). Works are recommended as introductory to the acquirement of knowledge: it is ignorance to consider them as finite.

^646:4 Tasya-dhenum. One copy has Homa-dhenu, 'cow of sacrifice;' another, Dharma-dhenu, 'cow of righteousness.' The commentator explains the terms as importing the same thing, a cow yielding milk for holy purposes, or for the butter which is poured in oblations upon the sacrificial fire.

## CHAP. VII.

Kes'idhwaja describes the nature of ignorance, and the benefits of the Yoga, or contemplative devotion. Of the novice and the adept in the performance of the Yoga. How it is performed. The first stage, proficiency in acts of restraint and moral duty: the second, particular mode of sitting: the third, Pranayama, modes of breathing: the fourth, Pratyahara, restraint of thought: the fifth, apprehension of spirit: the sixth, retention of the idea. Meditation on the individual and universal forms of Vishnu. Acquisition of knowledge. Final liberation.

"BUT," said Kes'idhwaja, "why have you not asked of me my kingdom, now free from all annoyance? what else except dominion is acceptable to the warrior race?" "I will tell you," replied Khandikya, "why I did not make such a demand, nor require that territory which is an object of ignorant ambition. It is the duty of the warrior to protect his subjects in peace, and to kill in fight the enemies of his sway. It is no fault that you should have taken my kingdom from one who was unable to defend it, to whom it was a bondage, and who was thus freed from the incumbrance of ignorance. My desire of dominion originated in my being born to possess it: the ambition of others, which proceeds from human frailties, is not compatible with virtue. To solicit gifts is not the duty of a prince and warrior: and for these reasons I have not asked for your kingdom, nor made a demand which ignorance alone would have suggested. Those only who are destitute of knowledge, whose minds are engrossed by selfishness, who are intoxicated with the inebriating beverage of self-sufficiency, desire kingdoms; not such as I am."

When king Kes'idhwaja heard these words, he was much pleased, and exclaimed, "It is well spoken!" Then addressing Khandikya affectionately, he said, "Listen to my words. Through desire of escaping death by the ignorance of works I exercise the regal power, celebrate various sacrifices, and enjoy pleasures subversive of purity. Fortunate is it for you that your mind has attached itself to the dominion of discrimination. Pride of your race! now listen to the real nature of ignorance. The (erroneous) notion that self consists in what is not self, and the opinion that property consists in what is not one's own, constitute the double seed of the tree of ignorance. The ill judging embodied being, bewildered by the darkness of fascination, situated in a body composed of the five elements, loudly asserts, 'This is I:' but who would ascribe spiritual individuality to a body in which soul is distinct from the ether, air, fire, water, and earth (of which that body is composed) [\*1]? What man of understanding assigns to disembodied spirit corporeal fruition, or lands, houses, and the like, that it should say, 'These are mine?' What wise man entertains the idea of property in sons or grandsons begotten of the body after the spirit has abandoned it? Man performs all acts for the purpose of bodily fruition, and the consequence of such acts is another body; so that their result is nothing but confinement to bodily existence. In the same manner as a mansion of clay is plastered with clay and water, so the body, which is of earth, is perpetuated by earth and water (or by eating and drinking). The body, consisting of the five elements, is nourished by substances equally composed of those elements: but since this is the case, what is there in this life that man should be proud of? Travelling the path of the world for many thousands of births, man attains only the weariness of bewilderment, and is smothered by the dust of imagination. When that dust is washed away by the bland water of real knowledge, then the weariness of bewilderment sustained by the wayfarer through repeated births is removed. When that weariness is relieved, the internal man is at peace, and he obtains that supreme felicity which is unequalled and undisturbed. This soul is (of its own nature) pure, and composed of happiness and wisdom. The properties of pain, ignorance, and impurity, are those of nature (Prakriti), not of soul. There is no affinity between fire and water, but when the latter is placed over the former in a caldron it bubbles and boils, and exhibits the properties of fire. In like manner, when soul is associated with Prakriti it is vitiated by egotism and the rest, and assumes the

qualities of grosser nature, although essentially distinct from them, and incorruptible. Such is the seed of ignorance, as I have explained it to you. There is but one cure of worldly sorrows, the practice of devotion; no other is known."

