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INTRODUCTION

TO

UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY

THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ

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BY

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ.

Of translations of the Bhagavadgītā and treatises on it there is truly no lack.¹ Nevertheless a new translation and examination of this famous poem is not superfluous since Böhlingk has shewn in his "Observations on the Bhagavadgītā"² how much still remains to be done for the proper understanding of the text. Böhlingk's observations conclude with the words: "An unprejudiced examination, uninfluenced by any commentator, of the philosophical contents of the Bhagavadgītā by a scholar acquainted with the philosophical systems of the Indians would certainly be welcomed by many." If this great master of research, who has been so recently removed from us, is right in this view, and if I, on the ground of my labours in the study of Indian philosophy, may venture to reckon myself amongst those called to such a task, I need have no hesitation in publishing the results of the varied and minute investigations of the Bhagavadgītā with which I have occupied myself.

I.—THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM.

The times, in which the Bhagavadgītā on account of the elevation of its thought and language aroused nothing but enthusiastic delight in Europe, are long past. We have become—leaving out phantastic theosophists like Franz Hartmann—more sober and critical and no longer shut our eyes to the manifest deficiencies and weaknesses of the poem. Thus the view which still prevails in India³ as to the unity

¹ Adolf Holtzmann in his "The Mahābhārata and its Parts," II (1893), 121-153, gives an exhaustive survey of the MSS. editions and translations of the Bhagavadgītā, the indigenous commentaries on it and the explanatory writings of European scholars. Since the appearance of this volume no year has passed that has not produced in India further contributions to the literature of the Bhagavadgītā.

² Reports of the philosophical-historical section of the Royal Saxon Society of the Sciences. Session, 6th February 1897.

³ Protāp Chandra Roy says in his Translation of the Mahābhārata, VI, p. 75, Note: "The text of the Gītā has come down to us without, it may be ventured to be stated any interpolation."

of the Bhagavadgītā has already been frequently disputed by German scholars. Already in the year 1826 W. von Humboldt in his famous treatise "On the Episode in the Mahābhārata known under the name of the Bhagavadgītā," p. 53, said: "Interpolations and additions may with great probability be conjectured even although it may not be possible to point them out individually"; and p. 54: "The connection between the individual doctrines would probably have been closer if the idea of a whole had dominated the first draft." Later, A. Weber in "Indische Studien," II (1853), p. 394, expressed himself with greater decision to the effect that "the Bhagavadgītā can, of course, only be regarded as in part a combination of the most highly diverse pieces". Adolf Holtzmann in "The Mahābhārata and its Parts," II, 163-165, emphasizes the necessity of the assumption that the Bhagavadgītā has been re-edited. To the same effect E. W. Hopkins in "The Great Epic of India" (1902) speaks in various places (p. 205, 234) of the "re-written Gītā" (re-written by a modernizing hand). In what way Hopkins conceives the Gītā to have been re-edited is to be seen in his older work "The Religions of India," 389, where it is said: "This Divine Song (or Song of the Blessed One) is at present a Krishnaite version of an older Vishnuite poem, and this in turn was at first an unsectarian work, perhaps a late Upaniṣad." And on page 399 Hopkins says: "It is . . . noticeable that although Krishna (Vishnu) is the ostensible speaker, there is scarcely anything to indicate that the poem was originally composed even for Viṣṇu."¹

As appears from the sequel, I do not share this opinion of the American scholar. But the conviction that the Bhagavadgītā does not lie before us in its original form, but has undergone essential transmutations, is shared to-day probably by most Indologists outside India. But this conviction has not yet led hitherto to the attempt to separate out the later portions and for reasons that are easily understood: since an attempt of this kind lays criticism too much open to objections and contradiction.

¹ Of the interpolations and alterations in the Bhagavadgītā Hopkins speaks in his "Religions of India," 390 and 429, at the top of the page.

In view, however, of the significance which the Bhagavadgītā has for the spiritual life of India, it seems to me in the interests of the history of religion to be opportune to venture on this attempt.

The translation made by me that is appended, which aims at being not smooth and pleasing, but faithful to the text, contains therefore, printed in smaller type, those portions which have, in my opinion, been added by a later hand. In carrying out this, I have been guided by the following considerations.

A. Holtzmann in the passage cited, pp. 163, 164, is led by the contradictions in the Bhagavadgītā to the assumption "that we have before us a Vishnuite working up of a pantheistic poem. We must distinguish between an earlier and a later Bhagavadgītā. The earlier poem was a philosophico-poetic episode of the old, genuine Mahābhārata composed in a pantheistic sense." When I read these conclusions, I was already firmly convinced that the case was precisely the converse of this. Shortly before the passage just quoted, Holtzmann, in a manner that is entirely correct, points to the fact that the theological idea of the poem is in contradiction with itself—"on the one hand the pantheistic absolutely impersonal world-soul, on the other the most highly personal and realistic Kṛṣṇa-Vishṇu incarnate as man—and we are asked to believe that these two are one!" The investigation, which undertakes to separate from one another the more ancient and the more modern elements in the Bhagavadgītā, must in fact start from this contradiction; but it cannot in my judgment be carried out in Holtzmann's sense.

