HINDU ETHICS
AN INTRODUCTION

C.V.S. Murthy
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"We are nothing to do anything before the power of God
We can do wonders in the world with the power of God"
PREFACE

The great power of Lord Sri Venkateswara and the spiritual philosophers are given to me this opportunity to distribute the fruits of "Hindu Ethics an Intrduction" message to devotees in the world.

I humbly appeal to the devotees of the lord of Seven Hills that I am nothing before the Power of God but my aim is to bring the path of "Hindu Ethics an Intrduction" to the door steps of all the devotees of the lord seven hills in the Veda Boomi.

The main theme of the present work is to knock the doors of the hearts of all the present generation in the spiritual way. Even one should know the truth in the Hindu Ethics an Introduction which ultimately leads every one to peace & prosperity.

I am grateful to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam authorities to give me the aid for publishing this small Valuble Book which is more valuble for all.

C.V.S. Murthy

"We must know our duties & responsibilities first
Then only we can dictate terms to others"
Sri C.V.S. Moorthy got up this valuable piece of spiritual book-let for the benifit of spiritual Seekers. The author in his endeavour refers spiritual litirature like Song Celestial (Bhagavad Geeta). Sri Patanjalis Yoga Sutras, Sri Geeta Vasistam, Bhakti Sutras and others. The author Vividly deals with "Trigunas" ie Satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika and goes on to say, a true spiritual Seekar has to achieve that stage that is "gunateeta" where he will got real bliss and mental peace. The author also deals with "Dharma Artha, Kama" vividly.

As Atma Vidya is the highest of spiritual aspirient one has to obtain blessings of Sadgurujies who are endowed with rare spiritual gnanas and qualities.

So the Author has tried to imbile these spiritual qualities into the minds of spiritual seekar vividly and I hope and trust that this spiritual books let will go a long way in making spiritual aspirents to achives the Brahma Vidya which is the highest Goal.

Om Tat Sat

M. Sankarlal

"Everyone must Clean their own heart First then only try to clean to others"
The Heart of Hinduism

The Hindu religion is marked by an eminently rational character. Throughout the bewildering maze of dreamy hopes and practical renunciation straightest dogmas and reckless adventures of spirit, throughout the four or five millenniums of ceaseless metaphysical and theological endeavour, the Hindu thinkers have tried to grapple with the ultimate problems in a spirit of loyalty to truth and feeling for reality. The Brahmanical civilization is so called since it is directed by Brahmin thinkers, trained to judge issues without emotion and base their conclusions on the fundamentals of experience.

The feature of the world which led the Hindu thinkers to raise the question of the Real was its passing away. The world open to our objective vision seemed to them an endless surpassing of itself. They asked: Is this passing away all, or does the doom which engulfs things meet its check anywhere? And they answered. There is something in the world which is not superseded, an imperishable Absolute, Brahman. This experience of infinity is given to us all. On some occasions, when we catch glimpses of the mighty secret, and feel the brooding presence of the larger self which mantles us in glory. Even in the tragic moments of life, when we feel ourselves to be poor and orphaned, the majesty of God in us makes us feel that the wrong and the sorrow of the world are but incidents in a greater drama which will end in power, glory and love. The Upanisads declare: "If there were no spirit of joy in the Universe who could live and breathe in this world of life?" Philosophically, the Real is the self identical Brahman revealing itself in all, becoming the permanent background of the world process. Religiously, it is envisaged as the Divine Self consciousness, pregnant with the whole course of the world, with its evolutions and involutions. Throughout its long career, the oneness of the ultimate spirit has been the governing ideal of the Hindu religion. The Rigveda tells us of one Supreme Reality, Ekam sat, of which the learned speak variously. The Upanishads make out that the one Brahman is called numerous names according to the spheres of reality in which it is seen to function. The analogy of human consciousness, with its three fold activity of cognition emotion, and will, suggests the view of the supreme as sat, chit, ananda - reality, wisdom and joy. The three gunas of sativa or equanimity, born of wisdom, rajas or enemy, which is the outcome of enlightenment and control, are aspects of all existence, and even God is not considered to be an exception to this law of the triplicity of
all beings. The three function of srishti or creation, sthiti or maintenance, and laya or destruction are traced to the three gunas of rajas, sattva and tamas. Vishnu, the preserver of the universe, is the Supreme Spirit dominated by the quality of sattva; Brahma, the creator of the universe, is the Supreme spirit dominated. By the quality of sattva; Brahma, the creator of the Universe, is the supreme dominated by the quality of rajas; and siva, the destroyer of the universe, is the Supreme dominated by the quality of tamas. The three qualities of the one supreme are developed into three distinct personalities. And each of the latter is said to function through its own respective sakti or energy, and so we have-answering to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Uma Saraswathi, Lakshmi, and their saktis strictly speaking all these qualities and functions are so well balanced in the one Supreme that it cannot be said to possess any quality at all. The one incomprehensible God who is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent appears to different minds in different ways. An ancient text says that forms are given to the formless Absolute for the benefit of the aspirants.

With the openness of mind, characteristic of the philosophical temper, the Hindus believe in the relativity of the creeds to the general character of the people who profess them. Religion is not a more theory of the Supernatural which we can put on or off as we please. It is an expression of the spiritual experience of the race, a record of its social evolution an integral element of society in which it is found. That different people should profess different faiths is not unnatural. It is all a question of taste and temperament. Ruchinam vaichityrat. When the Aryans met the natives of the soil, who were worshipping all sorts of deities, they, did not feel called upon to supplant their faiths all of a sudden. After all, all men are seeking after the one Supreme, According to the Bhagavadgita, God will not refuse the aspirant's wishes, simply because they have not felt the power of His highest nature. Any attempt at a rapid passage from one set of rules to another would involve a violent breach with the past. Consequently confusion and chaos. The great teachers of the world who possess a sufficient sense of the historical do not attempt to save the world in their own generation by forcing their advanced notions on those who cannot understand or appreciate them. Even so exacting an ethical teacher as Jesus implicitly justified moves for legally demanding from the Israelites something less in the matter of divorce than the highest ideal required because of the hardness of their hearts. Look at the uncompromising words of Mark x 11 if and Luke xvi.18, and the saving clauses introduced in Matthew v. 32 and vii.9. The Hindu thinkers, while they themselves practised a very high ideal, understood the unpreparedness of the people for it, and so took to careful tending
instead of wild forcing. They admitted the lower gods whom the masses ignorantly worshipped, and urged that they were all subordinate to the one Supreme "While some men find their gods in the waters others in the heavens, others in the objects of the world, the wise find the true God, whose glory is manifest everywhere, in the Atman" Another verse says; "The man of action finds his God in fire, the man of feeling in the heart the feeble-minded in the idol but the strong in spirit find God everywhere."

Hindu systems of philosophy and religion recognize the periodical evolution and involution of the world representing the systole and diastole of the one universal heart, which is ever at rest and ever active. The whole world is a manifestation of God. Sayana observes that all things whatsoever are vehicles for the manifestation of the Supreme Spirit. These beings are distinguished into different grades. "Amongst beings, those that breathe are high; amongst these, they that have developed minds among them those that use their knowledge; while the highest are those that use their knowledge; while the highest are those that are possessed by the sense of the unity of all life in Brahman." The one foundation spirit is revealing itself throughout these divergences of form.

The infinite in man is not satisfied by the fashion of the finite world that passes away. Our troubles are due to the fact that we do not realize the god in us. Freedom is our possession if we escape from all that is transient and finite in us. The more our life manifests the infinite in us, the higher are we in the scale of beings. The most intense manifestations are called the avatars or the incarnations of God. These are not out of the way miraculous revelations of God, but only higher manifestations of the supreme principle, differing from the lower general ones in degree only. The Gita says, though God lives and moves in all. He manifests Himself in a special degree in things which are splendid. The Rishies and the Buddhases, the prophets and the Messiahs; are intense revelations of the universal Self. The Gita holds out a promise that they will appear whenever they are needed. When the downward materialist tendency dominates life, a Rama or a Krishna, a Buddha or a Jesus comes upon the scene to restore the disturbed harmony of righteousness. In these men who break the power of sense, unseal the heart of love, and inspire us with a love of truth and righteousness we have intense concentrations of God. They reveal to us the way the truth and the life. They of course forbid the blind worship of themselves, since it retards the realization of the great self. Rama considers himself to be nothing more than a son of man. Even as he was in Jesus or Buddha if the Christian thinkers admit men may have access to God and be saved, other than through the mediatorship of Jesus, the Hindu will heartily
be subscribed it to the essential features of the religion of Jesus. The
divine manifestation is not an infringement of man's personality. On
the contrary, it is the highest possible degree of man's natural self
expressions since the true nature of man is divine.

The aim of life is the gradual revelation in our human existence
of the external in us. The general progress is governed by the law of
Karma or moral causation. The Hindu religion does not believe in a
god who from His Judgement Set weighs each case separately and
decides on its merits. He does not administer justice from with out
enhancing or remitting punishment according to his sweet will. God
is man, and so the law of Karma is organic to man's nature. Every
moment man is on his trial, and every honest effort will do him good
in his external endeavour. The character that we build will continue
into the future until we realize our oneness with God. The children
of god, in whose eyes a thousand years are as a day, need not be
disheartened if the goal of perfection is not attained in one life. Rebirth
is accepted by all Hindus. The world is sustained by our errors. The
forces that integrate creation are our broken lives which require to
be renewed. The universe has appeared and disappeared times
without number in the long past, and will continue to be dissolved
and reforme through unimaginable enternities to come.

Religious Experience:

The effort of religion is to enable man to realize the divine in
him, not merely as a formula or a proposition but as the central fact
of his being, by growing into oneness with it. They way to reach this
religious experience cannot be prescribed. The soul of man whose
nature is infinite has unlimited possibilities in it. The God whom it
seeks is equally infinite and wide. The reactions of an infinite soul to
an infinite environment cannot be reduced to limited forms. The
Hindu thinkers recognize that the exhaustless variety of life cannot
be confined to fixed moulds. A familiar text declares: "As the birds
float in the air, as the fish swim in the sea, leaving no traces behind,
even so are the paths to God traversed by the seekers of spirit. The
Rshis of the Upanasad, the prophets of Israel, and the founders of
religious have heard God's voice and felt His presence. God is
supremely impartial to His devotees, whatever form of address and
approach they may adopt. "Whoever comes to me through whatsoever
form, I reach him," Says the Lord in the Gita.

However, distinctions are made, on the basis of three fold
activity of human consciousness, in to the jnanamarg or the path of
knowledge and illumination, Bhaktimarga or the path of faith and
devotion, and karmamarga or the path of work and service. Through,
feeling and will are not isolated facilities, but only distinguishable
aspects of experience. Each of them makes its own contribution to
the whole, and is penetrated by the others. The right knowledge, right desire, and right action go together. The first reveals to us the truth, the second instills a love for it, and the third moulds life. Mere knowledge unidentified by the warmth of feeling, leads to icy coldness of heart: mere emotion, unlit by knowledge, is gysteria; mere action unguided by wisdom and uninspired by love is meaningless ritual or feverish unrest. All the three enter the integral experience of a perfect life. Yet as the emphasis on the three sides is changing in different men, they approach the problem of life from different sides.

The Gita says "There is no purifier like Jnana or wisdom." This Jnana is not dialectical learning, which is dismissed as mere words in the famous dialogue in the Upanisads between Narada, the representative of encyclopedic learning and Sanatkumara, the true knower of the Self. Man this essential nature is freedom of spirit and wisdom. Our limitations put us away from the reality of ourselves and subject us to error. The real question for logic is not, how or why the individual knows, but how or why he fails to know. Error is due to our limitations. Intellectual growth consists in breaking down these limitations when we directly experience reality. This kind of Jnana, which is independent of symbols and senses is life living itself in the very heart of reality. Conceptual construction and logical learning may be useful in leading us to the true wisdom the Gita insists on an intuitive insight, accompanied by rational knowledge Jnanam vijnana sahitam. Without this logical support, intuition may turn out to be mere emotional subjectivity. The author of the Gita by his saving clause, suggests that the direct consciousness or reality has universality about it we can attain this experience of reality by a prayerful attitude. If we kill our intellectual conceit and acquire a receptive frame of mind we shall lay ourselves open to the breeze from heaven. The Yoga discipline is intended to train the mind to hear the mightily voice of the silence within. We then feel our identity with the universal self, the Atman in us.

The cognitive pursuit of God is rather slow and painful. "The Father and Maker of this whole is hard to find, and when one has found Him, to declare Him to all is impossible." Our life is so short and the search is so slow, that We cannot afford to wait. We are in a hurry to see. We wish to accept some faith which will sustain us in life and help us to go about, free from doubt, acting and achieving. The impatience of the people to reach God is the opportunity for the quack who promises speedy salvation to those who believe in Him. Superstition and massive become the daily bread of common people. In the Brahmanical system reason does not completely abdicate. The sense of truth controls the life of the people. The highest truths of philosophy are dressed up in fables and stories intelligible to the
ordinary understanding that "all may safely cross beyond the difficult and dangerous places of life, that all may rejoice everywhere". The stories of the puranas enable the weaker minds to appreciate the highest good, and help the building up of the inner spirit.

Accepting the forms of worship that prevailed in the country, the Hindu thinkers arranged them in a scale leading to the highest form of divine worship, which is the practice of the presence of God. A verse in the Siva Purana reads: "The highest state in the natural realization of God's presence, the second in rank is meditation and contemplation, the third is the worship of symbols which are reminders of supreme, and the fourth is performance of ritual and pilgrimages to sacred places. Idol worship is unknown in the Rigveda. It obviously came into vogue later. It has always been recognized to be relative to an imperfect stage of development. Man is anthropomorphic, and is inclined to conceive God in vivid and pictorial form. He cannot express his mental attitude except through symbolism and art. However inadequate the symbols may be as expressions of the real, they are tolerated so long as they help the human spirit in its effort after the divine. The symbol need not be superseded so long as is suggests the right standpoint. There is a beautiful defence of image worship quoted form Maximums of tyre, in prof. Gilber Murray's Four Stages of Greek Religion, which excellently sums up the Hindu's attitude to symbolic worship: "God Himself, the father and fashioner of all that is, older than the sun or the sky, greater than time and eternity, and all the flow of being, is unnameable by any law giver, unutterable by any voice, not to be seen by any eye. But we, being unable to apprehend His essence, use the help of sounds and names and pictures of brighter gold and ivory and silver of plants and rivers, mountain peaks and torrents, yearning for the knowledge of Him and in our weakness naming all that is beautiful in this world after His nature just as happens to earthly lovers. To them the most beautiful sight will be the actual lineaments of the beloved, but for remembrance" sake they will by happy in the sight of a lyre, a little spear, a chair perhaps, or a running ground, or anything in the world that wakens the memory of the beloved. Why should I further examine and pass judgement about Images? Let men know what is divine, let them know; that is all. If a Greek is stirred to the remembrance of god by the art of Phidias, an Egyptian by paying worship to animals, another man by a river, another by fire I have no anger for their divergences; only let them know, let them love, let them remember. These words so true, so tender and so tolerant, jar on our ears, accustomed to hear dull dogmatics and fanatic falsehoods. If the symbolic function of the idol is overlooked and if the metaphor is taken literally the true God whom we are seeking to realize appears
as He is not. The thinking Hindu does not forget the instrumental character of idol worship. The Yogis see God in self and not in the images.

Realising as it does the force of the lower forms of worship, on the principle of milk for babes and meat for man, Hinduism had developed a religious atmosphere permeated by the highest philosophic wisdom as well as symbolic worship round which much glorious art has gathered. It has room for all men of all grades of cultural equipment and religious instinct. In a Hindu home, the most purified modes of worship retain some external form for the sake of the young who are growing up under the same roof it is idle to strifle the impulses of the child by breaking its playthings. Simply because we are grown up and do not find any need for them.