"Then," said Khandikya, "do you, who are the chief of those versed in contemplative devotion, explain to me what that is; for in the race of the descendants of Nimi [\*2] you are best acquainted with the sacred writings in which it is taught." "Hear," replied Kes'idhwaja, "the account of, the nature of contemplative devotion [\*3], which I impart to you, and by perfection in which the sage attains resolution into Brahma, and never suffers birth again. The mind of man is the cause both of his bondage and his liberation: its addiction to the objects of sense is the means of his bondage; its separation from objects of sense is the means of his freedom. The sage who is capable of discriminative knowledge must therefore restrain his mind from all the objects of sense, and therewith meditate upon the supreme being, who is one with spirit, in order to attain liberation; for that supreme spirit attracts to itself him who meditates upon it, and who is of the same nature, as the loadstone attracts the iron by the virtue which is common to itself and to its products [\*4]. Contemplative devotion is the union with Brahma, effected by that condition of mind which has attained perfection through those exercises which complete the control of self [\*5]: and he whose contemplative devotion is characterized by the property of such absolute perfection, is in truth a sage, expectant of final liberation from the world.

"The sage, or Yogi, when first applying himself to contemplative devotion is called the novice or practitioner (Yoga yuj); when he has attained spiritual union he is termed the adept, or he whose meditations are accomplished [\*6]. Should the thoughts of the former be unvitiated by any obstructing imperfection, he will obtain freedom, after practising devotion through several lives [\*7]. The latter speedily obtains liberation in that existence (in which he reaches perfection), all his acts being consumed by the fire of contemplative devotion. The sage who would bring his mind into a fit state for the performance of devout contemplation must be devoid of desire, and observe invariably continence, compassion, truth, honesty, and disinterestedness: he must fix his mind intently on the supreme Brahma, practising holy study, purification, contentment, penance, and self-control. These virtues, respectively termed the five acts of restraint (Yana), and five of obligation (Niyama), bestow excellent rewards when practised for the sake of reward, and eternal liberation when they are not prompted by desire (of transient benefits). Endowed with these merits, the sage self-restrained should sit in one of the modes termed Bhadrasana, &c., and engage in contemplation [\*8]. Bringing his vital airs, called Prana, under subjection, by frequent repetition, is thence called Pranayama, which is as it were a seed with a seed [\*9]. In this the breath of expiration and that of inspiration are alternately obstructed, constituting the act twofold; and the suppression of both modes of breathing produces a third [\*10]. The exercise of the Yogi, whilst endeavouring to bring before his thoughts the gross form of the eternal, is denominated Alambana [\*11]. He is then to perform the Pratyahara, which consists in restraining his organs of sense from susceptibility to outward impressions, and directing them entirely to mental perceptions. By these means the entire subjugation of the unsteady senses is effected; and if they are not controlled, the sage will not accomplish his devotions. When by the Pranayama the vital airs are restrained, and the senses are subjugated by the Pratyahara, then the sage will be able to keep his mind steady in its perfect asylum."

Khandikya then said to Kes'idhwaja, "Illustrious sage, inform me what is that perfect asylum of the mind, resting on which it destroys all the products of (human) infirmity." To this, Kes'idhwaja replied, "The asylum of mind is spirit (Brahma), which of its own nature is twofold, as being with or without form; and each of these is supreme and secondary [\*12]. Apprehension of spirit [\*13], again, is threefold. I will explain the different kinds to you: they are, that which is called Brahma, that which is named from works, and that which comprehends both. That mental apprehension which consists of Brahma is one; that which is formed of works is another; and that which comprehends both is the third: so that mental apprehension (of the object or asylum of the thoughts) is threefold. Sanandana and other (perfect sages) were endowed with apprehension of the nature of