The entire character of the poem is in plan and execution preponderatingly theistic. A personal god Kṛṣṇa comes upon the scene in the form of a human hero, sets forth his doctrines, demands from the hearer along with the fulfilment of duty, above all things a believing love towards him and devotion, then reveals himself in special grace in his super-earthly, but still always human-like form, and promises the believer that, as the reward of his love to God, he shall be united with him after death, shall attain to the fellowship of God. And side by side with this

god, endowed with the most personal form possible, who dominates the whole poem, there stands frequently as the highest principle the impersonal neutral *brahman*, the absolute. At one moment Kṛṣṇa says of himself that he is the one only highest god who has created the world and all things and rules over the All, at another he proclaims the Vedantic doctrine of *brahman* and *māyā*, the cosmic illusion, and sets forth as the highest goal for man that he should transcend this world-appearance (this phenomenal world) and become *brahman*. These two doctrines, the theistic and the pantheistic, are interwoven with each other and follow each other, at times without any connecting link, at times in loose connection. Nor is the one set forth as the lower, the exoteric, and the other as the higher, the esoteric doctrine. It is not taught that theism is a preparatory step to knowledge or a symbol of the truth, and the pantheism of the Vedanta the truth itself; but the two forms of belief are treated almost everywhere entirely as if there were no distinction between them either in value or in content.

It has been attempted to get over the contradictions in the Bhagavadgītā by explaining that here no definite system is set forth, but that a poet is speaking who takes the thoughts and shapes them as they flow into his mind without heeding the contradictions which result in detail.¹ Such a criticism of the Gītā is entirely incorrect. The Gītā is truly not "a work of art which the comprehensive vision of genius has created". It is true that in many a passage the flight of inspiration is perceptible; but not infrequently it is with sounding empty words that a thought already often enough expressed finds repetition and occasionally the language which expresses it is exceedingly defective. Verses from the Upaniṣad literature have been transferred word for word into the Gītā—a thing which a poet carried away by his inspiration would certainly not have done. The influences of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are systematized with a genuine Indian pedantry; and much more could be adduced to prove that

¹ W. von Humboldt, p. 45: "It is a sage who speaks out of the fulness and inspiration of his knowledge and his emotion, not a philosopher trained in a school who distributes his material according to a definite method and reaches the final propositions of his doctrine by following the thread of an artistically constructed chain of ideas."

the Gītā is not the product of a truly poetic creative impulse, but is in part a truly artificially constructed didactic poem for the dissemination of definite religious-philosophical ideas.¹ Thus the great contradiction that runs through the entire Gītā cannot be got rid of by an appeal to the poetical character of the composition. It can be removed only by assuming that one of the two heterogeneous doctrines which is put in the mouth of the personal god Kṛṣṇa must be a later addition. And if this is so, shall we then be in any serious doubt that it is the pantheistic doctrine and not the theistic, as Holtzmann holds, that we have to eliminate?

But, it will be objected, the Indians have seen no contradiction in this combination of theism and pantheism; in many other passages of the Mahābhārata (for example at the every beginning, Anukramaṇikāparvan, v. 22-24) in the Purāṇas and in other places Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu is identified with the Universal Soul; and in the system of Rāmānuja *brahman* is conceived of as entirely personal, as an almighty, all-knowing and loving ruler of the world which is pervaded by his divine spirit. Why should not the author of the Gītā out of the very same belief have composed a poem in which theistic and pantheistic elements lay side by side?

To this I make the following reply. The identification of Kṛṣṇa with *brahman*, the conception of him as the Universal Soul belongs to a later period than the original Bhagavadgītā, a period filled with tendencies to syncretism. This can be moreover established from the traditional Bhagavadgītā.

¹ Böhlingk says in his "Observations," p. 6 at the bottom of the page: "The Gītā contains side by side with many lofty and beautiful thoughts also not a few weak points: contradictions (which the commentators attempt in vain to remove), repetitions, exaggerations, breaches of taste and objectionable features." Hopkins' Religions of India, p. 390, calls the Bhagavadgītā the typical work of Hindu literature "in its sublimity as in its puerilities, in its logic as in its want of it" and p. 399 at the foot of the page "an ill-assorted cabinet of primitive philosophical opinions". Hopkins, p. 40, passes the following judgment on the poetical value of the Bhagavadgītā: "Despite its occasional power and mystic exaltation, the Divine Song in its present state as a poetical production is unsatisfactory. The same thing is said over and over again and the contradictions in phraseology and in meaning are as numerous as the repetitions, so then one is not surprised to find it described as 'the wonderful song which causes the hair to stand on end'."