The emotionally-toned men look upon God as the perfect Beauty or Love, and wish to be lost in the enjoyment of His presence Krishna is the typical God of beauty and love, and his appeal to men and especially to women, dominated by emotion and sentiment is great. A touching folksong says: "His flute hath call and I must go; and through the way be through the forest thick with thorns, I must go." When the irresistible call comes, none with a heart can fail to respond. For the aesthetic empowerment, emotional intensity seems to give ultimate satisfaction. Beauty is its own excuse for being. The devotee clings to the feet of the Lord and refuses to leave them for any thing on earth. Tukaram says: "I have grasped thy feet, I will not let them go I will not let they go not if thou givest me all else." Chaitanya says "I crave not for money, nor for men. Nor for beautiful women nor for poetic genius. O Lord of the world I only crave that in every birth of mine bhakti may grow in me towards thee. O Lord" The Hindu thinkers combat the tendency to exalt religious devotion over love of truth and practice of goodness. They know full well that emotions are not isolated functions. By themselves they are morally colourless. The value of an emotion depends on the source from which it springs. Whether it is an exited spiritual devotion or a degrading sensual indulgence. The bhakti doctrine does not say that all feeling is sacred. Only the feeling of contemplative humility which accompanies the consciousness of absolute dependence on God is the true religious feeling or bhakti. Such a feeling expressive of knowledge issue in a life devoted to the service of man. Worship, music and art develop the religion of feeling.

The practically minded man tries to realize his divine destiny by the performance of duty, karma and social service, yajna. Freedom is the nature of man; bondage is due to the barriers that shut us from ourselves. Our slavery is complete when we begin to hug it. If we break our selfishness. Which walls us off from the world, and identify
ourselves with the larger ends, we can gradually develop the love that cases out fear disarms all hatred, and breaks all sprigs of bitterness. Mere mechanical morality is not likely to lead us to the end. It has to be fed by a vital union with God. Then shall we realize that in every man there is a ray of external light emanating from the Central Sun. When we love man, we are conscious of our unity with him in the central spirit and we give effect to this consciousness in our lives. This takes us to the next topic of the ethical character of the Hindu religion.

Ethical Character:

The technical discipline, which is an application of the doctrine to life is intended to enable man to realize his potentialities, that he might stand secure in his own soul free from the hold of the past and fearless of the chances of the future. Ethical endeavour consists in an attempt to live on earth, every moment of our life, in the sweet spirit of adoration. In the glad consciousness of an external relationship with God. The ideal man lives always in the light of heaven, and his life embodies the great virtues of truth, purity, love and renunciation. Moral progress is judged not by man, power over the forces of nature, but by his control over the passions of the heart. To speak the truth under shower of bullets, to refrain from reprisals even when you are on the cross, to respect man and animal, to give all we have, totally for others, and turn the other cheek, are the principal duties of men. Our modern practical reformers may dismiss them all as too high and unfit for being human nature’s daily food admirable ideals fit to console the feeble mind of India or the fishermen of Galilee but impossible of realization. Aware of the distance separating actual human nature from this ideal perfection, the Hindu thinkers devised a from this ideal perfection, the Hindu thinkers devised system of culture and discipline to train the individual for his destiny.

The complex of institutions and influences which shape the moral feeling and character of the people is called the dharma, which is a fundamental feature of Hindu religion. Hinduism does not believe in enforcing creeds, but calls upon all Hindus to conform to the discipline. It is a culture more than a creed. It ye do the will for the dharma. We shall know the doctrine of the truth. The dharma helps the smouldering fire which is in every individual to trust into flame.

The dharma is a code of conduct supported by the general conscience of the people. It is not subjective in the sense that the conscience of the individual imposes it, or external in the sense that the law enforces it. It is the system of conduct which the general opinion or the spirit of the people supports, what the Germans call sittlichkeit. Fichte defines the latter as "those principles of conduct which regulate people in their relations to each other, and have become
a matter of habit and second nature at the stage of culture reached and of which therefore we are not explicitly conscious." The dharma does not force men into virtue, but trains them for it. It is not a fixed code of mechanical rules, but a living spirit which grows and moves in response to the development of society. Even the State of India was a servant of the dharma. It was not above morality. Its function was not to alter or annual dharma, but only to administer it. The functions of the state never introduced into the life of the people. The dharma or the social life has continued the same in principle for over 4,000 years in spite of divergent religious creeds dynastic wars and political feuds. The living continuity of Indian life is to be seen not in her political history. But in her cultural and social life political obsession has captured India since the battle of plassey. Today politics have absorbed life. The State is invading society and the India of "no nations" as Ravindranath puts it is struggling to become a nation in the western sense of the term with all its defects and merits.

The dharma has two sides, which are interdependent, the individual and the social. The conscience of the individual requires a guide and he has to be taught the way to realize a guide and he has to be taught the way to realize his purpose and live according to spirit and not sense. The interests of society require equal attention. Dharma is that which holds together all living being in a harmonious order. Virtue is conduct contributing to social welfare, and vice is its opposite. It is frequently insisted that the highest virtue consists in doing into others as we would be done. Both the individuals and the social virtues are included in what are called nitya karma or obligatory duties, which are cleanliness or saucam, good manners or acharam social service or panchamaha yajnas, and prayer and worship or sandhyavandana. The varnasrama dharma, which deals with the classes of society and the stages of the individual life, details.

The end of the individual is not so much the securing of happiness here on earth as the realisation of an ideal the accomplishment of a mission. This has to be achieved through the education of the individual which involves restraint and suffering. Four stages are distinguished in each man's life. In the first stage of Brahmacharya, the obligations of temperance, sobriety, chastity, social service are firmly established in the minds of the young. All have to pass through this discipline, irrespective of class or rank, wealth or poverty. In the second stage of a grahastha or householder the individual undertakes the obligation of family life. He becomes a member of a social body and accepts its rights and obligations, some of the sweetest of the habits of human nature are developed through the ties that bind us to our fellowmen. Self support thrift, and hospitality are enjoined in this stage. The house holder is respected
most, since he supports the three other stages. Caste rules are relevant only at this stage. In the third stage of vanaprastha the individual is required to check his attachment to worldly possessions, suppress all the conceits bred in him through of birth or property, individual genius or good luck, and cultivate a spirit of renunciation. When he is thoroughly disciplined for the higher life, he becomes a sanyasin, a disinterested servant of humanity who finds his peace in the strength of spirit. A state of perfect harmony with the eternal is reached, and the education of the human spirit terminates.

These sannyasins do not cut themselves off from the world and let it go to rock and ruin. The greatest of their class, Buddha and Sankara, Ramanuja and Ramananda, and scores of others, have entered the lifeblood of the nation and laid the foundations of its religion. Their names are today a part of the national heritage.

The caste rule relate to the social functions of individuals. Man's nature can be developed only by concentration of his personality at a particular point in the social order. Since human beings show one or other of the three aspects of mental life in a greater degree, the dvijas as the twice born are distinguished into the three classes of men of thought, men of feeling, and men of action those in whom no one quality is particularly developed are sudras. The four castes correspond to the intellectual, militant, industrial and unskilled workers, who are all members of one organic whole. So, early as the period of the Rigveda was the ergotic nature of society brought out by the metaphor of head, arms trunk, and legs, answering to the four classes which are bound by ties of common fellowship. Each class has its appropriate place, rights, and duties in the whole. Since all work is noble, caste pride and exclusiveness are not encouraged. Caste implies responsibilities and not rights. No one is free from any quality, though different qualities predominate in different men. The fulfillment of our functions is not merely a contribution to the whole but also a mode of self-expression. The nature of each individual realizes itself in his work which in a special sense is his own work, svadharma.

The ideal of the Hindu dharma is to make all men Brahmans all people prophets then they gave in the inward liberty and the joy of spiritual communion, and spontaneously refrain from resisting evil by force, returning violence, and possess the patience and the love to bear it if any one bears the, and yield to his wishes if any one would deprive them of anything. They are filled with the spirit of peaceful joy or santi, which means the extinction of all hatred. True Brahmminhood represents the highest of which human nature is capable.
The social fabric is organized on the basis of spiritual perfection. Man has no wings to soar to the heights; he has therefore to be content with scaling them through effort and pain, step by step. The Hindu social organization embodies this graduated scheme. I may illustrate this point by the two examples of 'hamsa' or non-violence and cow protection. "Thou shalt not slay". Either men or animals. It is the highest law, the only law worthy of men. Every Brahmin is asked to respect it, yet the system provides for a class of warriors whose profession it is to kill and get killed. The organizers felt that the spirit of realisation, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" was firmly rooted in human nature. It cannot be suddenly displaced with submission to evil wrong, resisting it by love is impossible, then resistance by violence is allowed, and the warrior classes are told that it is their duty to resist aggression by force. It is however a concession to human nature and the Kshatriya is told that the flow of love which the Brahmin practices is higher that the law of brute force which he himself employes. The kshatriya represents a lower stage of development, since he looks upon man as a lump of flesh and not a part of God. He is called upon to fight in a spirit of brotherliness, without hate and of a sense of duty, and not in a vindictive mood that he who has made me suffer must suffer too. If the Kshatriya acts in this spirit of humanity. He will rise in spiritual status and relyless on brute force until at last he becomes a Brahmin incapable of injuring any living thing on earth. Though violent resistance is allowed the end is to transcend it. We have to sail along the current of nature in order to pass beyond it.

The law against killing applies to the animal world also. Its logical implication is that we should abstain from animal food. The animal creation is also from God, and so has to be treated with kindness. The cow is the symbol of the animal world. The daily prayer or the regenerate Hindus asks for the protection of the cow and the Brahmin, symbols of the animals and the human worlds, nourishes our bodies and souls, respectively. Gandhi writes "why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India man's best companion. She was the giver of plenty. The cow is a poem. Of pity the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. But there were people in India who showed no pity or mercy for the animal world. They had to be trained out of their habits. The ideal or the Brahmin who abstains from all animal food, who hurts no being either for sport or food, has been ennobling in its influence. The warriors and the traders are chiefly vegetarians. Even the Sudras on sacred days absain from animal food. Thus there is a steady growth towards vegetarianism. Those who have absolutely no scruples about the treatment of animals are
the panchamas, on whom the influence of Hinduism has not been perceptible.

The charge that Hinduism has done nothing to unchain the moral and spiritual force of the lower classes displays a colossal ignorance of the work of Hinduism of India. Today after so many centuries of Buddhism and Christianity, when a civilized race comes into contact with a backward one, it does not care to understand the mentality of the latter, but practices cruel methods of conquest and subjection. So that the backward races, if they are left eyes to weep will spend laborious days and sleepless nights cursing God, because he had allowed these civilizers to get into their lands. The Aryans of India accepted the natives into their fold and helped them to get rid of their habits of dirt and drunkenness lead clean lives and warship the one living God. When the original inhabitants were found worshipping serpents, the Aryans told them that there was a greater then the serpent god. The Nageswara the lord of serpents or Krishna who dances on the head of the serpent Kaliya. They did not expose them selves to the avenging power of facts by hurriedly forcing up society to a higher plane of conduct which could not be reached without an inward call. The work of gradual civilizing by means of caste continued till the advent of the Mohammedans. In a large country like India, with no easy means of communications the work achieved is really great Mr. James Kennedy writes. The absorption and assimilation of these aboriginal or foreign messes within the Hindu fold was the task of new Hinduism a task mainly accomplished between the seventh and eleventh centuries A.D. and it was so thoroughly done that we now find throughout northern India a Hindu population fairly homogeneous in blood, culture and religion and sufficiently marked from the degraded tribes that still haunt the outskirts of civilization Outsiders have been steadily flowing into the Hindu fold, and the religion has been able to absorb and inspire heterogeneous peoples with elements of the higher life. But for this civilizing work India would have had, instead of fifty million untouchables, five times that number. This work has ceased to be effective since the loss of political freedom by the Hindus. It was then that Hindu society became fixed up in conservatism and left outside its pale a considerable part of the population of India, which has been the field for exploitation by the non Hindu religions.

Tradition:

All Hindus are experts to accept the Vedas as their highest religious authority. They embody the principles of life and of the universe. The vital parts of the Vedas are the Upanisads, products of a perfectly spontaneous spiritual movement which implicitly superseded the cruder aspects of the Vedas. The subsequent history
of the Hindu faith has been a insteady building on the foundations truly laid in the Upanisads. Though religious thought has traversed many revolutions and made great conquest, the central ideas have continued the same for nearly fifty centuries. Whenever dogmatic developments succeeded in imprisoning the living faith in rigid creeds, true prophets of the spirit a rose and summoned the people to a spiritual revival. When the movement of the Upanisads became lost in dogmatic controversies, and the fever of dialectical disputation filled the spirit of religion, Buddha insisted on the simplicity of truth and the majesty of the moral law. Probably in the same period, though in another part of the country when calonical culture and useless learning made religion inhuman scholasticism and filled with ridiculous pride those learned in this different trifling the author of the Gita opened the gates of heaven to all those who are pure in heart. Sankaras reformation of the Indian religion is not yet aspent force. Ramanuja and Madhwa, Kabir and Nanak have let perment marks on the Hindu faith. It is clear that Hinduism is a process not a result a growing tradition not a fixed revelation. It never shut off by force from anywhere for there are no distinctions of mine and thine in the kingdom of spirit.

THE HINDU DHARMA

From the time the history of the Aryans in India commenced up till today it has been the privilege or the misfortune of India to be faced with serious racial and religious crises. In a special sense, India has been a small edition of the world. It is a laboratory where experiments of racial and religious syntheses relevant to the problems of the world are undertaken and worked out. If it be true that every people has its own distinctive note and brings out on particular aspect of the divine manifestation India seems to have been selected in the economy of things for the purpose of offering solutions for racial and religious conflicts.

In the long history of the Hindu religion with all its cross currents abackwaters with the windings of the stream and the barren expenses of sand it is possible to discern a general tendency a spiritual direction which has continued the same in spite of varying expressions. The central principles of the ancient Hindu dharma are not dead cells, but living powers full of strength and suggestiveness. Even if it is be not so, it is not altogether without interests to understand the principles of the Hindu faith which has more than two hundred million followers today.

The term "dharma" is one of complex significance It stands for all those ideals and purposes influences and institutions that shape the character of man both as an individual and as a member of society.
It is the law of right living the observance of which secures the double object of happiness on earth and salvation. It is ethics and religion combined. The life of a Hindu is regulated in a very detailed manner by the laws of dharma. His fasts and feasts his social and family ties his personal habits and tastes are all conditioned by it.

Moksha or spiritual freedom is the aim of all human life. It is the destiny of man to reach the summits of spirit and attain immortality. We are the children of God. Amrtasya putrah. the eternal dream of the human heart, the aspiration of the soul to come to its own, is the basis of the Hindu dharma. It assumes that the fundamental reality is the soul of man. All the desires of the heart, all discussions of logic presuppose the Atman. It is something unprovable by reason, though no proof is possible without it. Nor is it a mere matter of faith, since it is the faith Which underlies all reason. If the self of man is open to doubt then nothing on earth is from it. It anything can be, then the soul is. It is the ultimate truth which is above all change the unseen reality which is the basis of all life and logic. It is the mystery which silently affirms itself. What our minds think is not much importance besides the truth that we are, the fears of man are due to the imperfections which hides the light within. If we take reference in the self, the only fixed point of our being, we shall know that we are not alone in the apparently endless road of life or samsara and that we can overcome the world and defy death. "Greater is he that is within you than he that is in the world."

While the spiritual perfection of men is the aim of all endeavour, the Hindu dharma does not insist on any religious belief or form of worship. The utmost latitude is allowed in the matter of addressing and approaching the supreme. The Hindu thinkers were good students of philosophy and sociology and never felt called upon to enforce religious belief. Misunderstandings and antagonisms in religious matters arise, when we put forward excessive claims on behalf of our own views of God. Besides, religion implies freedom and it is the greatest injury that we can inflict on men to compel him to accept what he cannot understand. Again, it is difficult to classify the ways of man to God. The heart of man has written in its blood, its pathway to God. A Sanskrit verse says "As the birds float in the air and the fish swim in the sea leaving no traces behind even so are the paths traversed by the spiritual. Christ spoke of the mystery of the divine life revealing itself in the finite soul. "The wind bloweth were it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, and causeth not tell whence it cometh or whether it goeth so is every one that is born of the spirit." God reveals himself now by a flash of lightning. Now by a tremor in the soul. To a Hindu who has understood the spirit of his religion all
faiths are sacred in Rabindranath’s School at Bolpur, where the one invisible God is worshipped abuse of other’s faiths is disallowed. Gandhi is most tolerant in his religious views. Regarding the attitude of the Brahmin thinkers to other religious, Wilson writes; The Brahmins who compiled a code of Hindu law, by command of Warren Hastings, preface their performance by affirming the equal merit of every form of religious worship. Contrarieties of belief and diversities of religion, they are in fact part of the scene of providence far as painter gives beauty to a picture by a variety of colours or as a gardener embellishes his garden with flowers of every hue, so God appointed to every tribe its own religion that man might glorify him in diverse modes, all having the same end and being equally acceptable in his sight.