Brahma. The gods and others, whether animate or inanimate, are possessed of that which regards acts. The apprehension that comprehends both works and spirit exists in Hiranyagarbha and others, who are possessed of contemplative knowledge of their own nature, and who also exercise certain active functions, as creation and the rest. Until all acts, which are the causes of notions of individuality, are discontinued, spirit is one thing, and the universe is another, to those who contemplate objects as distinct and various; but that is called true knowledge, or knowledge of Brahma, which recognises no distinctions, which contemplates only simple existence, which is undefinable by words, and is to be discovered solely in one's own spirit. That is the supreme, unborn, imperishable form of Vishnu, who is without (sensible) form, and is characterised as a condition of the supreme soul, which is variously modified from the condition of universal form. But this condition cannot be contemplated by sages in their (early) devotions, and they must therefore direct their minds to the gross form of Hari, which is of universal perceptibility. They must meditate upon him as Hiranyagarbha, as the glorious Vasava, as Prajapati, as the winds, the Vasus, the Rudras, the suns, stars, planets, Gandharbas, Yakshas, Daityas, all the gods and their progenitors, men, animals, mountains, oceans, rivers, trees, all beings, and all sources of beings, all modifications whatever of nature and its products, whether sentient or unconscious, one-footed, two-footed, or many-footed; all these are the sensible form of Hari, to be apprehended by the three kinds of apprehension. All this universal world, this world of moving and stationary beings, is pervaded by the energy of Vishnu, who is of the nature of the supreme Brahma. This energy is either supreme, or, when it is that of conscious embodied spirit, it is secondary. Ignorance, or that which is denominated from works, is a third energy [\*14]; by which the omnipresent energy of embodied spirit is ever excited, and whence it suffers all the pains of repeated worldly existence. Obscured by that energy (of ignorance or illusion), the energy that is denominated from embodied spirit is characterised by different degrees of perfection in all created beings. In things without life it exists in a very small degree: it is more in things that have life, but are (without motion): in insects it is still more abundant, and still more in birds; it is more in wild animals, and in domestic animals the faculty is still greater: men have more of this (spiritual) faculty than animals, and thence arises their authority over them: the faculty exists in an ascending degree in Nagas, Gandharbas, Yakshas, gods, S'akra, Prajapati, and Hiranyagarbha: and is above all predominant in that male (Vishnu) of whom all these various creatures are but the diversified forms, penetrated universally by his energy, as all-pervading as the ether.

"The second [\*15] state of him who is called Vishnu, and which is to be meditated upon by the (advanced) sage, is that imperceptible, shapeless form of Brahma, which is called by the wise, "That which is [\*16],' and in which all the before described energies reside. Thence proceeds the form of the universal form, the other great form of Hari, which is the origin of those manifested forms (or incarnations) that are endowed with every kind of energy, and which, whether the forms of gods, animals, or men, are assumed by him (Hari) in his sport. This active interposition of the undefinable god, all-comprehending and irresistible, is for the purpose of benefiting the world, and is not the necessary consequence of works. This form of the universal form is to be meditated upon by the sage for the object of purification, as it destroys all sin. In the same manner as fire, blazing in the wind, burns dry grass, so Vishnu, seated in the heart, consumes the sins of the sage; and therefore let him resolutely effect the fixation of his mind upon that receptacle of all the three energies (Vishnu), for that is the operation of the mind which is called perfect Dharana [\*17]: and thus the perfect asylum of individual as well as universal spirit, that which is beyond the three modes of apprehension, is attained, for the eternal emancipation of the sage. The minds of other beings, which are not fixed upon that asylum, are altogether impure, and are all the gods and the rest, who spring from acts. The retention or apprehension by the mind of that visible form of Vishnu, without regard to subsidiary forms, is thence called Dharana; and I will describe to you the perceptible form of Hari, which no mental retention will manifest, except in a mind that is fit to become the receptacle of the idea [\*18]. The meditating sage must think (he beholds internally the figure) of Vishnu, as having a pleased and lovely countenance, with eyes like the leaf of the lotus, smooth cheeks, and a broad and brilliant forehead; ears of equal size, the lobes of which are decorated with splendid pendants; a