It is only in the later parts of the Mahābhārata that Kṛṣṇa is recognised as the Universal-existence ; but the Gītā does not belong to the late insertions. Even in the re-edited form in which it lies before us, the Bhagavadgītā is rightly regarded as one of the older episodes of the Mahābhārata (Holtzmann, Mahābhārata and its Sections II. 121 ; Hopkins, Great Epic, 205, 402) ; indeed Holtzmann, I. 127, decides on "ascribing the oldest sections of the Bhagavadgītā without hesitation to the ancient poem". Although I should not care to subscribe to this last proposition, still there can be no doubt both on linguistic and metrical grounds as to the relative age of the Bhagavadgītā.¹

It is in entire agreement with this that Kṛṣṇa in the Gītā appears almost everywhere as a person and that only in a few places is his equality with *brahman* (these will be treated in more detail immediately) expressed in distinct terms. Here I would call attention only to Bhagavadgītā VII. 19 : "At the close of many existences the Knower draws near to me with the thought 'Vāsudeva is the All'. Such a lofty thinker is very hard to find"; *i. e.* Kṛṣṇa is very rarely conceived of as the All (or *brahman*) but almost always as a personal god. Does not the re-editor here declare in clear language that the equalization (identification) of Kṛṣṇa with *brahman* was in his time only in progress? In the first verses of the XIIth hymn which, in my opinion, belong to the ancient poem, the worshippers of the imperishable and unknowable *brahman* are opposed to the theists, the Kṛṣṇa-worshippers with a preference given to the latter (v. 2) and with the remark that for the theists there is less trouble in winning salvation (v. 5).

Hopkins, Great Epic, p. 398, characterises the third of the periods in the development of the text of the Mahābhārata assumed by him with the words "Remaking of the Epic with Krishna as all-god, etc."; for the preceding second period (a Mahābhārata tale with Pandu heroes, lays and legends combined by the Puranic diaskeuasts) Hopkins represents "Krishna as a demi-god". I believe that we ought not, on the ground of this succinct and to me on the whole entirely convincing scheme, to ascribe to Hopkins the opinion that Kṛṣṇa developed immediately from a demi-god

¹ See further regarding this in Chapter IV of this Introduction.

to the all-god, from a half-god to the Universal Being.¹ Between the two there naturally lies the transition from half-god to god and his identification with Viṣṇu.² The one God could be identified with the Universal Soul only after the Kṛṣṇa-cult had reached that point in its development,—a process moreover which signified not so much an elevation of the one personal god as a lowering of the *brahman* conception.

The original Bhagavadgītā was composed at the time when Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu had become for Brahmanism the highest god or we may say simply had become God; the pantheistic re-edited form of the poem which lies before us belongs to the period in which Kṛṣṇa began to be identified with *brahman* and when Kṛṣṇa-ism as a whole began to be vedanticized; to this period belong those portions which in my translation have been marked as additions. I pointed out above that Kṛṣṇa appears in the Gītā at first as identified with *brahman* only in quite isolated cases. In many a passage the conceptions of Kṛṣṇa and *brahman* stand close side by side as distinct, so as almost to give the impression that the re-editor shrank, in view of the manifestly theistic character of his original, from asserting out and out the identity of Kṛṣṇa and *brahman*. It is true that Arjuna, Bhagavadgītā, X. 12, says to Kṛṣṇa “Thou art the supreme *brahman*” and in the passage already cited, VII. 19, it is said “Vāsudeva is the All” (similarly XI. 40); but Arjuna asks, VIII. 1, “What is this *brahman*?” and Kṛṣṇa answers in v. 3 not “I am it”, but “the *brahman* is the imperishable Supreme” and gives regarding himself in v. 4b a different explanation. In XIV. 26, 27 Kṛṣṇa says, “He who serves me with unchanging loving devotion will be a partaker of union with *brahman*, since I am the foundation of *brahman*.” In XVIII. 50-53 it is taught by what means the perfect one attains to *brahman*; but immediately thereafter v. 54, 55, we hear that he who has become *brahman* conceives the highest love for Kṛṣṇa and in consequence enters into union with Kṛṣṇa.

¹ In my investigations I may leave out of consideration Joseph Dahlmann's theory as to the unity of the Mahābhārata, a theory which is shared by no non-Indian scholar in this department.

² I shall deal more in detail with this identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu in another connection in Chapter II.