This does not, however, mean that the Hindu thinkers have no right ideas of God and consider all belief to be equal true. they have a sure perception of the lightest truth, though they do not insist on a universal acceptance of it. they believe that if the mind is enlightened, the truth will be spontaneously perceived. Every religion is an expression of the mental and social evolution of the people who adopt it is therefore mischievous to attempt any sudden supplanting of existing beliefs by new ones. The cruder conceptions will give way before the rising rational reflection and the true reformer tries to improve the mental and moral nature of men. Truth is not so much the result of theological faith as the experience of a deeper moral life. So the Hindu thinkers pay more attention to the discipline than to the doctrine. The religion of the Hindus is not so much a theology as a scheme of life. What there one is an orthodox Hindu or not depends, nor on whether one believes this or that view of God, but on whether one accept or rejects the dharma.

The highest life enjoined by the dharma is what follows naturally from vital faith in the realigh of God. If the indwelling of god in men is the highest truth, conduct which translates in into pradic is kideal conduct. The several virtues are forms of the truch, satyakaras. Truth, beauty and goodness are a part of the life stuff of the ideal man. He will be an emobdiment of the virtues of self denial humility fraternal love and purity. By the mastery of soul over sense, clouds of hae and mists of passion dissolve and be will be filled with santi or serenity and will remain absolutely calm in moments of great peril. Personal loss of public calamity. With tranquility of soul, a steady pulse and a clear eye he will do the right thing at the right moment. He does not belong to this country or that, but is in a true sense. The citizen or the world. The quality of satva with its ideals of joy and love predominates over that of rajas with its craving for power and pride and over that of tamas with its dullness and inertia. For the perfect men the dharma is an inspiration from within for others it is an external command, what custom and public demand.
The ideal which require us to refrain from anger and covetousness, to be pure and loving in thought word and deed is much too high for those passing through the storm and stress of life of sin and suffering. It seems to demand of life what it possibly cannot give. It kills all the constituent conditions of life. If renunciation of all were necessary for salvation many may not care to be saved. The world is so organized that whose who practice the divine rule do not have much chance of success or survival. We are familiar with the way in which the sermon on the Mount is dismissed as impossible idealism. We cannot be turning our cheeks to the transmitters to receive blows, when it so tempting to give blows on both the cheeks. It may be divine to rejoice in suffering but the flash is weak for all that Christendom consoles itself in the belief that even Jesus nodded one or twice. "O, my Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Those who pride themselves on their practical spirit reduce the ideals to the level of ordinary human nature subject to the temptations of power and profit the flesh and the devil the modern worldly reformer says: "Ye have beared that it was said by them of old time: thou shalt not hate ye but I say un to you: Thou shalt not hate except the backward races the enemy nations and the weak of the world Alarmed at the sacrifice exacted by a religious life which tells us that happiness does not depend on power or wealth, but on love and peach our advanced reformers make so many reservations to the divine law that they completely destroy the force of the latter and justify our modern practice that violence abundance of possessions and armaments are the final end of man's life. They conveniently forget the story of the men who planned to build great store houses to provide an abundance for any years but was cheated of his chance by the blow of death which come overnight.

The Hindu thinkers are conscious of the great gulf that separates the actual nature of man, which is bad from the ideal which seems to be well high impossible. The consciousness of the great distance between the actual and the ideal does not tempt them to distort the ideal itself. It would be a blasphemy against the spirit in us that shall not be forgiven. They therefore attempt to develop the infinitely precious ideal from out of the apparently refractory stuff of life. The nature of man and inhabits of judgement change rather slowly. We must have patience in the striving after perfection. The Law of Karma tells us that millions of lives are consumed before one perfect life is produced. For thought to reach the highest plane we must plan toil and agonize a lot. For our heart to pulse with joy countless hearts must be crushed by suffering. Many strivings and sacrifices are needed to generate a by character. Most men climb up the ladder to the spiritual heights only rung by rung. Few can fly
from the bottom to the top at one bound. The varnasrama dharma or the discipline of the classes and stages of life is the Hindu's device for the gradual improvement of human nature. It is intended to make all Lords people prophets. Its principles are those of kingdom of spirit, not a civil common wealth of a universal institution not a national organization. If morality is that which conscience imposes, and law that which the state commands, dharma is neither the one nor the other. It is the tradition sustained by the convictions of countless generations of men, which help to build the soul of truth in us. It corresponds to the sittichkeit of the Germans and is independent of both the individual conscionce and the laws of the state. That is why dynastic feuds and imperialist aggression have not touched the life of India which has continued the same for nearly fifty centuries. Successive storms of conquest have passed over the changeless millions as the wind over needs.

Moksha or liberation is the ideal towards which humanity has to move All life is set to the music of this ideal All men are equal in that they are born of God. They are equal since they are to rise to the same divine destiny. But men differ with regard to their actual equipment for the ideal. They have varying amounts of darkness and evil to eliminate, and have to put forth varying efforts to illumine their life with light and Love. The education of the individual spirit is arranged through the scheme of asrams or stages of life and varnas or classes of men. It takes into account the different sides of human nature I the life for man is rooted in kama or desire. Man is a bundle of desires. Many says; "It is not good that the soul should be enslaved by desire, yet nowhere is to be found desirelessness (akamata). Since our activities are impelled by our desires, the right regulation of our desires is also a part of dharma. So kama or enjoyment is recognized as a valid pursuit it is not mere satisfaction of animal impulses but is the expression of the freedom of the self. This is not possible until we escape from the tyranny of the senses. The life of man is not a more succession of sensation, but is the manifestation of an eternal idea developing itself through forms.

The desires of men are directed into the channels of family life and public duty. The emotional or artistic life of man is also apart of life's integral good. But art cannot flourish in an atmosphere of aestheticism. We must have a that or wealth. The economic needs of the community should be satisfied, if the creative impulses of men are to be liberated for the higher cultural life. Rules are laid down regarding the interested for the community in the matter of the wealth earned by individual members. The liberty of each is restricted by the needs of all self denial is the only way to gain wealth and enjoyment. Dharma or duty controls the pursuit of both pleasure
and profit (Kama and artha). These in whom dharma predominates are of sattvik nature, while the seekers of wealth are of rajasic nature. The individuals who observe the laws of dharma automatically attains moksha, and so is it said that dharma, artha kama and moksha form the ends of life.

What ever may be the truth about the origin of life and the universe, the supremacy of the moral end is admitted by all. In Hindu thought, man is said to come into being for a divine purpose. The extinguished passions of our vanished lives bring about our birth on earth. It is through suffering that our weakness can be converted into strength our ignorance into illumination. The evil of existence is expiated only by the suffering and self restraint of life. The word asrama comes from a root which means to suffer without suffering, there is no progress without death no resurrection our life from beginning to end is a kind of death which means a larger life. The more we die to ourselves the more do we live to God Living and dying are inextricably be did and the perfect life is the crown of a complete death. Four stages are distinguished in the life of every Hindu of which the first two are those of brahamachari or student and Grihastha or house holder. The last two stages deal with the retirement from life in which the individual becomes a servant of God and humanity.

The first period opens with the sacramental symbol of initiation into a spiritual life. It is intended to build up the psycho physical constitution of man the building of the body and the training of the mind are the principal aims of this stage. The student is taught the habits of cleanliness, chastity good manners and godliness. Social sympathies are cultivated by insistence on poverty for all students whether they are sons of princes or of peasants every student is required to beg for his food and this training in poverty impresses on the mind of the student that wealth is not an essential condition of a good life. The students are not allowed to become laws into themselves nor are they delivered into the hands of an ignorant and blind fanaticism. They are not allowed to build altars and idols in their own imagination of fall a prey to superstitions and creeds. Loyalty to truth and respect for tradition are insisted on the kind of education that is to be given depends on the needs and capacities of the boys. The task was not so complex as it is today, since the future vocations of boys were roughly settled. In the programs of education, secular as well as religious, no distinction is made between boys and girls. Only co education was not encouraged.

When the stage of apprenticeship is over, the student becomes responsible for a family; "The man is not man alone, but his wife and children also." He becomes the bread winner of family and thus the mainstay of the community. Family life and social duty help towards
the ultimate goal and presuppose self restraint. Every man is expected to do his work for the world. He should not, out of mere selfish pleasure, abstrain from social service. We are pledged to one another and should live for one another the individual for the family, the family for the community, the community for the nation and the nation for the world. The caste system, valid in the second stage of the householder, assumes the unity and the interdependence of humanity. It takes into account the needs of the society as well as the interests of the individual. It sustains personality in that it helps the individual to transcend him self by giving his devotion to something beyond himself. By focusing his energies at a particular point in the environment, it tries to actualize his potentialities. It is an illustration of Hegel's harmony of opposites, a point of view which reconciles the apparently conflicting claims of the individual and of society. Not the good of the self as a thing apart or the good of society by itself, but a higher good to promote which constant self renewal and social service are the means, is the governing principle of the caste system. Taking into account the variety of human nature, it lays down ways and means by which each man can attain full self expression. It works up to the ideal of equality by recognizing the actual differences. It is an attempt to co-operate with the forces of nature and not flout them. Those who criticize the institution from the platform of modern knowledge do not remember that in no other country were peoples belonging to stocks of very unequal value thrown together. The pre Vedic peoples with whom the Aryans had to mingle were of a lower grade of civilizations and culture. They were constituted into the fourth estate of the unregenerate, the once born, the ekajata, in whom no quality of intellect, emotion or will is particularly developed. The twice born of the regenerated are divided into three classes according as their intellect, emotion or will is more dominant than the others. Those who are strongly endowed with the powers of thought and reflection are the Brahmins those gifted with heroism and love are the kshatriyas those strongly inclined towards the practical business of life are the Vaisyas. The four classes correspond to the intellectual, the militant, the industrial and the unskilled workers. All of them serve God's creation by their own capacities, the Brahmins by their spirituality, the Kshatriyas by their heroism, the Vaisyas by their skill and the sudras by their service. All of them place the common good above that of their party or class. Claims of egoism and ambition are subordinated to those of conscience and justice the enduring values that are confided to our keeping. When the different classes fulfill their respective, functions, the society is considered to be rust or in accordance with dharma.

The true interests of the unskilled workers were not neglected. The vaisyas pursue trade and love wealth and comfort, though they
are required to interpret them in terms of life and welfare. This caste is an association of men united by an economic nexus. Commercialism, however, was checked since the members of this class were called upon to hold the goods of life in the bonds of love. The kshatriyas were the defenders of society from external aggression and internal disorder. The military organization of the state was entrusted to them. They were in the charge of the political arrangements. It was not the intention of the Hindu dharma to take the entire body of the people act as a general militia. Efficiency is everywhere gained through specialization. Those whose business it is to make war and resist wrong by force must possess the proper aptitude for it and get the necessary training. The art of Government cannot be practiced by all. It is increasingly felt that a mature politicians keen or satisfying their constituencies and with on other training than what could be get from the hurry burly of popular elections are incapable of doing justice to the task of administrative. One particular class was devoted to the military and the administrative purposes, and the people as a whole were not possessed by a passion for government for domination and power.

Today, the great wars are fought for the government of the world and for the possession of its markets and not for the moral elevation of the people or the pursuit of good. The political obsession is the cause of the drifting of the world in deep confusion to unseen issues. It may be said that when there is a professional ruling class, there is no guarantee that the rule will be unselfish. But the training to which they are subjected is a sufficient security for the right discharge of their functions. Besides, the rulers are not allowed to annual or alter dharma but only to administer it. The charges in the dharma are introduced by the Bhashmin thinkers, who possess no vested interests but lead a life of a spirit in compulsory poverty. They interpret the dharma in cases of doubt and difficulty.

The organization of the society is essentially aristocratic in the best sense of the term, since lonely the philosophically minded men with detachment of view lay down the laws. The priests were the lawgivers even among the Jews, the Iranians and the Celts. The qualifications of the true Brahmins, wisdom, self control and disinterestedness made selfish legislation difficult. The Brahmans engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and the beautifying of life were regarded as superior to the officers and administrators, and were not obliged to do what was congenial to the latter they were freed from all material cares and term subordinates to earthly authorities in spiritual matters the institution recognizes that all good reforms start in the mind of one man and at first repel the world at large society cannot progress if all forwarded steps should first obtain the sanction.
of the majority. Absolute freedom for the creative and progress. Mr. Bertrand Russell, in a brilliant article in the century, observes that without freedom the man who is ahead of his age is rendered impotent, the considered conviction of one wise man is more worthy than the opinions of a myriad fools, according to Manu.

The moral codes are adapted to the different stages of the unfolding of the life of spirit. The trader boards up life zealously for material ends; the warrior flings it away for order and organization and resists evil by the employment of force. The Brahmin lives the life of ahimsa or non-violence is not a sign of weakness or cowardice, but the natural expression of spiritual strength and divine love. He has passed through the stage of a warrior and has found if unworthy of a true believer in God. Centuries of hereditary training and the influence of environment have made the Hindu a passive meditative being, a worshipper of the ideal of the Brahmin sannyasin. Even today he is willing to pay his tribute of profound admiration to an emaciated saint like Gandhi.

The existence of orders lower than the Brahmin and the dedication of one class to the business of war, have misled many students of Hinduism into thinking that the Hindu dharma is not based on the principle of non violence. The simple explanation that we have to pass through the lower stages in order to transcend them in forgotten. The higher we rise, the more austere should be. The legend of St. Christosopher who undertook to carry the Christ child on his shoulders across a stream, is applicable to us all. The deeper he entered in to the water, the heavier became the burden. By a slow conquest of the passions, by a rising knowledge of the spiritual basis of the world, all men who are born sudras gradually rise in the scale till they become Brahmans. The load becomes heavier the higher we rise, and our strength will have to increased in proportion to the in the weight of the load while the Kshatriya in view of his limitations may employ force through without hatred and with a clean conscience. The Brahmin should refrain altogether from the use of force and the cherishing of hatred or ill feeling for any.

The relativity of the stages leading up to the absolute ideal may also be illustrated from another case. Modern evolution is confirming the Hindu theory of the continuity of the animal and the human worlds. The Hindu dharma inculcates respect for life and tenderness towards all from of animal creation "Thou shalt not kill" applies to the animals as well. It is also believed that animal diet clogs the finer sensibilities of human life. More than what is adds to the physical it takes away from the physical Jesus himself is quite clear that even animals are objects of sacredness, and that not a sparrow falls to the without the notice of God. Yet the peoples of
India were accustomed to animal diet, and so regulations were laid
down restricting the use of animal diet for the fourth class and
prohibiting it as a rule for the other classes, with the result that the
Hindus as a whole are tending to give it up more and more.

Caste has economic implications. Many of the modern castes
are only occupational divisions. Every man is not fit for all things
and does not feel that he can begin any trade as he pleases. Nor do
individuals go about in search of work, but they serve society by filling
the station in which they happen to be placed. Unlimited competition
and selfish individualism are checked. A religious character is
impressed on every kind of work and from of industry. The bricklayer
and the carpenter, the blacksmith and the milkman believe that they
glorify God by the right performance of their work. In these days of
large scale production and factory labour, we tend to forget that when
a man is cut off from his family and made to work in a large factory
the work becomes joyless and mechanical. The caste on the other
hand puts all men working in the same profession in their natural
surroundings, instead of tearing them away from their homes and
making them work for long hours on small wages. The fullness of
communal life, with its living associations of beauty, love and social
obligations, helps to make the worker happy. The members of his
family who share in his work introduce sweetness and humanity into
it. If women and children are to be made to work, it is better that
they work in the atmosphere of a home where it is possible to embody
their creative impulses in what they turn out. There is a finer stimulus
to right action here than mere success in competition or the satisfaction
of customers can supply. Those who practice the same craft develop
corporate felling and professional honour. The young acquire from
the plastic influences of the environment the right kind of vocational
training. They absorb unconsciously the tradition of the trade and
the economic pursuit happens to be the free self expression of their
soul. It is true that modern conditions are working against cottage
industries and small scale production. But it is not everywhere the
case, Fine arts, decorative industries, even spinning and weaving, as
supplementary interests of the agriculturists, may be confined to
homes and we can have small factories worked by electricity or oil
engines. Caste as a trade guild is not yet out of date while the
suggestion of a definite programme of life at the every beginning is
not undesirable, still stereo typing it without the least regard to the
natural endowment and special aptitudes is likely to result in an
enslavement of life which finds it difficult adjust itself to the complex
condition of the modern world.