painted neck, and a broad breast, on which shines the Srivatsa mark; a belly falling in graceful folds, with a deep-seated navel; eight long arms, or else four; and firm and well-knit thighs and legs, with well-formed feet and toes. Let him, with well-governed thoughts, contemplate, as long as he can persevere in unremitting attention, Hari as clad in a yellow robe, wearing a rich diadem on his head, and brilliant armlets and bracelets on his arms, and bearing in his hands the bow, the shell, the mace, the sword, the discus, the rosary, the lotus, and the arrow [\*19]. When this image never departs from his mind, whether he be going or standing, or be engaged in any other voluntary act, then he may believe his retention to be perfect. The sage may then meditate upon the form of Vishnu without his arms, as the shell, mace, discus, and bow; and as placid, and bearing only his rosary. When the idea of this image is firmly retained, then he may meditate on Vishnu without his diadem, bracelets, or other ornaments. He may next contemplate him as having but one single limb, and may then fix his whole thoughts upon the body to which the limbs belong. This process of forming a lively image in the mind, exclusive of all other objects, constitutes Dhyana, or meditation, which is perfected by six stages [\*20]; and when an accurate knowledge of self, free from all distinction, is attained by this mental meditation, that is termed Samadhi [\*21].

"(When the Yogi has accomplished this stage, he acquires) discriminative knowledge, which is the means of enabling living soul, when all the three kinds of apprehension are destroyed, to attain the attainable supreme Brahma [\*22]. Embodied spirit is the user of the instrument, which instrument is true knowledge; and by it that (identification) of the former (with Brahma) is attained [\*23]. Liberation, which is the object to be effected, being accomplished, discriminative knowledge ceases. When endowed with the apprehension of the nature of the object of inquiry, then, there is no difference between it (individual and) supreme spirit: difference is the consequence of the absence of (true) knowledge. When that ignorance which is the cause of the difference between individual and universal spirit is destroyed finally and for ever, who shall ever make that distinction between them which does not exist? Thus have I, Khandikya, in reply to your question, explained to you what is meant by contemplative devotion, both fully and summarily. What else do you wish to hear?"

Khandikya replied to Kes'idhwaja, and said, "The explanation which you have given me of the real nature of contemplative devotion has fulfilled all my wishes, and removed all impurity from my mind. The expression 'mine,' which I have been accustomed to use, is untruth, and cannot be otherwise declared by those who know what is to be known. The words 'I' and 'mine' constitute ignorance; but practice is influenced by ignorance. Supreme truth cannot be defined, for it is not to be explained by words. Depart therefore, Kes'idhwaja; you have done all that is necessary for my real happiness, in teaching me contemplative devotion, the inexhaustible bestower of liberation from existence."

Accordingly king Kes'idhwaja, after receiving suitable homage from Khandikya, returned to his city. Khandikya, having nominated his son Raja [\*24], retired to the woods to accomplish his devotions, his whole mind being intent upon Govinda: there his entire thoughts being engrossed upon one only object, and being purified by practices of restraint, self-control, and the rest, he obtained absorption into the pure and perfect spirit which is termed Vishnu. Kes'idhwaja also, in order to attain liberation, became averse from his own perishable works, and lived amidst objects of sense (without regarding them), and instituted religious rites without expecting therefrom any advantages to himself. Thus by pure and auspicious fruition, being cleansed from all sin, he also obtained that perfection which assuages all affliction for ever.

### Footnotes

^650:1 The text is somewhat obscure, but it is in some degree cleared up by the next illustration. No one would think of applying the property of self – the idea of possession or personality – to soul, separated from body: but the objection is equally applicable to soul in the body; for whilst there it is

as distinct in its nature from the materials of body as if it was disembodied, and quite as incapable of individual personal fruition.

^651:2 That is, in the race of princes of Mithila.

^651:3 The term Yoga, which is that used in the text, in its literal acceptation signifies 'union,' 'junction,' from 'to join:' in a spiritual sense it denotes 'union of separated with universal soul; and with some latitude of expression it comes to signify the means by which such union is affected. In the Bhagavad Gita it is variously applied, but ordinarily denotes the performance of religious ceremonies as a duty, and not for interested purposes. Thus Krishna says to Arjuna, "Engaging in Yoga, perform rites, Dhananjaya, being indifferent to success or failure: such indifference is called Yoga." II. v. 48. It is elsewhere defined, 'exemption from the contact of pain:' VI. v. 23. The word has been accordingly rendered 'devotion' by Wilkins, and 'devotio' by Schlegel, in their translations of the Gita. In this place, however, it is used in a less general sense, and signifies, as is subsequently explained, reunion with spirit through the exercises necessary to perfect abstraction as they are taught and practised by the followers of Patanjali.