In these passages Kṛṣṇa and *brahman* are expressly distinguished from each other. But not only here are they two, but throughout the whole poem (apart, of course, from the passages in which the vedantic editor has identified and mingled together the two conceptions completely with each other). In the old poem Kṛṣṇa speaks of himself—and Arjuna of Kṛṣṇa—as an individual, a person, a conscious divinity¹; in the additions made in the re-editing, the neuter *brahman* stands forth as the highest conception and is occasionally identified with Kṛṣṇa. In short, in the old poem Kṛṣṇaism philosophically based on the Sāṃkhya-Yoga is proclaimed; in the additions made in the recension, the Vedānta philosophy is taught.² It has long been well known that the doctrines of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga are, taken as a whole, the foundation of the philosophical discussions in the Bhagavadgītā and that in comparison with them the Vedānta takes a considerably inferior place. How often are the Sāṃkhya and Yoga mentioned by name, while the word Vedānta occurs only once (Vedāntakṛt XV. 15) and in the sense of Upaniṣad.³

Thus, if we think merely of the part played by the philosophical systems in the Gītā as handed down to us and keep before us the irreconcilable contradiction between the *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* and the *Vedānta* which also can be got over only by distinguishing between *Old* and *New*, the vedantic elements in the Bhagavadgītā are again shewn to be non-original.

¹ Also in the pictures of the Rsis, Mbh. VI. Adhy. 68 (ed. Cal.) Kṛṣṇa is still conceived of as quite preponderatingly personal.

² The additions in the recension are related to the original Bhagavadgītā as the subsequently added Uttaratāpanīya in the Nṛsimhatāp-Up. to the older Pūrvatāpanīya. Weber, Ind. Stud. IX. 54, has characterised the two portions of the Upaniṣad in the following words: "The great difference which separates these from each other lies clear before our eyes. The *pūrvatāpanīyam* is purely exoteric, has to do only with the creed of a sect which celebrates the Nṛsiṅha form of Viṣṇu as the highest expression, the loftiest form of the godhead and stands essentially on the standpoint of the *Yoga* doctrine. The *uttaratāpanīyam*, on the other hand, is purely esoteric, has to do only with the identity of the Universal Soul, the supreme *ātman* or *brahman* with the All especially under the conception of their identity under the sacred formula *om*, the individual constituents of which are for their part represented as including within themselves the All, and stands essentially on the standpoint of the Vedānta-doctrine." Thus also in the Nṛsimhatāp-Up. theism based on the *Yoga* doctrine is the older, the Vedantic conception the later. Moreover, it will be shewn in Chapter IV of this introduction that the re-editor of the Bhagavadgītā has made use of the Uttaratāpanīya.

³ "Vedānta" has generally this signification throughout in the Mahābhārata, cf. Great Epic, 93.

Whether the Gītā is examined on its religious or its philosophic side, in both cases the result obtained is the same.¹

Since the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta in the philosophical literature of Brahmanism are most intimately connected, it can easily be understood that the re-editor of the Gītā has introduced into this popular, not strictly philosophic, but rather religious work, side by side with *Vedānta*-conceptions also *Mīmāṃsā* doctrines. The fact that the poem, II. 42-46 and XVIII. 66, goes decidedly against the Vedic service by works has not prevented the re-editor from making additions in which he represents his own ritualistic standpoint and emphatically recommends the Vedic service by offerings (III. 9-18; IV. 31).² In the old poem, IV. 25 ff. and elsewhere, the offering was conceived of entirely in a transferred spiritual sense.

After the Bhagavadgītā was ready in the form in which it has come to us, it served—with its combinations, contradictions, and obscurities which Indian mysticism was able to tolerate—as a model to later poets. After the pattern set by it were prepared (not reckoning particular passages that are founded on the Bhagavadgītā, such as Mbh. III. 120 and in the Pāñcarātra Section, Mbh. II, Adhy. 341, cf. especially Bhagavadgītā XI. 15 ff. and Mbh. XII. v. 12914 ff. Calc. ed.) the Anugītā (Mbh. XIV. Adhy. 16-51), the Īsvaragītā (Kūrmap. II. Adhy. 1-11), the Vyāsagītā (Kūrmap. II. Adhy. 12-34)³ and sundry other pieces.

I have in the course of years read through the Bhagavadgītā six or seven times and every time the impression on my mind has been strengthened that the Vedāntic and Mīmāṃsīc

¹ Also in the so-called Quintessence Verse of the Gītā, XI. 55 (sarva-śāstra-sāra, or the like, in the commentators) nothing of the vedantic conception is contained.

² The description of the *tamas* offering, XVII. 13, "in which the *mantras* are wanting and no reward for the sacrifice is given (to the Brahmins)" might produce the impression that here approval is expressed of the offering prescribed in the Mīmāṃsā. But this is contradicted by the description of the *sattva* offering in v. 11 "Which is offered by such as desire no reward for it". The author in these verses brings under review the various kinds of offerings which were known to him from the cultured life of his people, in order to bring them under the scheme of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, but without thereby recommending the Vedic offerings and the doctrines of the Mīmāṃsā. The same holds good of the reverence paid to the Brahmins in v. 14 and the practice of reciting the Veda in v. 15. In XVIII. 5, 6, offerings, libations and asceticism are recognised as means of purification for the wise; but even there it is emphasized that these must not be performed for the sake of the result (thus opposing the Mīmāṃsā).