Strictly speaking, the caste of a man is determined by the
predominance of reason, emotion or will in him. These correspond
roughly to the three gunas or qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. Manu mentions three principles as governing the caste of a man, viz, tapas or individual effort, stream or the cultural environment and younger heredity. The first is a vague test and is not available for objective use. The second depends on the home influences. Which in their turn depend on the third consideration view is in consonance with the principles of rebirth and karma accepted by the Hindus.

Peoples with different racial heritages can live together in amity and fellowship on the basis of caste the formulators of the institution felt that though birth was the only available test, spiritual character was the real basis of the divisions of society. Manu allows that if an individual practices the ways of the good and leads a pure life, he overcomes the effects of heredity. According to the Mahabharata the test of regeneracy is not birth not learning, but only conduct. We have ignored all factors other than birth, with the result that the system has rigidly confined people for all time to particular compartments enslaved successive generations of men and proved well nigh fatal to the free growth of social polity. The natural plasticity and fluidity moulds and barriers of the system. We have reached a condition of society where the disorganization of social life is so great that the principle of birth should be subordinated Referring to a similar state of affairs the Mahabharata says: "I here has been so much mixture in marriage that the text of jati or birth is no good. The governing consideration should be sila or conduct and the first Manu has declared that there is no point in distinctions of caste, if character is not considered.

Since the distinction of functions among the different classes is likely to generate pride and exclusiveness, in spite of the training during the student period, general laws of the equal treatment of all are insisted. The highest virtue consists in doing to others as we would be done by. Vismu Purana says: Every where you should perceive the equal for the relations of equality or samatva is the worship of God. There are duties which men of all castes are required to obey, such as non injury to life, truth, integrity, cleanliness and self-control.

After all the caste divisions are incidental to our imperfections and should not therefore constitute a source of pride. The one eternal has no caste. The rules of caste are applicable only in the stage of the householder. Even here, they are not superior to the claims of humanity. What is necessary at the present day is acceptance of the aim of caste and the cultivation of a more true social spirit. The blighting bigotries and the rigid restrictions on the amenities of life are inconsistent with humanity and fellowship and are therefore to be given up. Manu does not encourage them. The ploughman, the friend of the family the cowherd the servant the barber and the poor
stranger offering his service from the hands of such sudras food may be taken.

The caste rules were not rigid until the advent of the Mohammedans into India. The social laws were fluid and elastic and the mutability of growth was not sacrificed to the strait waistcoat of a legal formula we read in the puranas stories of individuals and of families who changed from lower to higher castes. Manu admits the possibility ascent and decent Rules for change of caste by gradual purification are also mentioned. The higher state were accessible to merit from below. When Hindu India lost political freedom and the new rulers adopted a policy of proselytism, social initiative disappeared and law and custom became fetishes, with disastrous results for national solidarity. We have to recover the original spirit of the dharma which was not limited to particular forms, but manifested itself in fresh ones, changing the old and developing the new the exaggerated value given to caste in times of political insecurity is no more necessary Caste has a future only if it is confined to social matters in every society people enter into marriage relations only with those who are near to them inhabits of mind and action. Since a common cultural tradition is better developed among those who pursue the same vocation, marriages among members of the same profession become the order of the day. Even in ancient India inter marriages among members of different castes were not forbidden, though they were not encouraged Anuloma and pratiloma marriage are not usual though they are not invalid according to Hindu law. If such marriage are not common, it is because they tend to disturb the intimate, industrial social and spiritual life of the community. Caste as a basis of intimate social relations does not interfere with the larger life of the nation. As the emperor Ashoka said to his Hindu minister. “Caste may be considered when it is question of marriage or invitation, but not of dharma; for dharma is concerned with virtues and have nothing to do with caste.

To say that social service is unknown to the Hindus is to utter a bold untruth. Much capital is made out of the treatment of the untouchables. It is not remembered that a free India rendered them much greater service than what other free countries even in recent times have done for their backward classes. How have the superior nations civilized Tasmanian and the Australian aborigines, certain Maori peoples and North American Indian tribes? They generally refine them into extinction, and where that is not possible, they sink them into the slough of vice and crime worse than say normal expression of savage life. If the Kaffir has multiplied under the British protection and the Japanese under the Dutch if the protections of Straits Settlement, and British India have not vanished
before their civilizers, it is because a good God has put them in a climate unfavorable to the civilizers. The tropics can never become the habitual of the Europeans. They can be held, but not peopled by them. But for the limits set by Nature, the history of the tropical regions would have been different. From the time the Aryans met the peoples of a lower grade of civilizations, they devised ways and means by which the different portions of the populations could develop in social, spiritual directions. The Aryans even accepted a non-Aryan representative of the block peoples Krishna and made him deliver the message of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. Krishna's conduct scandalized society and provoked the vedic gods, Indra and Brahma. Today the Aryan worshippers of these gods look upon Krishna, however had great respect for the Aryan thinkers and it is said that he washed the feet of the Brahmin guests at the Rajasuyayaga of king Yudhisthira. The Aryans took to the non Aryan gods very kindly improved them where possible, and subordinated them where necessary.

The worshippers of Mahisa (buffalo-demon) were told that the Cosmic spirit was greater than the Mahisa. The worshippers of serpents were instructed that there was one greater than the serpents, the Lord of serpents, Nageswara or Krishna who danced over the head of Kaliya. The marks of the gradual civilizing of the lower classes are visible throughout the cultural history of India. Whenever there was a tendency to overlook the common humanity of men, a Buddha or a sankara arose, emphasizing the common lot of all high and low. The extent of the country 2,000 miles long and 1,500 miles broad is not similar to that from Dan to Beersheba. The means of communication that we have at the present day were not available till recently. If the work of civilizing the backward classes had not been under taken and carried on with zeal and success by the ancient Indians, we would have had not merely fifty millions of these depressed classes, but a much larger number. When the outside invaders came into the country the Hindu feels nervous, and as a sheer act of self preservation, stereotyped the existing divisions, and some tribes were left outside the pale of the caste order. Though Manu says that there is no fifty class any where the tribes who were not influenced by the dharma formed themselves into the fifth class. He who has abandoned his duties, is cruel and pitiless, and oppresses others, and who is passionate and full of destructiveness is a leeched words are too strong for the deplorable condition of these people. To disregard the claims of man simply because he happens to be low belongs to another race is against the religions spirit of Hinduism. Now that things are in a more settled condition, the Hindu leaders are reiterating the central truth that the least of all men has a soul and need not be considered past all power to save.
The last two stages of Vanaprastha and Sannyasa which may be taken as one for purposes. Treat of those who have retired from the competitive struggle for life. The Sannyasin represents the highest type of Indian manhood. From selfishness, the individuals has progressed to self annihilation through the extinction of all prejudice, hatred and ambition. He has passed through all institutions, and is now above them. His emotional life express itself in the love of God or bhakti and not in animal lusts or personal likes he perceives the oneness and who lenses of humanity, and his mind is freed from all superstitions and unreason. His active energies are devoted to the service of humanity, knowing as he does that God is in beings and is of them. He who has the vision of all in one, in whom the impersonal predominates over the personal, cannot sin. He is the superman of the Bhagavadgita, the awakened of Buddhism, the true Brahmin who glories in his poverty, rejoices in suffering and is finely balanced in mind, with peace and joy at heart. He loves all men, birds and beasts not evil, but over comes it by love. In him the soul of man is at its highest stretch. The ideal of the sannyasia has dominated the life of India from the time of Rishies of the Upanisads. To follow this ideal, kings lay down their crowns and scepters and assume the garb of poverty, fighting heroes forget the pride of victory and breck their weapons, and skilled traders and workmen pursue their toil with steadfast mind surrendering to God the fruits there of.

These sannyasins; as a rule, are the helps of humanity. The greatest of them, like Sankara and Ramanuja, Ramananda and Kabir, have entered into the life blood of the nation and laid the foundations of its religion. It is, however, true that in India, as in Mediaval Europe, many ascetics made the mistake of escaping into the wilderness from the worries of the world. These hermits of the cloister and monks of the desert are voices astray in the dark. Their perpetual consciousness of sin and their preoccupation with their own salvation show that they have lost their lives in their anxiety to save them. As the tide of monasticism which swept over Europe in the Middle Ages is not true to the teaching of Jesus, who asks us to look upon ourselves as servants trusted by the master, porters bidden to watch, stewards to whom much is committed sons to whom much is committed, sons to whom the father confides his affairs, so the deserters from battle of life are not the true sannyasins, who are prepared to suffer for mankind, with intense humility, glowing with and sincere love.

To reach the highest state it is not always necessary to adhere literally to the rules of dharma. There are cases of sudden conversion uprushes of the spirit from seemingly commonplace souls, astonishing moral elevation among men who have not learned the highest lesson of existence. The rules of dharma however, represent the normal growth of spirit. The freed souls sometimes smile at the irrelevance
of the painful scrupulosities and anxious questioning about ceremonial propriety which worry those in the lower stages of life. The order of sannyasins is open to men of all castes. No man, however, should desire liberation without paying his three debts to the gods by means of hymns and prayers to the pitris or the ancestors by gifts and charity and social service and by the rearing up of progeny, and to the Rises by passing on to others the instructions received by himelf.

The Hindu dharma has room for all kinds of men, the dispassionate old who have retired from the business of life and the eager pushful young who are keen on worldly success. The four castes and orders are not intended to be special moulds into which the Indian people are thrown but forms capable of embracing the whole of humanity. Without the employment of force or eagerness for exploitation, Hinduism has been able to civilize a large part of Asia. What has attracted it is not imperialist expansion, but the cultural conquest the peaceful penetration of the thought and mind of the peoples which it achieves by its spirituality. From the kingdom of Khotan in Central Asia. To the island of Java, which lies on the way between India and Australia, the creative urge of the Hindu genius founds its expression in life and art. Java had Hindu settlers as back as the second century AD and has remained since then predominantly Hindu and Buddhist. Today, Japan, China and Burma look to India as their spiritual home even as Christians look to Palestine. Wherever we go from Russia to China, at Samarkand, at Tibet, we can trace the influence of Indian civilization. All these pale into insignificance when we remember that there are records of Indian culture in Western Asia, in the plains of Mesopotamia, in the regions watered by the river Tigris and Euphrates.

Inscribed Tibets discovered at Boghaz-koi, assigned by competent scholars to 1400 BC speak to us of people who were worshipping the Hindu gods. This influence of India is not because her religion is old or her empires are great, not because she developed weapons of destruction or exercised force on a large scale, but because she had an intelligent understanding of the deeper unity in the midst of all diversity. Wherever show went, the deep and silent influence of her version of the unity of all things in God pervaded. All the mighty impulses that entered into India were synthesized on the same plan. All religions she welcomed. Since she realized from the cloudy heights of contemplation that the spiritual landscape at the hill top is the same, thought the pathways from the valley are different. To those who were wandering at random in the plains without suspecting that all roads lead to the same top, she says "Raise your eyes, Things in the valley separate us. Up younger, high above us, we are all one. The variety of ways has meaning at the foot of the hill, but if we
understand what they signify on the snowy summits, we shall now that all are reaching out for God." It may be that India with her assimilative genius may yet succeed in harmonizing the mighty currents of the world's great religions that have met on her soil.

THE HINDU IDEA OF GOD

Religion as human institution is a living organism. It possesses the same kind of unity and self identity which organic things have, the unity of a continuously changing life as against that of an unchanging creed. Its spirit is to be found not in what it was in a past stage, nor even in what it is now. Religion requires to be interpreted according to its meaning and not according to its lisping expression. Even as Empedocies was expounded by Aristotle (Metaphysics 1, 985 a 3). If we survey the successive stages of the history of a religion, we get an idea of something deep and fundamental which is ever expressing itself a new, though never finding perfect expression. This growing ideal, this operative principle, which is inadequately expressed in any specific stage, is the real spirit, the meaning or the idea which informs the whole historical movement.

If we ask for the spirit of the Hindu religion it is to be found in its insistence on the reality of spiritual experience. We are at grips with reality in the inner depths of the soul. This insistence on the inwardsness of religion, its subjective or experimental character is maintained throughout the history of Hinduism. When the Hindus look back to the Vedic period as the epoch of their founders, It means that the Rises were the pioneer spirits, the first researchers in the realm of spirit. The Sanskrit word Rises from the root "drs" to see Religion is sight, vision, experience. The truths announced by Rises are evolved not as the result of logical reasoning or systematic philosophy, but are the products of spiritual institution, dristi vision. The Rises are not so much the authors of the truths registered in the Vedas as the seers who were able to discern the eternal truths by raising their lift-spirit to the plane of universal spirit. Their utterances are based not on transient vision but on continuous experience of resident life and power, sada pasyanti surayah. If the Vedas are regarded as the highest authority, it is because the most exacting of all authorities is the authority of facts. God is not the ideal we cherish, but the Real we apprehend. Spiritual experience is not a species of imaginative thinking but is the closest communion with Reality.

The saint who knows God by acquaintance and not simply by hear say does not want a definition of god. Doubt and disbelief are impossible for him. Nothing can disturb his sense of certainty, strange and simple. But for the sake of ordinary human beings, who are
religious at secondhand, who wish to enjoy the consolations of religion without undergoing the labour of being religious, who wish to be guided by myth and ritual in the path of religions, we require imagery to cloth the vision. Besides, the only way to impart our experience to others, elucidate its implications; defend its validity against hostile criticism is by means of logic and language. Hinduism offers us a graduated scale of interpretations from the most impersonal to the crudely personal.

When the individual who has the insight attempts to interpret his experience in the light of logic and common sense, the adopts an attitude of faith which is urged by its own needs to posit the transcendent Reality. He knows that the soul has dealings, intimate, direct and luminous with a plane of being different from that with which the sense deal, more resplendent but not less real than the conventional one which the understanding presents. Reason, revelation and spiritual experience alike bear witness to reality of a Being. Spiritual in its essence which is the ground of all that is whose shadow is immortality and death. Yasya chary mortem essay mrtvuth. Ineffability is the most striking feature of spiritual experience when we seek to define the experienced reality. We are compelled to use forms and conceptions, but the reality exceeds the most comprehensive of them. Buddha admits the reality of spiritual experience, but refuses to interpret it as the revelation of anything beyond itself. For him, the view the spiritual experience gives us a direct contact with God is an interpretation and not an immediate datum Buddha attempts to keep close to the given, and is spirit penetrates the visible and tangible world. Sankara, the great Hindu philosopher and the Ologian argues that all forms contain an element of and the Real is beyond all forms. The Upanisads, Buddha and Sankara and his followers admit that the pure luminous spirit, without division or duality unique, existent beyond or rather within the world of multiplicity and change is an unconditioned existence, beyond all possibility of adequate expression by thought or description by speech. We confess without confession that the glory of God is inexplicable, beyond the reach of speech and mind. "It is other than the known and above the unknown." "The eye goes not thither, nor speech nor mind." There is, however, a danger in this intellectual modesty and spiritual humility Buddhas reticence on the question of the Absolute exposed him to the charge of atheism. By denying all attributes and relations we seem to be reducing ultimate reality to bare existence, which is absolute vacuity. Sankara urges that only the feebleminded will confuse the negative accounts are intended to convey the soul's sense of the transcendent majesty of the Absolute, that it is the "wholly other", of whom ought may be predicated save in negations.
Hinduism is not content with this negative account. The three
note worthy features of spiritual experience are reality awareness
and freed myself come parts of our experience come to us with these
characteristics it implies the possibility that all experience is capable
of being received in the same manner. The consciousness to which
all-experience is present in its own immediacy, revealedness, and
freedom from any thing which is not itself is the divine consciousness,
that which is our ideal in the divine status reality is its own immediate
witness. Its own self-awareness its own freedom of complete being.
There is nothing which is not revealed in it, and there is utter absence
of all discord. It is perfect being, perfect consciousness and perfect
freedom, sat, chit and ananda. Though and its forms will and its
harmonies are based on. These human counterparts involve duality
tension strain. Hence the inadequacy of the human and finite
categories to the perfection of the divine. The supreme is real, not
true is perfect not good its freedom its life its essential spontaneity.