^651:4 This illustration is however only to a [p. 652] limited extent, explanatory of the nature of Yoga; for though the loadstone and iron unite, by virtue of a community of kind, yet the union that takes place is only that of contiguity, Samyoga not that of identification or unity, Tadaikyam. Some further explanation therefore is required.

^652:5 The first stage is the Atma prayatna, the practice of moral and religious restraint, Yama, Niyama, &c. When the novice is perfect in these, then he is fit to attain the perfectibility of an adept, through the especial practices which treatises on the Yoga prescribe. When the mind has attained the state which can alone be attained through them, then the union with Brahma, which is the consequence, is called Yoga: . The Atma prayatna is defined to be that which has Yama, &c. for its object. The next phrase is explained, 'depending upon, or relating to, such control.' is the same as condition or state of mind which is perfected: of that state of mind, union with Brahma, is Yoga. Union with Brahma is the abstraction that proposes the identity of the living with the supreme spirit of the Jivatma, with Brahma; and Yoga is understanding of the identity of the contemplator and the object contemplated. A text of Yajnyawalkya is quoted to this effect: 'Know holy wisdom to be the same with Yoga, (the practice of) which has eight divisions. That which is termed Yoga is union of the living with the supreme soul.'

^652:6 Vinishpannasamadhi is the expression of the text, which can scarcely be regarded as an appellative. The commentator terms the adept Brahmajnani, 'He who knows Brahma.'

^652:7 After three lives, according to the Vayu Sanhita, as quoted in the comment.

^653:8 There are various postures in which the Yogi is directed to sit when he engages in meditation. In the Bhadrasana he is directed to cross his legs underneath him, and to lay hold of his feet on each side with his hands.

^653:9 It is itself figuratively the seed of the fruit, which is meditation; but it is to be accompanied with what is also technically called Bija, or seed, inaudible repetition of certain prayers, and meditation on the visible form of the deity, termed likewise Alambana, and presently mentioned.

^653:10 Pranayama is performed by three modifications of breathing: the first act is expiration, which is performed through the right nostril, whilst the left is closed with the fingers of the right hand; this is called Rechaka: the thumb is then placed upon the right nostril, and the fingers raised from the left, through which breath is inhaled; this is called Puraka: in the third act both nostrils are closed, and breathing suspended; this is Kumbhaka: and a succession of these operations is the practice of Pranayama.

^653:11 Alambana is the silent repetition of prayer.

^654:12 The Brahma that is without form (Amurta) may be Para or Apara. Supreme formless spirit is, without attributes of any kind. Secondary formless spirit is invested with the attributes of power, glory, truth, perfection. Spirit embodied, or with form in his highest state, is, according to our text, Vishnu, and his manifestations. Spirit in an inferior or secondary series of bodily forms is Brahma and all other living beings.

^654:13 The term is Bhavana, defined to be, 'function to be engendered by knowledge;' the mental impression or apprehension following upon knowledge.' Here it implies in particular the formation of a fixed idea by the Yogi of the object of his contemplations. It is also termed Bhava-bhavana, 'apprehension of the being, the existence, or substantiality, of the object; the thing contemplated.'

^655:14 The term used throughout is S'akti, power,' 'ability,' 'energy' By the first kind, or Para, is understood knowledge able to appreciate abstract truth, or the nature of universal soul; by the second, ability to understand the nature of embodied soul; and by the third, inability to discern one's own nature, and reliance on moral or ceremonial merit. These different kinds are called energies, because they are the energies or faculties of the supreme spirit, or, according to the Vaishnavas, of Vishnu, accompanying soul in all its various conditions of existence.

^656:15 The first, which has been intended to be described in the foregoing passages, was the universal, visible form of Vishnu; the second is his formless or imperceptible condition.

^656:16 Sat 'what is being.'

^656:17 Retention, or holding of the image or idea formed in the mind by contemplation: from Dhri, 'to hold,' literally or figuratively.