³ Rājendralāla Mitra, Catalogue of Bikāner 201, No. 430.

portions are non-original. Thus I have dared, not in consequence of a sudden thought, but on the ground of a slowly matured conviction, to carry out practically the idea of separating from each other the elements referred to. In doing this, I found that by this separation there was nowhere a real hiatus produced in the Bhagavadgītā, rather in a number of passages the interrupted connection was restored; as is quite clearly seen when the passages III. 9-18, VI. 27-32, VIII. 20—IX. 6, are eliminated.¹ A better confirmation of my theory I think I could scarcely look for.

If I may be permitted to quote an individual point in favour of my view, I would instance the use of the word *māyā* which occurs six times in the Gītā. In the passages which, in my opinion, are old because they treat of *īśvara* (IV. 6, XVIII. 61) *māyā* has the old signification—“miraculous power”, in other cases (in VII. 14 twice, 15, 25) it has the technical meaning it bears in the *Vedānta* “world-appearance, cosmic illusion”. With the exception of the case of this word which is of such high significance in reference to the religious-philosophical development of India, I am not disposed to attempt to support my theory by investigations into language; and I at the same time would warn against any attempt to refute it on the ground of language, style or metre. For the recension of the Gītā has not, of course, been undertaken in such a mechanical way that the vedantic-ritualistic pieces were inserted just where an opportunity offered, the old material being carefully preserved. Rather must we assume that also the context of the interpolations, perhaps the major part of the poem, received a new form. But still the old Bhagavadgītā has not undergone so radical a change of character in the process that the interpolated passages for the most part are not recognisable as such in their new setting. Since the interpolations are distributed very unevenly over the 18 hymns, it is natural to suppose that the original Gītā consisted of a smaller number of hymns. The division into 18 *adhyāyas* is probably an imitation of the division of the Mahābhārata into 18 *parvans*; perhaps at that time also the 18 *purāṇas* were known.

¹ See this more in detail in the Appendix “On the passages not originally belonging to the Bhagavadgītā”.

The portions which I have excluded are, as I have said, in the main of vedāntic and mīmāṃsīc content. Some passages have been put aside also on other critical grounds, of which the appendix furnishes the justification. Of the 700 verses of the Bhagavadgītā 170 fall out in this way ; if 24 verses at the beginning and the end which may or may not belong to the proper Gītā are deducted, the excluded verses amount to 146 or more than one-fifth of the whole.

I do not cherish the illusion that I have succeeded, in the way which I have chosen, in eliminating *all* the ungenue portions of the Bhagavadgītā. In the recension many verses besides have been inserted of which not a word existed in the original poem ; the means of recognising these as ungenue are wanting, and I am not inclined to commit myself to mere conjecture. W. von Humboldt's statements on page 46 of his treatise shew that this great master of research was inclined to regard the genuine Bhagavadgītā as closing with the XIth hymn. Hopkins, *Great Epic*, p. 225, calls the verses Mbh. VI. 830-1382, *i. e.*, exactly the first 14 adhyāyas of our poem "The heart of the Gītā".¹

I admit, without qualification, that the latest hymns shew a falling off from the level of the preceding ones ; but I would not venture on this account to declare them in the lump to be a later addition, but rather assume that, as is so often the case, the power of the author grew enfeebled towards the close. It speaks for the genuineness of the latest hymns that some of the principal doctrines of the Gītā are first placed in their proper light through passages in the XVIIIth adhyāya (v. 55, 66).

My translation of the Bhagavadgītā is intended to make it possible for the reader in a convenient manner to pass over the passages which, in my view, are ungenue, and thus to obtain an approximately correct idea of the original form of the poem. My attempt at reconstruction at any rate removes the principal contradictions, which run through the whole poem in its traditional form, thus producing obscurity and confusion ; it offers a Gītā the religious character of which is purely theistic and the philosophical character of

¹ But when Hopkins, p. 234, says that the heart of the poem differs in style from its beginning and ending, he doesn't reckon at least in this passage the beginning of the Gītā as pertaining to the "heart". How does this agree with the remark quoted above ?

which has been determined by the doctrines of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga. However illuminating to myself personally the result of my investigation may appear to be, I am still prepared to meet with opposition. I anticipate it, in particular, from the side of those who see in the Sāṃkhya nothing but a "daub" of the Vedānta, although even this standpoint does not necessitate the rejection of my results.

II.—THE SOURCE OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ.

For a correct estimate of the contents of the Bhagavadgītā it is necessary that we should picture to ourselves the history which preceded it so far as we can deduce it with probability from the indications that are available. We require for this purpose only a portion of the enormous amount of material dealing with Kṛṣṇa and the Kṛṣṇa-cult, but even this portion is entangled and does not lend itself quite readily to the endeavour to obtain a clear consistent idea of the development of Kṛṣṇaism. In this endeavour we are exposed to the danger of doing violence to the original data both as to their substance and their chronology. As to whether I have succeeded in escaping this danger, let others decide ; I can only say that I have kept it continually in view.