While the fullness of spiritual being transcends our categories
its nature is still a kin to the highest kind of being we are aware of in
our selves. If the real were utterly transcendent to the self of man, is
would be impossible for us to apprehend even dimly its presence we
would not be able to say that the Supreme is wholly other. There is
in the self of man, at the very centre of his being, deeper than is
intellect something which is akin to the Supreme. There is a real
ground in man's deepest being for the experience of reality God's
revelation and man's contemplation seem to be two sides of one fact.
The substantiality of the spirit in man and God is the conviction
fundamental to all spiritual wisdom. It is not merely a matter of
inference in the spiritual experience itself, the barrier between the
self and the universal spirit drop always. We belong to the real and
real is reflected in us the great text, Tat tvam asi. That art thou, is
the simple statement of an experienced act The Biblical saying: So
God created man in his own image in the image of God created He in
him." Asserts that in the soul of man is contained the true revelation
of God. "The spirit of man is the endle of the Lord." According to
Plato, man is potentially a participator in the external mode of being
which he can make his own by living in detachment form the fluting
shadows of the earth. "I and My father are One." Is Jesus way of
expressing the same profound truth.

God is the infinite spirit who is both in us and out of us. If
God were not in us there would be no sense of need; if God were not
out of us, there would be no sense worship. If we emphasize the
transcendence of the Supreme to the human self, our religion becomes
devotional. Our highest knowledge of God is only partial. There
always remains something which is unknown and unsaid. The
specifically religious consciousness insists on the sense of communion with a higher than ourselves with whom it is impossible for the individual to get assimilated. There are many degrees in this personal relationship ranging from the feeling of utter humiliation in the presence of Divine Majesty to the communion with Supreme Love on whose grace the worst sinner can count. To compare the supreme with the highest kind of being we know is nearest. The truth to compare Him with anything lower. The religious devotee envisages the supreme reality in the form of a personal God who is the source, guide and destiny of the world. The difference between the supreme as absolute spirit and the Supreme as personal God is one of Standpoint and not of essence. It is difference between God as He is and God as He seems to us personality is a symbol, and if we ignore its symbolic character it shuts us out from the truth.

Hinduism is the symbol of India's spiritual vision it is based on the institution of the oneness and wholeness of supreme spirit. On the belief that human life every where and always is a part and parcel of the divine being at is has always is a part and parcel of the divine being at it has cultivated a sort of religious hospitality. It recognizes that more than one reading of experience is possible. If a number of us watch a sunset in summer, our experience in the world of thought and feeling may not be identical, and our articulations of them are bound to vary. But this variety of interpretation need not be used as a support for skepticism.

**HINDU ETHICS**

ETHICS, which concerns itself with the study of conduct, is derived, in Hinduism, from certain spiritual concepts; it forms the steel frame certain spiritual concepts; it forms the steel frame foundation of the spiritual life. Though right conduct is generally considered to belong to legalistic ethics, it has a spiritual value as well. Hindu ethics, it has a spiritual value as well. Hindu ethics differs from modern scientific ethics, which is largely influenced by biology; for according to this latter, whatever is conductive to the continuous survival of a particular individual or species is good for it. It also differs from utilitarian ethics, whose purpose is to secure the maximum utility for a society by eliminating friction and guaranteeing for its members a harmonious existence. Hindu ethics prescribed the disciplines for a spiritual life, which are to be observed consciously or unconsciously as long as a man lives.

Hindu ethics is mainly subjective or personal, its purpose being to eliminate such mental impurities as greed and egoism, for the ultimate attainment of the highest good. Why Hindu ethics stresses the subjective or personal value of action will be discussed later.
Objective ethics, which deals with social welfare, has also been considered by Hindu thinkers. It is based upon the Hindu conception of dharma, or duty, related to a man in position in society and his state in life. Objective ethics, according to the Hindu view, is a means to end, its purpose being to help the members of society to rid themselves of self-centredness, cruelty greed, and other vices, and this to create an environment helpful to the pursuit of the highest good, which transcends society Hinduism further speaks of certain universal ethical principles which apply to all human beings irrespective of their position in society or stage in life.

The ethical doctrines of the Hindus are based upon the teachings of the Upanishads and of certain secondary scriptures, which derive their authority from the Vedas. But though their emphasis is mainly subjective, the Upanishads do not deny the value of social ethics. For instance, we read: 'As the scent is wafted afar from a tree laden with flowers so also is wafted afar the scent of a good deed.' Among the social virtues are included hospitality, courtesy, and duties and wife, Children and grandchildren.' In one of the Upanishad, a king, in answer to a question by a rishi regarding the state of affairs in his country, says: In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man without an alter in his home, no ignorant person no adulterer, much less an adulteress.'

Ethical action calculated to promote social welfare is enjoined upon all who are identified with he world and conscious of their social responsibilities. Without ethical restraint there follows social chaos, which is detrimental to the development of spiritual virtues. According to the Upanishads, the gods, who are the custodians of society, place obstacles in the path of those who seek liberation from samsara, or the relative world. Without previously discharging their social duties. As a person realizes the unreality of the world and the psycho-physical entity called the individual his social duties gradually fall away; but they must not be forcibly given up if the scab is removed before the wound is healed, a new sore forms. Every normal person endowed with social consciousness has a three fold debt to discharge his debts to the gods, to the rishis, and to the ancestors. The debt to the gods, who favour us with rain, wind and other natural amenities, is paid through regular study of the scriptures. The debt to the ancestors from whom we have received on physical bodies is paid thoroughly the propagation of children, ensuring the preservation of the line with the blessing of the gods, the rishis and the ancestors one can cheerfully practise spiritual disciplines for the realization of the highest good in which all worldly values find fulfillment. The observation of social ethics, in a large measure, preserved Hindu society when various outside forces threatened to destroy it, The neglect of social ethics on
the other hand has undermined its vitality.

How; by suitable ethical disciplines, the British man may become a decent man, the decent man an aristocrat, and the aristocrat a spiritual person, has been explained by a story in one of the Upanishads. Once a god, a man and a demon the three offspring of the creator sought his advice for self improvement. To them the Creator said: 'Da.' As the syllable da is the first letter of three Sanskrit words, meaning. Respectively, self-control. Charity, and compassion the creator was in effect asking the god to practise self control, the man charity and the demon compassion. In human society there exist aristocrats, average men, and demoniacal man. The aristocrat in spite of his education refinement generosity and gentleness may lack in self control and go excess in certain matters like eating, drinking or gambling. Hence he needs self-control to improve his character further. The average man, in spite of his many human qualities is often greedy he wants to take that belongs to others. Liberality orcharity is his discipline for self improvement. The demoniacal person takes delight in treating others with cruelty and truthlessness, which can be suppressed through the practice of compassion. The Upanishads say that the Creator, even today, gives the same moral advice to different types of human beings through the voice of the thunderclap, which makes the reverberating sound 'Da.da-da-.'

The caste system in Hinduism is intimately connected with the social aspect of Hindu ethics demonstrating the importance of renunciation and self-denial as cardinal virtues. The origin of this system is found in the Vedas, though it later under went much transformation in the hands of the Hindu law givers. The Bhagavad Gita says that Lord Himself divided human beings into four groups determined by their actions and virtues. Traditions other than Hinduism support similar divisions. Plato divided the state into three classes. Castes professions, namely, philosopher-rulers, warriors, and the masses. Nietzsche says that every healthy society contains three mutually conditioning types and that it is nature, not Manu. The Hindu law giver which separates one from another the mainly intellectual those mainly intellectual, those mainly endowed with muscular and temperamental strength, and those who are distinguished neither for the nor for the other, the mediocre third class. The first group contains select individuals and it the last, the great majority.

According to the Hindu scriptures, a normal society consists of the Brahmans, who are men of knowledge, of science, literature, thought and learning the kshatriyas, who are men of action and valour;
the vaishyas who are men of desire. Possessiveness, and acquisitive enterprise and lastly the sudras who are men of little intelligence, who can not be educated beyond certain low limits who are incapable of dealing with abstract ideas, and who are fit only for manual labour. Each of them in the words of Nietzsche, has its own hygiene, its own domain of labour, its own sentiment of perfection and its own special superiority. In the Vedas the four castes are described as four important parts of the body of the cosmic person: the head, the arms, the thighs and the feet. This analogy suggests the interdependence of the four castes for the common welfare of all; it also suggests that the exploitation of one by another undermines the strength of the whole of society. The rules regarding the four castes sum up the experience, sagacity, and experimental morals of long centuries of Hindu thinkers.

The Bhagavad Gita describes the virtues of the four castes and their duties. The qualities of a Brahmin are control of the mind and the senses austerity, cleanliness, forbearance, uprightness scholarship, insight, and faith. He possesses a minimum of worldly assets, accepts voluntary poverty, and is satisfied with simple living and high thinking. Both a priest and a teacher, he is the leader of society and an adviser to king and commoner. A custodian of the culture of the race he occupies his high position in society by virtue of his spirituality and not by the power of arms or wealth. The qualities of a kshatriya are heroism high spirit, firmness, resourcefulness, dauntlessness in battle, generosity, and sovereignty. Agriculture caterring and trade are the duties of a vaishya. The main duty of a sudra is action entailing physical labour.

The hierarchy in the caste system is determined by the degree of voluntary renunciation, poverty and self-control and also by the degree of intellectual and spiritual attainments. A Brahmin has to suppress many impulses for physical enjoyment. A kshatriya no doubt enjoys power and pleasure but he is ready at any time to lay down his life for the protection of the country from external aggression or internal chaos. A vaishya whose moral code an intellectual attainments are not so rigorous or high as those of the two upper castes, amasses wealth both for his own enjoyment and for the welfare of society, One does not expect from a sudra very much of spiritual intellectual or moral perfection. The higher is one's position in the caste system, the greater is one's obligation to members of the lower castes and the more stern in the renunciation of personal comforts Noblesse oblige. The caste system was designed to promote the harmonious working of society, the weak being assured of protection from the strong. It is a law of spiritual economic's said Mahatma Gandhi. It has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. When a person belonging to a lower
caste becomes a saint he is honoured even by the Brahmans. The discipline for spiritual development are not with held from anyone.

The basis of the caste system according to the Hindu view is men's self-evident inequality physical, intellectual and spiritual. An individual is born into a higher or lower caste as a result of actions performed by him in his previous life, and each person, therefore is himself responsible for his position. By discharging the duties determined by his caste, a man becomes qualified for birth in a higher caste in a future life. If one does not accept the doctrine of rebirth and the law of karma, then the inequity from which members of lower castes often suffer cannot be explained.

A second element in the organization of the caste system is vernacular. Even in the remote past of history, the Indian subcontinent was inhabited by people of different racial groups marked by different complexions which formed the basis of their dividing. In course of time, through trade relations and invasions of Persians, the Greeks the Scythians, the Bactrians, the Sakas the Kusanas, the Hindus and peoples of other races entered India and were gradually absorbed into Hindu society. They were assigned places in the caste system according to their physical or mental aptitudes. In this manner Hindu society solved the problem of alien minorities in its midst. Gradually the contrast between colours was toned down by intermarriages. Through permutations and combinations many subcastes came into existence. A tolerant Hindu society allowed the newcomers to preserve as far as practicable their own racial preferences regarding food, clothes, and social and religious customs. This perhaps explains the existence of a great diversity in India in regard to these matters. A composite Hindu society gradually came into being. Whose watch words unity in diversity and friendly coexistence. In olden times inter dining was permitted, as also intermarriage under certain conditions. Through the caste system, Hindu society entrusted it self to the leadership of spirituality and intellect in preference to that of military power, wealth, or labour.

As the population increased and other complexities set in, the qualities of the individual became less easy to determine and heredity was gradually accepted as a sort of working principle to determine the caste. The son inherited the professional duties of the father as well as some of his physical and mental traits. But in olden times, when a Brahmin did not live up to his virtues, he was demoted, and a sudra, by the acquisition of higher qualities, was promoted. Conduct was more important than birth. One of the Upanishads narrates the touching story of Satyakama a young boy who wanted to study the Vedas, a privilege accorded only to one who was born in the Brahmin caste. When the boy asked his mother about his lineage.
She said that she did not know it because she had conceived him when, as a young woman, she had not time to ask his father about his lineage. When the teacher whom Satyas kama approached for the Vedic knowledge heard this he was impressed with the boy's truthfulness and out spoken nature and concluded that his father must have been a Brahmin.

For many centuries the caste system worked in a superb manner, and consolidating the Indian culture, which reached its height when the Brahmins kshatriyas vaisyas and sudras all dedicated their activities and efforts to the common welfare. But in this relative universe even a good custom, if it continues for a long time, becomes corrupted. The Brahmins had a monopoly of the knowledge of the scriptures, which was the source of their power; eventually they became greedy for more and began to exploit the lower castes. They demanded privileges and respect even when they did not possess brahminical qualities, similarly the kshatriyas and the vaisyas exploited the sudras who formed the majority of the population. The social laws became rigid and in the absence of freedom Hindu society stagnated. On account of exploitation, the masses became weak and the country feel an easy prey to powerful invaders from the outside. Islam and Christianity took advantage of the injustices that prevailed in Hindu society and made easy converts, especially among those who were denied social privileges. Hindu society, however, was not completely to blame for these foreign religions also sometimes used force and unethical persuasion for the purpose of conversion.

But it should not be forgotten that the caste system even in its rigid form rendered good service to Hindu society during the days of foreign domination. The Brahmin leaders by means of ironclad caste laws prevented Islam Christianity from completely destroying it. They became the custodians of the Hindus culture and zealously protected it from the leveling influence of those alien faiths.

Contract with the west revealed to the Hindu leaders many drawbacks in their society and made them aware of the need for drastic changes in the caste system. Since India's attainment of political freedom, laws are being enacted for the gradual elimination of taboos about marriage, interdining, and social intercourse. The lower castes are being given greater facilities for education, and no one is being debarred from government jobs on account of his caste. It is to be hoped that this unique social system, which has in the past decisively contributed to India's spiritual life, will again create an environment in which men and women will be able to practise the virtues stressed in Hinduism for the realization of the final goal of human evolution.

The Bhagavad Gita states, in its verse, that the secret of prosperity, strength, morality, and all round social welfare lies in the
harmonious working together of the spiritual and the royal power. Sankaracharya points out that a conflict between the Brahmans, the creators of the spiritual culture, and the kshatriyas, the protectors of that culture, causes the disintegration of society. In India give up the caste system in principle and in practice, she will surely lose her spiritual back done. There is, however, room for the caste system in an industrialized society, which is controlled largely by the power of wealth and labour. It is the goal of a secular classless society to create an equality on the level of the Sudras, whereas Indian society through the caste system has aimed at creating an equality by raising all to the level of the Brahmans.

Even at its best however, the caste system is a human institution, and one cannot expect perfection of it. The good and evil of the rule of society by the four castes have been brilliantly pointed out by Swami Vivekananda in a letter to an American friends written during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The swami says:

Human society is, in turn, governed by the four castes the priests the soldiers the traders and the labourers. Each state has its glories as well as defects. When the priest (Brahmin) rules, there is a tremendous exclusiveness on hereditary grounds the persons of the priests and their descendants are hemmed in with all sorts of safeguards none but they have any knowledge. Its glory is that at this period is laid the foundation of the sciences. The priests cultivate the mind, for through the mind they govern.

The military (kshatriya) rules is tyrannical and cruel; but they are not exclusive, and during that period the arts and social culture attain their height.

The commercial (vaisya) rule comes next. It is lawful in its silent crushing and blood sucking power. Its advantage is that, as the trader himself goes everywhere, he is good disseminator of the idea collected during the two previous states. They are still less exclusive than the military, but culture begins to decay.