^657:18 The explanation of Dharana given in the text is rendered unnecessarily perplexed by the double doctrine here taught, and the attempt to combine the abstractions of Yoga theism with the sectarian worship of Vishnu.

^657:19 The two last implements are from the comment; the text specifies only six.

^657:20 They are, 1. Yama &c., acts of restraint and obligation; 2. Asana, sitting in particular postures; 3. Pranayama, modes of breathing; 4. Pratyahara, exclusion of all external ideas; 5. Bhavana, apprehension of internal ideas; 6. Dharana, fixation or retention of those ideas.

^657:21 The result of the Dhyana or Samadhi is the absence of all idea of individuality, when the meditator, the meditation, and [p. 658] the thing or object meditated upon, are all considered to be but one. According to the text of Patanjali: 'Restraint of the body, retention of the mind, and meditation, which thence is exclusively confined to one object, is Dhyana: the idea of identification with the object of such meditation, so as if devoid of individual nature, is Samadhi.'

^658:22 The expressions of the text are somewhat obscure, nor does the commentator make them much more intelligible, until he cuts the matter short by stating the meaning to be, that 'discriminative knowledge enables the living spirit to attain Brahma.'

^658:23 The text is very elliptical and obscure. Having stated that embodied spirit (Kshetrajna) is the Karanin, the possessor or user of the Karana, which is knowledge, it adds, literally, 'by that, of that, that;' i. e. Tat, 'that which is; and Brahma, or supreme spirit, is the attainment of that spirit which abides in body by that instrument, or discriminative knowledge, of which it has become possessed through perfect meditation.

^659:24 The commentator, in order to explain how Khandikya should have given what he did not possess, states that it is to be understood that Kes'idhwaja relinquished to him the kingdom; or the term Raja may denote merely, master of, or acquainted with, mystic prayers, or Mantras.

## CHAP. VIII.

Conclusion of the dialogue between Paras'ara and Maitreya. Recapitulation of the contents of the Vishnu Purana: merit of hearing it: how handed down. Praises of Vishnu. Concluding prayer.

I HAVE now explained to you, Maitreya, the third kind of worldly dissolution, or that which is absolute and final, which is, liberation and resolution into eternal spirit [\*1]. I have related to you primary and secondary creation, the families of the patriarchs, the periods of the Manwantaras, and the genealogical histories (of the kings). I have repeated to you, in short, who were desirous of hearing it, the imperishable Vaishnava Purana, which is destructive of all sins, the most excellent of all holy writings, and the means of attaining the great end of man. If there is any thing else you wish to hear, propose your question, and I will answer it.

MAITREYA. – Holy teacher, you have indeed related to me all that I wished to know, and I have listened to it with pious attention. I have nothing further to inquire. The doubts inseparable from the mind of man have all been resolved by you, and through your instructions I am acquainted with the origin, duration, and end of all things; with Vishnu in his collective fourfold form [\*2]; his three energies [\*3]; and with the three modes of apprehending the object of contemplation [\*4]. Of all this have I acquired a knowledge through your favour, and nothing else is worthy to be known, when it is once understood that Vishnu and this world are not mutually distinct. Great Muni, I have obtained through your kindness all I desired, the dissipation of my doubts, since you have instructed me in the duties of the several tribes, and in other obligations; the nature of active life, and discontinuance of action; and the derivation of all that exists from works. There is nothing else, venerable Brahman, that I have to inquire of you; and forgive me if your answers to my questions have imposed upon you any fatigue. Pardon me the trouble that I have given you, through that amiable quality of the virtuous -which makes no distinction between a disciple and a child.