In the epoch in which the Kṣatriyas took a prominent share in the re-formation of the spiritual life of ancient India—in my opinion they took the leading part in it¹—there was founded by the fighting warrior Kṛṣṇa the son of Vasudeva and Devakī a monotheistic religion which spread first among his tribesmen the Yādavas, Sātvatas or Vṛṣṇis and subsequently beyond the limits of his tribe. This idea was first propounded only conjecturally by R. G. Bhandarkar in connection with his description of the Rāmānuja system and its fore-runners (Report on the search for Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bombay Presidency during the year 1883-84, Bombay 1887, p. 74) ; but it can be well established. Here chiefly the three following evidences, which mutually supplement and support one another, have to be considered. Firstly, Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra is, as is well known, mentioned

¹ See my "Contributions to the history of Indian Civilization (Berlin, 1903), Essay I".

in the Chānd. Up. III. 17, 6 as the pupil of the Angirasid Ghora—in a manner that deserves to be carefully noted, in connection with doctrines which possess an expressly ethical character.¹ Secondly, the part which Kṛṣṇa, the famous hero of the Yādava family and the ally of the Pāṇḍavas, plays in the older parts of the Mahābhārata as warrior, counsellor and propounder of religious doctrines is to be mentioned. Already the ²P. W. II. 413 speaks of the “natural connection” of the hero glorified in the Mahābhārata with the Teacher Kṛṣṇa mentioned in the Chānd. Up. which ought not to be dissolved without necessity. Thirdly, to this belongs also the fact that Kṛṣṇa’s patronymic “Vāsudeva” (in a wider sense and earlier than the personal name) occurs as a designation of God and in the first instance specially in the tribe to which Kṛṣṇa, according to the Epic, belongs.³ This circumstance is, therefore, of eminent significance, because the deification of the founders of sects is quite the order of the day in India and not only as Barth, Religions de l’Inde, 137, maintains, in later Brahmanism since the end of the Twelfth Century A.D.

When these evidences are combined, the way to an understanding of what Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva was in reality long ago, is, I should think, sufficiently clear. Out of the wilderness of tales, legends, and myths, with which the form of Kṛṣṇa is overgrown, there emerges as the kernel a victorious hero who was at the same time a successful founder of a religion.

The contradictions which the character of Kṛṣṇa in the Mahābhārata presents have led Adolf Holtzmann to the view that two different persons have been blended together in the Kṛṣṇa of the Epic.

But this way out of the difficulty has been long ago recognised to be unnecessary. For the contradictions are perfectly satisfactorily explained by the transformation of the old Kuru-Epic in which Kṛṣṇa as the adversary of the Kurus was a man full of cunning and deceit, into the

¹ Chānd. Up. III. 17, 4. Asceticism, Liberality, Righteousness, Doing injury to no one, and speaking the truth.

² Petersburg Dictionary.

³ R. G. Bhandarkar in the passage quoted, 73.

Pāṇḍava Epic which lies before us and which glorifies Kṛṣṇa as the friend and helper of its heroes.¹

Weber also assumed, on mythological grounds, that in the Kṛṣṇa of the Epic and of the Hindu religion various bearers of this name—a human personality and one or several (?) mythical personalities—had been mixed together (“The history of Indian religion—a cursory outline” Stuttgart, 1899, pp. 28, 29). But the manner in which Weber conjectures “certain mythical foundations” and makes use of different possibilities of interpretation affords no proper insight into the process of thought by which he reached his conviction and offers no means for a critical discussion of his standpoint.

For me still less convincing is the fantastic interpretation of Kṛṣṇa as originally a purely mythological figure advocated by Senart and Barth. Senart, in his “Essay on the legend of Buddha,” sees in Kṛṣṇa, as also in Buddha, a sun-hero, a popular form of the “Agni atmosphérique” (the atmospheric Agni) and A. Barth, “Religions of India,” pp. 100, 103, shares his view. In the latter passage Barth says: “Considered in his natural origin Krishna is a complex figure on which have come to be founded myths of fire, of light, of storm and, despite his name, (Krishna signifies ‘the black’) of heaven and of the sun,” and further down he makes the assertion that under the parents of Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva and Devakī lurks “the ancient couple of the celestial male and the Apsaras”. Similarly also Weber who, however, elsewhere advocated the sound view of the gradual elevation of Kṛṣṇa from man to divinity, has given in various ways to the purely human stories about Kṛṣṇa a mythical significance. In *Ind. Stud.* I. 432, XIII. 353, Remark 2, he interprets Vāsudeva as Indra-Son and in *Ind. Streifen* III. 428 he says: “The close relationship of the legends of Krishna to the Vedic representations of Indra as the Lightning-god who is also called Govid as the other is called Govinda was already before this [before Senart] made certain by the common relation of both to Arjuna,” that is to say, because Arjuna, like so many another Indian mythical hero, was made a son of Indra (which in this

¹ L. v. Schroeder, *Literature and Civilization of India*, 480.