Last will come the labour (sudra) rule. Its advantages will the distribution of physical comforts its disadvantages (perhaps) the lowering of culture. There will be a great distribution of ordinary education, but extraordinary geniuses will less and less.

Of it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial and the ideal of equality of the last can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state. But is it possible?

Yet, the first three have had their day, now is the time for the last they must have it none can resist it. The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried if for nothing
else, for the novelty of the thing. A redistribution of pain and pleasure
is better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures.
The sum total of good and evil in the world remains ever the same.
The yoke will be lifted from shoulder to shoulder by new systems,
that is all.

Let every dog have his day in this miserable world. So that
after this experience of so called happiness they may all come to the
Lord and give up this vainly of a world and governments and all other
botherations.

Outside the pale of society are the untouchables, whose
contact pollutes others. Who are these untouchables? Originally
they were the aborigines, with a very low mental development; who
are unclean food, lived by hunting, and were untouch in appearance,
manner, and conduct. The Aryans proud of their spiritual culture,
shrunk from them. But instead of annihilating them outright, or
forcibly super-imposing upon them their own higher culture, the Aryans
sought to assimilate them through education. The Ramayana and
the Mahabharata record that many of thee aborigines established
intimate friendship with the Hindus of the higher castes. During the
foreign rule of India, who the very existence of Hinduism was
threatened, society became conservative and the process of
assimilation practically stopped. Now that the danger is over. Laws
have been passed abolishing untouchability. Economic and political
positions educational facilities, and temple entry for the purpose of
worship are open to all. Even in the past many Hindu religious leaders
have protested against untouchability and regarded it as a blot upon
society.

Apart from caste, a person's duties in the Hindu tradition,
are determined by the stage of life to which he belongs Life, which is
regarded by Hinduism as a journey to the shrine of truth, is marked
by four stages, each of which has its responsibilities and obligations.
In that journey a normal person should leave no legitimate aspiration
unfulfilled, otherwise physical and mental sickness will follow, putting
roadblocks in the way of his further spiritual progress.

The first stage of life covers the period of study, when a student
cultivates his mind and prepares himself for future service to society.
He lives with his teacher in a forest retreat and regards the latter as
his spiritual father. He leads an austere life and conserves his energy,
spurning the defilement of the body and mind through evil words,
thoughts, or deeds. He shows respect to his elders and teachers, and
becomes acquainted with the cultural achievements of the race.
Students, rich and poor, live under the same roof and receive the
same attention from the teacher and his wife. When the studies are
complicated, the teacher gives the pupil the following instruction, as
described in one of the Upanishads.
Speak the truth, practice dharma. Do not neglect the study (of the Vedas). Having brought to the teacher the gift desired by him (enter the householder's life and see that) the line of progeny is not cut off. Do not swerve from the truth. Do not swerve from dharma. Do not neglect (personal) welfare. Do not neglect prosperity. Do not neglect your duties to the gods and the Manes. Treat your mother as God. Treat your guest as God. Whatever deeds are faultless these are to be performed not others, whatever good works have been performed by us, those should be performed by you not others. Those Brahmans who are superior to us you should comfort them by giving them seats. Now, if there arises in your mind any doubt concerning conduct, you should conduct yourself in such matters as Brahmans would conduct them selves - Brahmans who are competent to judge, who (of their own accord) are devoted (to good deeds) and are not urged (to their performance by others, and who are not too severe, but are lovers of dharma. Now, with regard to persons spoken against, you should conduct yourself in such a way as Brahmans would conduct themselves - Brahmans who are competent to judge, who (of their own accord) are devoted (to good deeds) and are not urged to their performance by others, and who are not too severe, but are lovers of dharma. This is the rule. This is the teaching. This is the secret wisdom of the Vedas. This is command (of God). This you should observe. This alone should be observed.

With marriage, a person enters the second stage. A normal person requires a mate; his biological and emotional urges in this respect are legitimate. Debarred from marriage are those alone who have a dangerous ailment that may be transmitted to children, or those rare souls who, as students, for sake the world at the call of the spirit. Neither a confession of sin nor a concession to weakness, marriage is a discipline for participation in the larger life of society. Children endow marriage with social responsibilities; Hinduism does not regard romance as the whole of the married life Husband and wife are copartners in their spiritual progress, and the family provides a training ground for the practice of unselfishness. A healthy householder is the foundation of a good society, discharging his duties as a teacher a soldier, a statesman, a merchant, a scientist, or a manual worker. He should be ambitious to acquire wealth and enjoy pleasures, but not by deviating from the path of righteousness. The following are the five great duties of a householder: the study and teaching of the Vedas; daily worship of the gods through appropriate rituals; gratification of the departed ancestors by offering their spirits food and drink according to the scriptural injunctions; kindness to domestic animals; and hospitality to guests, the homeless and the destitute.
When the skin wrinkles, the hairs turn grey or a grandchild is born one is ready for the third stage of life in the forest or in a quiet place. At this stage the pleasures and excitements of youth appear stale and physical needs are reduced to minimum. The third period of life is devoted to scriptural study and meditation on God.

During the fourth stage, a man renounces the world and embraces the monastic life. He is no longer bound by social laws. The call of the infinite became irresistible to him; even charity and social service appear inadequate. He rises above worldly attachments, finite obligations, and restricted loyalties; he is a friend of his fellow human beings, of the gods, and of the animals no longer tempted by riches honour or power a monk preserves equanimity of spirit under all conditions. He turns away from the vanities of the world, devoting himself to the cultivation of God consciousness, which is a man's true friend both here and hereafter. During the fourth stage, a disciplined life attains to its full blossoming. Well has it been said when a man is born he cries and the world laughs but let him lead such a life that when he dies, he laughs and the world cries.

Thus it will be seen that every stage to of life, as described in the Vedas, has duties and obligations the right discharge of which requires self control. Through the disciplines of the four stages of life Hindu learns progressive non attachment to the transitory world. The movement of life has been aptly compared to that of the sun. At dawn the sun rises from below the horizon and as the morning progress it goes on radiating heat and light till it reaches the zenith at midday. During the afternoon it goes down, gradually withdrawing its heat and light and dusk it sinks below the horizon a mass of radiance to illumine other regions.

The key to the individual and social ethics of Hinduism is the conception of dharma. Whose full implications cannot be conveyed by such English words as religion, duty, or righteousness. Derived from a root which means to support the word signifies the law of inner growth by which a person is supported in his present state of evolution and is shown the way to future development. A persons dharma is not imposed by society or decreed by an arbitrary God, but is something with which he is born as a result of his actions in previous lives Dharma determines a man's proper attitude toward the outer world and governs his mental and physical reactions in a given situation. It is his code of honour.

Hindusim emphasizes the relative nature of dharma, and does not recognize absolute goods good or evil may be described as what is less good. One cannot stipulate what is absolutely good or evil for all men at all times. The attempt to do so, and to judge all people by a concept of dharma or impose upon all a single idea of righteousness
has been the cause of much injustice to humanity. If one wants to give a comprehensive definition of good and evil one may say that what helps men toward the realization of God or of the unity of existence is good, and its reverse is evil. But one faces difficulties when one tries to work out practical details. A solider unsheathes his sword to vindicated law and justice. Whereas a saints lays down his own life for the same purpose. The injunction of nonkilling cannot therefore have a universal applications at least at the present state of human evolution. A man must not give up his imperfect dharma determined by his inborn nature; all actions have elements of imperfection in them. He should follow his own dharma and should not try to imitate the dharma of another, however perfect the latter may be. By performing his duties in a spirit of worship without seeking any personal result a man ultimately realizes God, in whom alone all duties and values of life find their fulfillment. The Mahabharata narrates the stories of a housewife and an untouchable butcher who, by following their respective dharmas, realized the highest truth and became teachers of the knowledge of Brahman.

The affirmative attitude of Hinduism toward life has been emphasized by its recognition of four legitimate and basic desires dharma or righteousness artha or wealth kama or sense pleasure and moksha or freedom through communion with God or the infinite. Of these, the first three belong to the realm of worldly values the fourth is called the supreme value. The fulfillment of the first three paves the way for moksha enjoyment if properly guided can be transformed into spiritual experience the suppression legitimate desires often leads to an unhealthy state of body and mind, and delays the attainment of liberation.

Dharma, or righteousness, we have already seen to be the basis of both individual progress and social welfare. Artha, or wealth, is legitimate; money is indispensable in the present state of society Voluntary poverty as practiced by religious mendicants is something quite different pious householders provide for the monks few necessities recognition of their efforts to keep alive the highest spiritual ideal. But a man of the world with us money is a failure he cannot keep body and soul together. According to an injunction of Hinduism. First comes the body and next the practice of religion furthermore money is needed to build hospitals, laboratoraries schools museums and educational institutions which distinguish a civilized from a primitive society. Money gives leisure which is an important factor in the creation of culture. But money must be earned according to dharma; otherwise it debases a man by making him greedy and cruel.
The object of the third legitimate desire is kama or the enjoyment of sense pleasure. This covers a vast area from the enjoyment of conjugal love without which the creation cannot be maintained to the appreciation of art music or poetry life becomes drab and grey unless lone cultivate aesthetic sensitivity. But sense pleasures if not pursued according to dharma degenerate into sensuality. Wealth and sense pleasure which we only means to an end are valuable in so far as their enjoyment creates a genuine yearning for spiritual freedom in the mind of enjoyer. The hedonists alone regard sense pleasure as an end in itself.

The Charvaka school of thinkers out and out materialists, rejects righteousness and spiritual freedom and admits only two values, namely these related to wealth and sense pleasure the Upanishads make a sharp distinction between the ideal of the pleasant and of the good, and declares that the former, created by ignorance, ultimately brings about suffering and misery. Even dharma or duty, for its own sake is regarded as empty and dry by Hindu philosophers. It is a worthy end in so far as it helps the soul to attain its spiritual goal but the illuminated person serves the world not from a sense of duty but because of his overflowing love for all created beings.

The fourth legitimate desire, equally irresistible is related to moksha, or freedom from the love and attachment prompted by the finite view of life. Man who in essence is spirit cannot be permanently satisfied with worldly experiences. The enjoyments of desires reveals the fact that desires cannot be satisfied by enjoyment, any more than fire can be quenched by pouring butter into it; the more they are fulfilled, the more they flare up. Nor can man attain his divine stature through correct social behaviour, economic security, political success or artistic creations. Charity for the needy many be a corrective for selfishness, but cannot be the ultimate goal of his soul's craving. Even partriotism is not enough as history shows, undue emphasis on patriotism was a major course of the downfall or the Greek city states. After fulfilling all his worldly desires and responsibilities a man still wants to know how he can suppress his inner restlessness and attain peace. So at last he gives up attachment to the world seeks freedom through the knowledge of the spirit.

A few words may be said here to explain why Hindu philosophers emphasized personal ethics. Our social their arguments that since society consisted of individuals, if individuals were virtuous, social welfare would follow as matter of course second the general moral tone was very high in the ancient Hindu society, where everybody was expected to do his appropriate duties, which included,
among other things rendering help to one's less. Fortunate fellow beings. As the country was prosperous and men were generous and hospitable no need was felt for organized charity, which even in Europe and America has been a comparatively new development the organized social service in the modern is, to a large extent a from of sentimentalism in reaction against the doctrine of utilitarianism and the industrialization of western society due to the extraordinary growth of science and technology. Third, the Hindus regarded spiritual help as of more enduring value than material help; the hungry would feel again the pinch of hunger and the sick would again be sick; but a spiritual person could easily bear with calmness his physical pain and privations finally Hindu philosophers believed that the sum total of physical happiness and suffering remains constant suffering like chronic rheumatism, only moves from one place to another but cannot be totally eradicated. It is not easy to substantiate the claim of progress if it means the gradual elimination of evil and increase of good. It is true that we are living in a changing world, but it need not be true that we are living in a progressive world. Every age has its virtues and limitations but can any one really show that men today are enjoying more happiness peace and freedom that their forebears? The Hindu philosophers without encouraging the illusion that a perfect society could be created always exhorted people to promote social welfare at a part of spiritual discipline. We must do good to other, because by means of selfless action we can purify our hearts and transcend the relative world of good and evil social service that has only an instrumental not an ultimate value.

But the need for emphasis on social ethics in modern India cannot be derived for times have changed the conception of dharma which was the foundation of Hindu life, both individual and social has greatly lost its hold upon the people. The struggle for existence in an increasingly competitive society has become keen, and wealth is not justly distributed strong often invoke the law of karma to justify their exploitation of the poor, who are helpless in their exploitation of the poor, who are helpless in their suffering. There exists in India a widespread misery due to ignore, poverty, ill health, and general backwardness. The rich and the powerful are often too selfish to remove these drawbacks. Hinduism in the past has no doubt many saints; but the precious gems of their spiritual realisations have been preserved in heaps of dirt and filth.

A certain measure of compliance with the general principles of social ethics may well have helped to preserve the Hindu social system from a lack of the vitality characteristic of western and society.
Therefore India, is now emphasizing the value of social ethics; the
government is trying to create a welfare state. Whatever may be the
pattern of development in the new India, she should not forget the
ultimate goal of ethics, namely the liberation of the soul from the
bondage of the phenomenal world.

From what has been said above it will be clear that social
ethics is efficacious in so far as it helps a person to curb his selfishness.
But Hindu philosophers have recognized that social duty also has its
limitations. Duty is often irritating behind its is the idea of compulsion
and necessity behind its is the idea of compulsion and necessity this
person constantly engaged in the discharge of his duty finds no time
for prayer meditations study recreation or other things which his
soul craves. If the kingdom of heaven is within a man, he cannot
attain it by always looking fanatically outside it is often under the
guise of duty that a man indulges his greed, passion desire for
domination or morbid attachment too far duty becomes a disease. As
Vivekananda has said Duty is the midday sun which scorches the
tender plant of spirituality.

Hindu philosophers encourage the performance of duties but
they exhort men to perform them not from a sense of compulsion but
through love. Unless a man is inspired by love he cannot cheerfully
perform his duty at home in the office total disintegration during the
dark period of Indian history. But on account of insufficient emphasis
on social responsibilities, there is in Hindu society in the factory, or
on the battlefield. This love is not, however, sentimentality but springs
from the perception of God in all living beings. Work done under the
impulsion of duty depends a man's attachment to the world but when
performed through love it brings him nearer to freedom.

The healthy social environment created by objective ethics
provides men with an opportunity to cultivate the more important
subjective ethics. The discipline of subjective ethics for the liberation
of the soul have been stressed in the Bhagavad Gita and the
Upanishads. The Gita says Let a man lift himself up by his own self.
Let him not depress himself; for he himself is his friend and he himself
is his enemy. To him who has conquered himself by himself his own
self is a friend but to him who has not conquered himself, has own
self is hostile like an external enemy.

The chief disciplines of subjective ethics are austerity, self-
control, renunciation, non attachment and concentration. Austerity
enables a men to curb impulses for inordinate enjoyment of physical
comforts and also for the acquisition of supernal cultural powers which
exalt him for above the world of men, now even above the world of
the gods. In the Upanishads austerity, or tapas, often denotes intense thinking, the same sort of thinking which precedes creative work, making a man indifferent about his personal comforts or discomforts. But later austerity degenerated into bodily torture as practiced by spurious yogis with a view to performing miracles for selfish purposes, thus depriving this noble virtue of its original significance.

Let us try to understand the meaning of self control. The sense organs, which are ordinarily inclined toward material objects and employed to seek only the pleasant, should be controlled in order to create that inner calmness without which profound spiritual truths cannot be grasped. But self-control does not mean the weakening of the organs, as is explained in the Katha Upanishad by the illustration of the chariot. The body is compared to the chariot, the embodied soul to its master, the intellect or discriminative faculty to the driver, the mind to the reins, the senses to the horses, and sense objects to the roads. The chariot can serve its purpose of taking the master to his destination if it is well built, if the driver can discriminate between the right and the wrong road, if the reins are strong if the horses are firmly controlled and if the roads are well chosen. Likewise, the spiritual seeker should possess a healthy body and vigorous organs, unerring discrimination, and a strong mind. His discrimination should guide his senses to choose only those objects which are helpful to the realization of his spiritual ideal. If the body, the mind, or any of his faculties is injured or weakened, he cannot attain the goal, just as the rider cannot reach his destination if the chariot and its accessories or not in the right condition. Thus the two important elements emphasised in the practice of the self-control are discrimination and will power. The middle path, which makes a man 'temperature in his food and recreation, temperature in his exertion in work, temperature in sleep and walking'. His been extolled the Bhagavad gita and also by Buddha.