PARAS'ARA. – I have related to you this Purana, which is equal to the Vedas in sanctity, and by hearing which all faults and sins whatever are expiated. In this have been described to you the primary and secondary creation, the families of the patriarchs, the Manwantaras, the regal dynasties; the gods, Daityas, Gandharbas, serpents, Rakshasas, Yakshas, Vidyadharas, Siddhas, and heavenly nymphs; Munis endowed with spiritual wisdom, and practisers of devotion; the distinctions of the four castes, and the actions of the most eminent amongst men; holy places on the earth, holy rivers and oceans, sacred mountains, and legends of the truly wise; the duties of the different tribes, and the observances enjoined by the Vedas. By hearing this, all sins are at once obliterated. In this also the glorious Hari has been revealed, the cause of the creation, preservation, and destruction of the world; the soul of all things, and himself all things: by the repetition of whose name man is undoubtedly liberated from all sins, which fly like wolves that are frightened by a lion. The repetition of his name with devout faith is the best remover of all sins, destroying them as fire purifies the metal from the dross. The stain of the Kali age, which ensures to men sharp punishments in hell, is at once effaced by a single invocation of Hari. He who is all that is, the whole egg of Brahma, with Hiranyagarbha, Indra, Rudra, the Adityas, the Aswins, the winds, the Kinnaras, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, Vis'wadevas, the celestial gods, the Yakshas, serpents, Rakshasas, the Siddhas, Daityas, Gandharbas, Danavas, nymphs, the stars, asterisms, planets, the seven Rishis, the regents and superintendants of the quarters, men, Brahmans and the rest, animals tame and wild, insects, birds, ghosts and goblins, trees, mountains, woods, rivers, oceans, the subterrene legions, the divisions of the earth, and all perceptible objects – he who is all things, who knoweth all things, who is the form of all things, being without form himself, and of whom whatever is, from mount Meru to an atom, all consists – he, the glorious Vishnu, the destroyer of all sin – is described in this Purana. By hearing this Purana an equal recompense is obtained to that which is derived from the performance of an As'wamedha sacrifice, or from fasting at the holy places Prayaga, Pushkara, Kurukshetra, or Arbuda. Hearing this Purana but once is as efficacious as the offering of oblations in a perpetual fire for a year. The man who with well-governed passions bathes at Mathura on the twelfth day of the month

Jyeshtha [\*5], and beholds (the image of) Hari, obtains a great recompense; so does he who with mind fixed upon Kes'ava attentively recites this Purana. The man who bathes in the waters of the Yamuna on the twelfth lunation of the light fortnight of the month in which the moon is in the mansion Jyeshtha, and who fasts and worships Achyuta in the city of Mathura, receives the reward of an uninterrupted As'wamedha. Beholding the degree of prosperity enjoyed by others of eminence, through the merits of their descendants, a man's paternal ancestors, his parents and their parents, exclaim, "Whosoever of our descendants, having bathed in the Yamuna and fasted, will worship Govinda in Mathura, in the light fortnight of Jyeshtha, will secure for us eminent exaltation; for we shall be elevated by the merits of our posterity!" A man of good extraction will present obsequial cakes to his fortunate ancestors in the Yamuna, having worshipped Janarddana in the light fortnight of Jyeshtha. But the same degree of merit that a man reaps from adoring Janarddana at that season with a devoted heart, and from bathing in the Yamuna, and effecting the liberation of his progenitors by offering to them on such an occasion obsequial cakes, he derives also from hearing with equal devotion a section of this Purana. This Purana is the best of all preservatives for those who are afraid of worldly existence, a certain alleviation of the sufferings of men, and remover of all imperfections.