case was all the more likely to happen since Arjuna was known from the Veda as a name of Indra.)¹

The crushing refutation which Oldenberg has bestowed on the solar theory of Senart with reference to Buddha cannot indeed be applied in the same way to Kṛṣṇa, because in this case there are wanting ancient sources of such transparent clearness as are contained in the old Pāli texts for the life of Buddha; but the analogy is none the less most instructive. If the solar conception of Buddha has proved itself to be erroneous—even Senart has found himself compelled in the second edition of his “Essai”, to make considerable admissions in favour of the historical conception—then in view of the similarity of the conditions, the solar theory cannot well be upheld in the case of Kṛṣṇa. We dare not regard the Kṛṣṇa myths as the “foundations” on which the representations of the person Kṛṣṇa were built up, but current mythological ideas which were *transferred* to Kṛṣṇa *after* he had been raised to divine rank. Regarded from this standpoint all the obscurities which attach to the solar or atmospheric theory of Kṛṣṇa’s origin vanish and from this standpoint the circumstance that the majority of the Kṛṣṇa myths with many of their individual features are repeated in the apocryphal biography of Buddha does not appear surprising.

Every unprejudiced historical treatment of our sources shews us Kṛṣṇa in the most ancient time as a man, and later—in progressive development—as demi-god, god, and Universal Being.²

¹ Thus Weber, Ind. Stud. XIII. 355, Remark 5, finds it to be in the highest degree puzzling how Kṛṣṇa has attained to the names Keśava and Govinda. For one who sees in Kṛṣṇa a man, there is nothing that could be less of a puzzle than this. The epithet Keśava shews that Kṛṣṇa had long flowing hair or was represented with hair of this fashion and Govinda, “the plunderer of herds” simply designates the Victor in the conflict. That there is no sufficient ground for the assumption that the surname Govinda is a prakrit form for Gopendra, “the prince of the herdsmen” has already been stated in P. W. (Petersburg Dictionary).

² Hopkins, “Religions of India,” p. 465, says that the god-man of the Mahābhārata “must be the same with the character mentioned in the Chāndogya Upaniṣhad 3. 17. 6.” But at the foot of p. 466 Hopkins enters on a different path of explanation: “It cannot be imagined, however, that the cult of the Gangetic Krishna originated with that vague personage whose pupillage is described in the Upaniṣhad,” and in the two following pages he declares Kṛṣṇa to be an anthropomorphic god. This conclusion of the otherwise so keen and so clear-minded scholar does not seem to me to be a happy one. In Fausböll’s “Indian Mythology according to the Mahābhārata in outline,” London 1903, p. 121, Kṛṣṇa is, in a manner that is remarkable, passed over with a reference to the Harivaṃśa, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and other later works.

When in the mythology of Hinduism Kṛṣṇa comes forward as a god become man, as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, we have there the converse of the actual facts as these are elsewhere to be observed in the myths that deal with such transformations. In the case before us Euhemerism is truly justified.

Kṛṣṇa was thus just like Buddha, a real man, and his parents also, Vasudeva and Devakī, were no mythical or allegorical personages, but human beings like himself. The question has naturally been raised, on what grounds does the deification of Kṛṣṇa rest? One school (Weber *Ind. Lit. Gesch.* [History of Indian Literature], 78, Note 68; *Ind. Stud.* XIII. 349, Note; Holtzmann, *Arjuna* 61) declares this to be a mystery; on the other hand, the services of Kṛṣṇa in connection with the victory of the Pāṇḍavas have been named as supplying the reason. Schroeder, *Indiens Literatur und Cultur* (Literature and Civilization of India), p. 332, finds it to be reasonable and natural "that these new rulers of Madhyadeśa were prepared to encourage and to spread the worship of the national hero of their allies and strove to exaggerate still further the nimbus of the hero who had also become their hero", and says, p. 333, following Lassen I. A. K. (*Indische Altertumskunde*) I² 821: "The Pāṇḍavas, the heroes of the Mahābhārata, appear as promoters of the Kṛṣṇa-cult." In opposition to this, it must be noted that the deification of Kṛṣṇa was first undertaken at a time at which the help which the Yādavas long ago had given to the conquerors of the Kuru-race had long ceased to be of any real interest. In view of the numerous analogies which the Indian religious history of Buddha down to the most recent times presents, the deification of Kṛṣṇa is most naturally explained (as has already been indicated above on p. 13) by the fact that he founded the monotheistic religion of his tribe.

With regard to the original character of this religion we are only able to say that it was a popular religion independent of the Vedic tradition and of Brahmanism and that it probably from the very outset laid stress on the ethical side which is so awfully deficient in the Brahmanic religion and philosophy. Compare p. 13, Note 1, above, and think of the part which duty plays in the Bhagavadgītā. Other

passages also of the Mahābhārata can be adduced to prove that Kṛṣṇaism was out and out an ethical Kṣatriya religion, for example, Mbh. VI. 3044, 3045 (Calc. ed.) *rājarsinām udārānām āhaveṣv anivartinām | sarva-dharma-pradhānānām tvam gatiḥ, Madhusūdana* || “Thou O Slayer of Madhu art the refuge of the noble royal sages who do not falter in the battles and are diligent in the fulfilment of all duties.”