Renunciation is another discipline for self perfection. A good example of it is seen in the institution of monasticism. A monk takes the vow of renouncing enjoyments in the 'three worlds' earth, the mid region and heaven. The four stage of life, already described are a training ground for this important discipline. Non-attachment and concentration will be discussed in a later chapter.

Ethics is principally concerned with conduct, which is in turn guided by will, pious or impious. The impious will leads to righteous conduct and produces evil, whereas the pious will leads to righteous conduct and is conductive to the highest good. With the help of ethical disciplines one suppresses unrighteousness and stimulates righteousness.
Unrighteousness may be physical, verbal or mental. Physical unrighteousness is expressed through cruelty, theft, and sexual perversion; verba-unrighteousness through falsehood, rudeness, insinuation, and gossip; mental unrighteousness through ill-will, covertousness, and irreverence.

Righteousness is also threefold; physical, verbal and mental, Physical righteousness is expressed through charity, succour to the distressed, and service to all; verbal righteousness through gentle speech conductive to the welfare of others; and mental righteousness through kindness, attachment, and reverence. Righteousness and unrighteousness cover both personal and social duties. Broadly speaking, virtue is defined as what is conductive to the welfare of others, and vice as what caused them pain and misery.

Pathanjali, in his yoga philosophy, enumerates the important virtues as follows: non injury, truthfulness, abstention form the fit, chastity, and non-attachment to material by all religious Hindus; from the Vedic seers to Mahatma Gandhi. The practice of non-injury also includes gentleness and abstention roam harsh words. Mahatma Gandhi applied. Cheerfully by means of non violence, India, under his leadership, secured her political freedom from alien rule.

Truthfulness implies the ascertainment of facts by such valid proofs as direct perception, correct inference, and reliable testimony. In addition, truthfulness demands that fact must be described without any intentional decide or unnecessary verbiage. Such truthfulness is often lacking in diplomatic statements and political discussions. Self-truths and evasions are regarded as lies. But truthfulness, in orders, its purpose being the welfare of others. When such a purpose is not served the wise remain silent. A Hindu injunction says 'Speak the truth; speak the pleasant, but not the unpleasant truth.

Abstention from theft robberies not only that one should not appropriate another's property unlawfully but also that one should abstain from greediness. What is really amounts to is indifference to the material advantages of life. The accumulation of physical objects beyond a certain limit is generally tainted by cruelty, greed or similar blemishes One cannot hoard wealth without some short of deceit or injury to others.

The practice of chastity, highly extolled by Hindu philosophers, includes abstention from lewdness in thought, speech, and action. According to a trick definition, as applied to monks, a man becomes unchaste not merely through the sexual act, but even when he listens to or utters lewd words engages in a sport of looks at an object which arouses lust, exchanges secrets with a member of the opposite sex,
or expresses the desire makes the effort for carnal gratification. Both
the body and the heart must be kept unsullied by a spiritual seeker,
the body being the temple of god and the heart its inner shrine.

The Bhagavad Gita speaks of the spiritual virtues as the divine
treasures with which an aspirant provides himself in his search for
God. Their opposites for instance, ostentation arrogance, self-deceit,
anger, rudeness, and ignorance belong to those who are born to the
heritage of the demons. Here is a graphic description from the Gita
of men of demoniac nature.

They do no know what to do and what to remain from. Purity
is not in them, nor good conduct, nor thorough. They say; 'The world
is devoid of truth, without a moral basis, and without a God. It is
brought about by the union of male and female, and must alone is its
cause-what else?' Holding such a view, these lost souls, of little un
standing and fierce deeds, rise as the enemies of the world for its
destruction. Giving themselves up to insatiable desires, full of
hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance, they hold false views through
delusion and act with impure resolve. Best with innumerable cares,
which will end only with death, looking on the gratification of desire
as their highest goal, and feeling sure that this is all; bound by a
hundred ties of hope, given up wholly to lust and wrath, they strive
by unjust means to a mass wealth for satisfaction of their passions
(The say to themselves:) 'This desire I have gained today, and that
longing I will fulfill. This wealth is mine, and that also shall be mine.
That enemy I have slain, and others, too, I will slay. I am the lord of
all, I enjoy; I am prosperous, mighty, and happy I am rich; I am of
high birth. Who else is equal to me? I will offer sacrifice, I will give, I
will rejoice' Thus deluded by ignorance, bewildered by many fancies,
addicted to the gratification of lust, they fall to the lowest depths of
degradation.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, the 'three gateways of hell'
leading to the ruin of the soul are lust, wrath, and greed, and the five
cordial virtues purity, self-control, detachment, truth, and non violence.
Called universal virtues, they admit of no exceptions arising from
caste, profession, place, or occasion. They are compulsory for all
spiritual seekers aspiring freedom, and they differ from ordinary moral
standards, by which one treats differently men and animals, one's
fellow countrymen and foreigners relatives and strangers.

Jainism, which is an offshoot of Hinduism, speaks of an action
as immoral if it is impelled by the impulse thought of the agent, and
moral if there is pious thought behind it. Forgiveness is regarded as
the highest virtue. Jains ethics aims more at self culture than at
Hindu Ethics - An introduction

formal rituals which have been enacted in the temples are meant for the purification of the individual and society, especially during important ceremonies. The performance of the Vedic rituals will enable the reader to understand the Hindu view of rituals and their purpose, and the role of sacrifice in achieving the highest goal.

Many thinkers, both Eastern and Western, find it difficult to reconcile the concept of a soul in a body. In Hinduism, the soul is believed to exist even when the body is not present. The concept of "soul" is closely related to the idea of "atman," which refers to the essence of the individual soul.

Greek thinkers stressed the social virtues, the two most prominent ones being justice and friendship. Of these, the former emphasis is placed on the duty of sacrifice as the sole injection of the Vedas, which is an important aspect of the Hindu religion. Cherished by sacrifices, the gods will bestow upon the Hindu religion in the interdependence of gods and men. The gods, men, and women should regard sacrifice as the "Gaw of plenty." The Greeks, and men, should cherish one another. Cherished by sacrifices, the gods will bestow upon the Hindu religion in the interdependence of gods and men. The gods, men, and women should regard sacrifice as the "Gaw of plenty." The Greeks, and men, should cherish one another. Cherished by sacrifices, the gods will bestow upon the Hindu religion in the interdependence of gods and men. The gods, men, and women should regard sacrifice as the "Gaw of plenty." The Greeks, and men, should cherish one another. Cherished by sacrifices, the gods will bestow upon the Hindu religion in the interdependence of gods and men. The gods, men, and women should regard sacrifice as the "Gaw of plenty." The Greeks, and men, should cherish one another. Cherished by sacrifices, the gods will bestow upon the Hindu religion in the interdependence of gods and men. The gods, men, and women should regard sacrifice as the "Gaw of plenty." The Greeks, and men, should cherish one another.
ignorance identifies itself with the body and senses, it is source of all evil, selfishness is sin. Hence a man seeking freedom and peace should give up identification with the body and the sense-organs, and all private and personal attachments. Therefore nondualistic ethics, in one discipline of the suppression of ego.

Now let us consider the affirmative aspect of the non-dualistic ethics. Man is more than the narrow and finite self; he is Brahman, the all, and it is his duty to recognize his oneness with all. But a theoretical recognition is not enough; his daily action must demonstrate it. A man trying to understand the nature of his relationship with others should be told that all individuals, being of the nature of the spirit are in essence identical with one another. Consequently it is his duty to avoid discrimination between one being and another and cultivate a feeling of kindliness and love for all. For the non-dualist this love is not confined to men, but extends to all living creatures, Love far one's neighbour means love for every living, and this all embracing love is based upon the fact that all livings beings have souls, though all souls may not have reached the same state of spiritual growth. The universal love taught by non-dualism is based upon the relisation of the fundamental oneness of all living beings. The apparent difference between one being and another is entirely due to ignorance; the wise see the same spirit everywhere. Even the exclusive love shown by the ignorant is an expression of the universal love based upon the non duality of the spirit. Whether one knows it or not, the oneness of existence is the only source of mutual attraction. The husband loves the wife not for the sake of the wife but for the sake of the spirit which dwells in both.

Now, the question arises whether a man, still cultivating ethical disciplines, can transcend the strife and contradictions which are the characteristic of the phenomenal world, and experience the peace and freedom which his higher nature seeks. Is ethics an end in itself, or does it lead to a higher state in which all ethical laws are transcended?

Hindu philosophers believe that no real freedom or peace is possible as long as a man is identified with the domain of ethical laws. Moral life cannot be dissociated from struggle an incessant struggle against evil and imperfection which seem to be always present on the relative plane. Ethics is concerned with life as it ought to be lived. A moral man constantly says to himself: 'I ought to have done this I ought not have done that'. Therefore oughtness is the very crux of morality and implies an unclosing struggle for self improvement. Moral life belongs to the plane of imperfection. No one can be merely
moral and at the same time perfect; for outhness and imperfection go together. Where there is no imperfection there is no outh; the outh itself implies imperfection.

The struggle against evil cannot be won on the moral level; for morality cannot redeem the sinner. The woman taken in adultery, as described in the Bible, was condemned by her judges according to the moral laws of the time, but could not be redeemed by them. The redemption came from a spiritual man, der reine Tor, who had transcended moral laws and was the embodiment of innocence and guilelessness. How could the moral judges, themselves still struggling against evil, enable the women to rid herself of her sin? One is redeemed through, love and grace, which belong to the realm of spirit. Dirt cannot be completely washed way by water which is less dirty, but only by water which has not trace of dirt.

Hindu philosophers have suggested the means of enjoying spiritual freedom even while engaging in the performance of action. Both optional duties, through which the agent seeks particulars ends, and obligatory duties, which ought to be done by all spiritual seekers endowed with social consciousness, should be performed according to the normal laws. But the actions of the enlightened, performed in a spirit of love and non-attachment, cannot bind the doer; the secret of freedom is non-attachment. This non-attachment is not a negative attitude; it is not indifference. On the contrary, it dentes a superior power of the mind which enables one to preserve inner peace and equanimity is success and failure. The practice of non-attachment by both the dualist and nondualist will be discussed in the chapter dealing with karma-yoga.

Both enlightened dualists and non-dualists, free from ego, transcend the moral ought. In their activity they are not impelled by the compulsion of duty, but by love. Action flows spontaneously from the fullness of their hearts. To them the idea of work with the purpose of improving the world is meaningless. Devotees of God see the world as God's world, His playground, and regard themselves as his playmates. Nondualists see everywhere and in every thing only the spirit, ever perfect, ever free and very illumined. The world process is the spontaneous manifestation of the spirit, as the waves are of the ocean, there being neither phyma nor reason behind the cosmic activity. To project, support and dissolve names and forms is the very nature of Brahman, say the Upanishads. Only the ignorance read a motive into the creation. Their little brains fool them all the time.
Work of lasting benefit to humanity has been done by blessed souls like Christ and Buddha, who were free from ago and moral struggle, and inspired by selfless love for all. On the other hand, the work done by many social reformers or philanthropists has a limited value. It is said that nowadays men become philanthropists only after making their first million; even in a noble act of charity there is a conscious of unconscious desire for fame, power, or recognition. Too often a philanthropist is trying to soothe a guilty, chastity, poverty, and complete self denial. Only an illumined person, whose ego has either been burnt in the fire of self-knowledge or totally transformed by love of God, has no trace of selfish motive, Sankaracharya says that a man should first of all see God. Such a man alone can perform really unselfish and therefore fruitful action. His moral struggles are over. He is no longer deceived by the notion of good and evil. He does not refrain from fear of punishment or engage in good works from hope of reward; moral virtues become his natural attributes, the by-products of his spiritual freedom. In the words of the Upanishad; Evil does not overtake him, but he transcends evil. He becomes sinless, free from doubts, and a knower of truth.

Hinduism in Practice

We have thus far been discussing mainly the philosophical aspects of Hinduism. But the religion practiced in daily life by the average. Hindu is, to all outward appearances, different from what is taught in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. It is associated with worship of images and with symbols, music, dancing, processions, prayer feasting, fasting, and so on. Popular religion everywhere is dualistic: the object of worship is the personal God, or one of His manifestations, who is propitiated by various rituals.

Let us try to understand the Vedantic concept of the personal God. Vedanta, as we have seen, includes dualism, qualified on-dualism, and absolute non-dualism. Dualism anthropomorphizes ultimate reality and regards it as the personal God who creates, preserves, and destroys the universe, while remaining suicide it. It is by His trance that a man attains to liberation.

According to qualified non-dualism, reality called Vishnu or the all pervading spirit, is present everywhere in the creation and represents the totality of individual bodies, minds, and souls. But at the same, as the personal God. He dwells in His special heaven. This may be explained by the illustration, of a man, who is endowed not
only with a body and innumerable living cells, but with a soul besides. Though the soul functions in every part of the body, yet its presence is especially felt in the heart, just as the owner of a large house may occupy any part of it, but there is a special room where he is usually found. Reality, or God, includes both the physical universe and living souls: the totality of physical bodies is His body, all souls are His living cells, and His own soul or essence is the personal God. A man can lose a limb, or a number of living cells, and still live; likewise, nothing happens to God if part of the physical world or a number of living beings are destroyed. Thus, according to qualified non-dualism, God is one and without a second, though His nonduality admits of distinctions. His personal aspect, whose trance it is that liberates the soul, is worshipped by the devotees.

According to absolute non-dualism, pure consciousness appears, through maya; as the conditioned Brahman, and assumes different forms and names for the welfare of devotees in the phenomenal world. Each of these forms—Vishnu, or the Father in heaven or Jehovah, or All a his regarded by its respective devotees as the Personal God. Form and formlessness, as Ramakrishna said, are manifestations of one and the same Reality. By worshipping the personal God with rituals and devotion, a devotee can attain the knowledge of the Impersonal absolute if he so desires. Sankaracharya instituted in his mounteries the worship of Sakti or the feminine aspect of reality; Ramakrishna, at the beginning of his spiritual disciplines, worshipped Kali and ultimately realized Brahmin. Love of God leads to the Knowledge to Brahman.

The deities of popular Hinduism are symbols of the personal God. Their images are seen in the temples and shrines. A popular says in India, thousand deities worshipped by three hundred million people. Yet the Hindu religion is essentially monotheistic. Whatever deity or a aspect of reality is worshipped is, to his devotee, the supreme God, other deities being only parts of Him. Before the monotheism of the Hindus does not exclude other gods: it includes them all. An Upanishad says: Rudra is truly one for the knowers of Brahman do not admit the existence of a second. He alone rules the worlds by His powers He dwells as the inner Self of every living being. After having created all the world, He the omniscient Rudra, the creator of the gods and the bestower of their powers the support of the universe, He who in the beginning gave birth to the conditioned Brahman may He endow us with clear intellect. All the upanishads proclaim the non-duality of the Godhead.
or expressed as a worshipper for purposes of attaining the fulfillment of the worldly desires or for unlimited delight. Directors from the theology of the world, some god does not accept of their inability to contemplate their identity with the supreme spirit, pursue a concrete form of worship as a spiritual discipline, and cherish the hope ultimately of giving dualistic thought. Thus they are led from the personal God to get steadiness, stillness, and silence among those who are not so to the nearer to the experience of inner peace and silence. Other worshippers, however, live to preserve the distinction between God and themselves and enjoy the bliss of divine communion in various ways.

They do no know what to do and what to remain from. Purity is not in the body, nor good conduct, nor wealth. They say, 'The world is full of noise and movement. The atmosphere of the earth is both heavy and limited, but never beget with songs, hymns, and shouts of praise. This is the duty due to the earth. Hindu realists feel in the shrine of the deity, who is the embodiment of bliss. The Hindu also feels the duty due to God, the Hindu feels, therefore, if he is wicked, they may, if they approach Him with devotion and contrite hearts. He can, for those who are always devoted to Him, what they seek and preserve for them, what they already have. He can do what He wills, want, and conserve. Best with all of the cares, wants, and desires, but living in the highest goal and knowing that He is all, by one. He should be regarded as a saint because his efforts are wholehearted. Quickly, he realizes the soul of religion. He enjoys eternal personal salvation. He knows that His devotee never meets with destruction.