This Purana, originally composed by the Rishi (Narayana), was communicated by Brahma to Ribhu; he related it to Priyavrata, by whom it was imparted to Bhaguri. Bhaguri recited it to Tamasitra [\*6], and he to Dadicha, who gave it to Saraswata. From the last Bhrigu received it, who imparted it to Purukutsa, and he taught it to Narmada. The goddess delivered it to Dhritarashtra the Naga king, and to Purana of the same race, by whom it was repeated to their monarch Vasuki. Vasuki communicated it to Vatsa, and he to Aswatara, from whom it successively proceeded to Kambala and Elapatra. When the Muni Vedas'iras descended to Patala, he there received the whole Purana from these Nagas, and communicated it to Pramati. Pramati consigned it to the wise Jatukarna, and he taught it to many other holy persons. Through the blessing of Vas'ishtha it came to my knowledge, and I have now, Maitreya, faithfully imparted it to you. You will teach it, at the end of the Kali age, to S'amika [\*7]. Whoever hears this great mystery, which removes the contamination of the Kali, shall be freed from all his sins. He who hears this every day acquits himself of his daily obligations to ancestors, gods, and men. The great and rarely attainable merit that a man acquires by the gift of a brown cow, he derives from hearing ten chapters of this Purana [\*8]. He who hears the entire Purana, contemplating in his mind Achyuta, who is all things, and of whom all things are made; who is the stay of the whole world, the receptacle of spirit; who is knowledge, and that which is to be known; who is without beginning or end, and the benefactor of the gods – obtains assuredly the reward that attends the uninterrupted celebration of the As'wamedha rite. He who reads and retains with faith this Purana, in the beginning, middle, and end of which is described the glorious Achyuta, the lord of the universe in every stage, the master of all that is stationary or moveable, composed of spiritual knowledge, acquires such purity as exists not in any world, the eternal state of perfection, which is Hari. The man who fixes his mind on Vishnu goes not to hell: he who meditates upon him regards heavenly enjoyment only as an impediment: and he whose mind and soul are penetrated by him thinks little of the world of Brahma; for when present in the minds of those whose intellects are free from soil, he confers upon them eternal freedom. What marvel therefore is it that the sins of one who repeats the name of Achyuta should be wiped away? Should not that Hari be heard of, whom those devoted to acts worship with sacrifices continually as the god of sacrifice; whom those devoted to meditation contemplate as primary and secondary, composed of spirit; by obtaining whom man is not born, nor nourished, nor subjected to death; who is all that is, and that is not (or both cause and of effect); who, as the progenitors, receives the libations made to them; who, as the gods, accepts the offerings addressed to them; the glorious being who is without beginning or end; whose name is both Swaha and Swadha [\*9]; who is the abode of all spiritual power; in whom the limits of finite things cannot be measured [\*10]; and who, when he enters the ear, destroys all sin?

I adore him, that first of gods, Purushottama, who is without end and without beginning, without growth, without decay, without death; who is substance that knows not change. I adore that ever inexhaustible spirit; who assumed sensible qualities; who, though one, became many; who, though pure, became as if impure, by appearing in many and various shapes; who is endowed with divine wisdom, and is the author of the preservation of all creatures. I adore him, who is the one conjoined essence and object of both meditative wisdom and active virtue; who is watchful in providing for human enjoyments; who is one with the three qualities; who, without undergoing change, is the cause of the evolution of the world; who exists of his own essence, ever exempt from decay. I constantly adore him, who is entitled heaven, air, fire, water, earth, and ether; who is the bestower of all the objects which give gratification to the senses; who benefits mankind with the instruments of fruition; who is perceptible, who is subtile, who is imperceptible. May that unborn, eternal Hari, whose form is manifold, and whose essence is composed of both nature and spirit, bestow upon all mankind that blessed state which knows neither birth nor decay!

### Footnotes

^660:1 The term is Brahmani laya, which means, 'a melting away,' 'a dissolution' or 'fusion,' from the root, 'to liquefy,' 'to melt,' 'to dissolve.'

^660:2 Or with Vishnu in the four modifications described in the first section, spirit, matter, form, and time: see <page 9>.

^660:3 Or S'akti, noticed in the last chapter, <page 655>.

^660:4 Or Bhavanas, also described in the preceding section, <page 654>.

^662:5 This month is also called Jyeshthamula, which the commentator explains to mean, the month, of which the root or cause (Mula) of being so called is the moon's being full in the constellation Jyeshtha: but it may be so termed, perhaps, from the lunar asterism Mula, which is next to Jyeshtha, falling also within the moon's passage through the same month.

^663:6 This name is also read Tambamitra. One copy has Tava-mitraya, 'to thy friend,' as if it was an epithet of Dadhicha; but the construction of the verse requires a proper name. 'Bhaguri gave it to Tambamitra, and he to Dadhichi.'

^663:7 A different series of narrators has been specified in the first book, <page 9>.

^663:8 This seems to be an injudicious interpolation; it is not in all the copies.

^664:9 The words or prayers employed in presenting oblations with fire.

^664:10 The text has, . Mana commonly means 'pride,' but here it seems most appropriately rendered by its radical import, 'measure' the measures which are for the determination of measurable things are not applicable to Vishnu.