Popular worship in India is generally pervaded by a spirit of mysticism. This wealth is mine, and that also shall be mine. The enemy shall not prosper, nor those that hate me. Others, too, I shall destroy. I am the Lord of all, both power and prosperity, mighty, and happy; and rich. I am free from doubts. I have subdued all prayer and worship in this world. I have destroyed the desires for deliverance from the suffering of repeat births and deaths in this world.

A Hindu celebrates thirteen holy days in twelve months. These are occasions for festivities accompanied by congregational singing, pilgrimage, and chanting of sacred words and a purity temple. The Hindu festival, then, is the driest tract of the daily life of the world. Thus the Hindu is free from the worries and fellow. The popular worship of modern times, which has its source in the rituals of the Vedas, emphasizes bhaski or love of God, and also faith rather than reason. The god of bhaski was known in the ritualistic or the Vedas and was developed later in the Agamas and the Brahman. There has been a continuity in religion through
from the earliest Vedic period to the present time, though its outer expression has considerably changed. Therefore a brief discussion of the Vedic rituals will enable the reader to understand the Hindu view of ritualistic worship and its bearing upon the attainment of man’s highest goal.

Various sacrifices, which consist of offering oblations for the propitiation of the deities, have been dealt with throughout the four sections of the Vedas, the mantra section contains hymns and prayers used in the sacrifices. The Brahma section gives the rules of the sacrifices, deals with their accessories and also reveals the abstruse meaning of the mantras or sacred formulas. The Aranyak section lays down symbolic sacrifice and also the various meditations to be used as substitutes for the accessories of a tangible sacrifice, when such accessories are not available. The Upanishads deal with the knowledge of Brahma, but recognize the place of ritualistic meditation at certain stages of spiritual development.

One of the six systems of Indian philosophy, namely the purva, Mimamsa, regards the performance of sacrifices as the sole injection of the Vedas; through it the worshipper enjoys prosperity in this world, and happiness in heaven. The utilitarian aspect of sacrifices is based upon the Hindu belief in the interdependence of gods and men. The Bhagavad Gita says that Brahma created men and asked them to regard sacrifice as the "Cow of plenty". The gods and men should cherish one another. Cherished by sacrifices, the gods will bestow upon you the pleasures you desire. He is verily a thief who enjoys the things they give without giving them anything in return. This reciprocity is the basis of Vedic sacrifices; the beneficent gods had to be pleased if one was to secure boons from them, and the maleficent deities had to be appeased to ward off any harm. The essence of sacrifice is to offer to the duties the things one greatly values; the offering should be accompanied by sincerity and faith. The deities that people sought to propitiate in Vedic items were, among others, Indra, Mira, Varunas, and Agni, the firegod, become important among the deities because the oblations were offered in the fire, which came to be regarded as the mediator between gods and men. But it should always be remembered that the deities and rituals are valid only in the phenomenal world.

The Vedas speak of various rites, some of which are optional, some obligatory, some to be performed on special occasions, and some in the form of penances to expel the sins of the past. The optional rites, such as daily religious devotions, do not bring about any specific result, but their non per formance produces harm. Their
indirect result is the purification of the mind and the development of introspection, The rites to be performed on special occasions have a deep religious significance and tend to spiritualise the important events of life from birth to death. Some of the important occasions are when a man is born, when he is given a name, when he is first fed with solid food, when he is invested with the sacred thread enabling him to study the Vedas, when he marries, and when he is cremated. The investiture with the sacred thread, or initiation ceremony, which marks his spiritual birth, is the most important event in a man's life. By means of expiatory rites partisans are forgiven, and aspirant is thus enabled to practise his spiritual disciplines with a some what contented mind.

Now we shall discuss the place given to rituals in the Upanishads. The goal of the Upanishadic teachings is the attainment of the unitive knowledge of Brahman. This knowledge is incompatible with rituals in any form, which naturally presuppose a distinction between the doer, the instrument of action and the result, But the direct knowledge of Brahman can be attained only by a fortunate few who are altogether free of worldly desires and attachments and who have practiced uncompromising discrimination and renunciation; the minds of average seekers are restless and attached to the world. One of the means of gradually acquiring inner calmness is ritualistic worship. According to Vedantic teachers, rituals, in order to be effective, should be accompanied by meditation. Edditative worship called upasana is directed to the Saguna Brahman, that is to say, the conditioned Brahmen, or to any other deity approved by the scriptures, Upasana is described as mental activity; the mind of the worshipper should flow without interruption towards the object of worship.

Upasana produces two kinds of results; seen and unseen. It may lead to the knowledge of the deities and enjoyment of material happiness. It may also lead to introspection and finally to liberation. The spiritual value of upasana depends upon the motive of the worshipper; the less selfish his mind is, the better fitted it is for the acquisition of concentration without which deep spiritual truths cannot be realized.

According to some vedic scholars, for instance Sayanancharya, upasana may be directed either to the Brahman with attributes or to a material symbol called pratika. Since the attributeless Absolute is still beyond his comprehension, the advanced student meditates upon Brahman associated with attributes described in one of the Upanishads as He "whose creation is this universe, who cherishes all desires, who contains all odours, who is endowed with all tastes, who embraces
all this." The upasana associated with material symbols is prescribed for the less advanced seekers, who on account of their strong attachment to physical objects, cannot think of the attributeless Brahman. One end of symbol is an accessory of the sacrifice, but such symbols have now become obsolete on account of the disappearance of the Vedic sacrifices. Another kind is a physical object on which the idea of Brahman or a deity is superimposed; it is worshipped as a representative of the deity or as Brahman. The Upanishads also speak of such symbols of Brahman as the mind, the sun, the wind and the word Om.

The mechanical performance of rituals without meditation has very little immediate spiritual value; but as already stated, rituals are conducive to deeper concentration, which has a real spiritual significance. The highest tangible result of upasana (ritual with meditation) is the attainment of Brahmaloka where one enjoys the most exalted form of phenomenal bliss. By means of upasana, however, a sincere worshipper can gradually sublimate his desires for gross objects. Upasana also trains the mind, naturally confined to the limited, to comprehend the vast. Thus the Upanishads, whose sole purpose is to inculcate the knowledge of Brahman, prescribe various forms of rituals associated with meditation as necessary steps for the attainment of such knowledge.

Though the Vedic rituals have now disappeared from India yet the principles underlying them have been preserved, may expanded, din the latter scriptuless which deal mostly with bhakti or love of God as an effective spiritual discipline. The source of the bhakti doctrine is to be found in the Vedic upasana. Self-surrender being the ultimate goal of both.

The physical symbols used in the popular religion of modern India are classified into two group; either they may be natural objects such as a tree, the sun, a river, fire, or a special piece of stone, or they may be images or pictures. These symbol remind the devotees of certain aspects, powers, and attributes of the Godhead. The symbol is not the Godhead; through it one contemplates the Godhead. All worship and contemplation, in so far as they are mental activities, are symbolic. To see God every-where and to practise the presence of God uninterruptedly is not possible for the beginner. So he is asked to see God wherever there is a manifestation of his power, splendour, beauty, and love.

There is another kind of worship in modern India, which is associated with God's incarnations on earth. There is no essential difference between God and His incarnation; Krishna Rama, and other
incarnations are worshipped by their respective devotees for the fulfillment of wordy desires and also for the purpose of obtaining salvation.

Hindu teachers say that the spiritual life begins with symbolic worship but in the end such worship is transcended. According to the puranas, to see God everywhere, naturally and spontaneously, represents the highest spiritual stage; meditation comes second; in third place is worship through symbols; and fourth is the performance of rituals and pilgrimage to sacred places. According to another text, worship through images is the lower, the next higher is the lower, the next higher is the recital mantras and the offering of prayers, superior to that of is mental worship, and the highest of all is contemplation of the Absolute. The adept sees God everywhere; but the weaker devotee requires a concrete support. As the pilgrim makes his progress, he goes from the lower to the higher form of worship. After reaching the goal, he sees the same God head everywhere in images stones, nature, in all living being and in his own heart.

The most common objects of worship among the Hindus are human representations at the supreme spirit in the form of images. As long as the worshipper regards himself as a human being, he finds it easier to commune with a humanized God. Such a God can listen to prayers, answer them, and accept worship. Men can love Him and receive His love in return. Worshipers generally establish a definite relationship with the deity, regarding Him as Master, Father, Mother, Friend, Child, or Beloved. There are two main types of humanized God; male and female. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are the most important male deities Rama, Krishna, and Nrisimha (half lion and half man) are some of the divine incarnation worshipped by the Hindus; Karthikeya, a son of the Divine Mother, and the embodiment of valour, is highly venerated in South India. Besides these, there are other male deities, such as Ganesha, the god with and elephant's head, and Hanuman, the monkey chieftain. Such female deities, as Kali and Durga represent the Sakti, or creative power, of Brahman. Brahman and its power are inseparable. Innumerable are the deities embodying the diverse attributes and powers of the spirit. Worship may be offered to any of the symbols, for it ultimately reaches the supreme Godhead, which alone bestows upon devotees the fruit of their prayer, either in the form of worldly happiness or of supreme liberation.

Rituals help to create a religious climate, and also often express the devotee's exuberance of sentiment at a particular stage of his spiritual development they heighten a man's devotion to the Lord. Though ritual differ in different parts of Indian and also with
regard to different gods and goddesses, there is an underlying similarity. Images are worshipped in the house of those who can afford such worship and also in temples. The deity is treated as an honoured guest especially in the home, and in the temple as the king of kings. In the paragraphs immediately following is a description of ritualistic worship such as may be seen anywhere in India.

Though Hinduism stresses mental worship, it encourages as well external worship with physical ingredients, especially for beginners. In the seat of the mental worship the devotee regards the heart as the Deity, whom he conceives as having a luminous body. All the articles of worship, such as flowers; lights, incense food, and water, are mental in the external worship the devotee takes the spirit-form of the Deity form his heart and places it on the image before him, which has been decorating God. The mode of worship is like that of the service usually rendered to a beloved guest or to an honoured king. The scandal paste, and rice grains as a mark of respect. He puts the sacred thread on image, offers flowers made fragrant with sandal paste, burns incence, waves a lamp, offers food, and makes a gift of gold. Before bidding the Deity, farewell, he performs a special mutual with a lamp, lighted camphor, conch shell, flower, and fan. The ceremony over, the worshipper takes the spirit-form back the image and reinstalls in his own heart, its real dwelling place.

In the temples the priest attends on the Deity as on a king, Early in the morning he arouses the Deity from sleep with music, and after giving Him a ceremonial bath, dresses Him in royal robes and decks Him with ornaments and flowers. He waves lights before Him and offers Him food and drink. Then the Deity holds court, giving audience to devotees, hearing their complaints, and granting their prayers. On festive occasions He is taken in procession with all the regalia befitting an emperor.

This is, in short, the popular religion practised by a pious Hindu. But through all these rituals and forms the worshipper does not forget the absurdity of trying to gratify the spirit by means of perishable offerings. Hence he prays to the Deity; 'O Lord, in my worship I have attributed forms to Three, who are formless. O Thou teacher of the world, by my hymns I have, as it were, contradicted Thy indescribable nature. By going on pilgrimage I have as it were, denied thy Omnipresence, O Lord of the universe, pray, forgive me these three transgressions'.

To compete the description of the usual religious life of a Hindu, mention may be made of festivals purificatory fasts, birthdays of saints, and pilgrimages of holy places.
Religious festivals are frequent in India. On these days Hindus often observe fasts and offer special worship. Many of these festivals commemorate certain events in Hindu mythology which symbolize the destruction of the forces of evil by those of good; a popular festival in North India, called the Ramalila, depicts the destruction by Rama of the wicked monster-king Ravana. Festivals are colourful occasions giving rise to innocent joys and merriments and offering relief from the humdrum chores of daily life. Fasting gives inner purity; the feasting which follows develops the social sense. Different days are set apart for this purpose for the devotees of different cults. Sometimes devotees keep vigil for the whole night, reading form the scriptures and worshipping God; special worship is offered on the birthdays of the great religious teachers and mystics who were the creators of India's spiritual culture. Pilgrimage, are made to holy places, the pilgrims practicing austerities and often walking on foot great distances into almost inaccessible regions. Pilgrimages quicken the devotee's spiritual life. Of ten spiritual aspirants practise austerities in these place and attain to the vision of God, thus intensifying the holy atmosphere.

Rituals and myths, besides quickening the spiritual life of the Hindus, have enriched India's art, architecture, and literature. Temples, priests, and pilgrimages have kept Hinduism alive through the dark periods of her history. With the help of concrete worship many have attained great spiritual depths. Even what is regarded as crude and superstitious in the popular worship often reveals the genuine fervor of the worshipper. A Christian missionary has described how one day, near the absorbed in worship. The uncouth man was seated by the roadside before a phallic symbol of Siva. The disgusted missionary, coming near, saw a sudden light on the face of the worshipper and exclaimed; 'Ah, after all, in spite of his superstition, he has it. But with all my education I am still in the dark. It is amazing to see how many saints have been produced by Hinduism, Roman Catholicism, and Mahayana Buddhism, all rich in rituals and mythology.

Through religious festivals, pilgrimages, the observance of vows, and ritualistic worship, a Hindu cleanses his heart, renew his contact with God, and makes progress toward his spiritual goal. The perfect man, of course, regards every moment as holy, every, action as service to God, every thought as communion with the Deity. But his goal cannot be reached without hard discipline. Only when the seeker transcends the deity of the phenomenal world and realizes his oneness with ultimate reality does he transcend rituals and concrete
worship. This is evidenced in this following Hindu hymn;

How can one invoke the all-pervading Absolute?
How give a seat to that which is the sole support of all?
How can one bring offering to that whose nature is pure
awareness, Or purify that which is ever pure?

Why should one bathe with water that which is utterly free
from strain. Or offer clothes to that which folds the universe in itself?
Why place a sacred thread on Him who has no bodily form?
Why offer fragrant flowers to one indifferent to smell?

How can perfume be pleasing to Him who is totally unattached.
Or jewels set off the beauty of Him who is all beauty's source?

Useless are gifts of food to one who is ever satisfied. How can
one circumambulate Him who is boundless in all directions, And how
contribute to salute Him who is one and without a second?

Him can hymns be pleasing to that which the Vedas cannot
reveal?

How can one wave lights before the self-illumined Lord?
How install an image of one complete within and without?
Perfect knowers of Brahman, always and under all conditions,
worship the Lord by knowing their total identity with Him.
SELF CONTROL

♦ Know that talking ill of others in private is a sin. You must wholly avoid it. Many things may occur to the mind, but it gradually makes a mountain of a mole-hill, if you try to express them. Everything ends if you forgive and forget.

♦ If anybody comes to you for vain dispute, politely withdraw yourself. You must express your sympathy with people of all sects. When these cardinal virtues will be manifested in you, then only you will be able to work with great energy.

♦ You should work like a master and not as a slave; work incessantly, but do not do a slave's work.

♦ Be 'unattached'; let things work; let brain centres work; work incessantly, but let not a ripple conquer the mind. Work as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves; bondage is terrible.

♦ Inactivity should be avoided by all means. Activity always means resistance. Resist all evils mental and physical; and when you have succeeded in resisting, then will calmness come.

GEMS OF WISDOM FROM BASAVESHWARA'S VACHANAS

♦ God is not lover of songs; neither is he lover of knowledge. What he loves is devotion.

♦ What is the good of reading or hearing, if you do not know the path of God? If the knowledge of God has not dawned, the man of much reading, is no better than an animal.

♦ If you do no wrong and speak no wrong, what will not God give you? He gives whatever you ask.

♦ The world of God and the world of mortals are not different. To speak the truth, is the world of God, to speak untruth, is the world of mortals; Cleanliness is heaven, uncleanness is hell.

♦ If one sincerely repents for his sins and is willing to reform himself, God dwells in him.

Murthy