In the religion of Kṛṣṇa god was called by the name applied in India from the oldest times to divine and sacred things “Bhagavat”, the exalted One; in the course of time other designations came to be employed side by side with this: Nārāyaṇa, Puruṣottama, and also the patronymic and the personal name of the Founder. Bhāgavata and Sātvata can be shewn to be the oldest names of the sect (first from the 12th book of the Mbh.); the latter is taken from the tribe to which Kṛṣṇa belonged. Later than these two designations is the name Pāñcharātra which occasionally is used to designate a special subdivision of the sect, but generally is employed as synonymous with Bhāgavata by which name I shall in the sequel briefly designate the followers of the Kṛṣṇa-religion because I consider it to have been the original name.

If we inquire as to the time in which Kṛṣṇa lived and founded his religion, this might be set down, according to Chānd. Up. III. 17. 6, as a couple of centuries before Buddha; and if, as I believe, there lurks some seed of historical fact in Kṛṣṇa's share in the conflict of the Pāṇḍavas with the Kauravas it would have to be placed a little earlier. The existence of the sect founded by Kṛṣṇa rests upon literary evidence that is not earlier than the Fourth Century B.C. namely that of Pāṇini IV. 3. 98, where the formation of the word *Vāsudevaka*, worshipper of Vāsudeva, is explained. The explanation given in the Mahābhāṣya in the second passage (*athavā nai 'ṣā kṣatriyākhyā, samjñai 'ṣā tatra-bhagavataḥ*)¹ manifestly hits the true meaning.²

¹ Kielhorn gives in his edition *tatra-bhavataḥ*, which is certainly incorrect.

² Cf. Weber, Ind. Stud. XIII. 348. Weber sees in the statements of the Mahābhāṣya on the worship of Vāsudeva less than Telang, whom he controverts and who rightly explains Vāsudeva in the passage quoted as “a name of the Supreme Being”. Weber, p. 353, brings forward in opposition to the view of Telang that the Mahābhāṣya bears witness to the worship of Kṛṣṇa as the worship of the Supreme Being, the fact that

Vāsudeva is in the Pāṇini passage not a designation of the Kṣatriya Kṛṣṇa, but of the Supreme Existence. It cannot be brought forward as an argument against this, that there, beside *Vāsudevaka*, stands *Arjunaka* the "reverer of Arjuna"; since Pāṇini, when he instanced these two forms in closest connection with each other, was thinking not of the friend and fellow-combatant of the human Kṛṣṇa, but had before his mind Arjuna in the character in which he comes before us in the Bhagavadgītā (apart from the introduction) and in which he already in the time of Pāṇini must have been generally known, viz., as the disciple to whom the religious truth of the Supreme Being had been revealed and who accordingly must have come to be regarded as its proclaimer and disseminator. The kind of reverence which was intended to be expressed by the two derivatives *Vāsudevaka* and *Arjunaka* was different; but at bottom both words signify the same, namely, "followers of the Bhāgavata-religion" and therefore they are named by Pāṇini in one breath.¹

I have above contested resolutely the theory of the mythical origin of Kṛṣṇa. When I, at first, tested it as to its probability, just because of the name Arjuna, I was for a long time in doubt as to whether it was not after all the correct theory. For the two names Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, "black" and "white" give one naturally an impression of the allegorical and naturalistic. They led Weber (Zur indischen Religionsgeschichte, 28, 29) to think also the same. But such impressions resting on the etymology of names have already too often led us astray and given occasion to allegorical or other profound explanations in cases in which the simplest and most natural interpretation offered itself.

numerous other passages of the Mahābhāṣya refer to Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva as *hero* and *demi-god*. But in these passages, Patañjali has simply used the material drawn from the epic stories. If the famous commentator draws upon the stories known to him in which Kṛṣṇa appears as a semi-divine hero for the formation of grammatical examples, that does not imply that Patañjali in other passages does not allude to the worship of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme god which had penetrated deeply amongst the people in his time. In regard to this question compare also R. G. Bhandarkar, Ind. Ant. III. 16.

¹ Hopkins in his Great Epic, 395, Note 2, has given expression to an entirely different interpretation of our Pāṇini-passage: "The whole 'evidence', at its most evincing is that Pāṇini knew a Mahābhārata in which the heroes [Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna] were objects of such worship as is accorded to most Hindu heroes after death." Had Pāṇini really meant only such a kind of reverence it would have been in the highest degree wonderful that he should have selected just these two names which are of such high significance in the religious-historical sense and are closely associated in this respect.

I would instance only Māyā, the mother of Buddha. The names Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna have also been known in India apart from this, Kṛṣṇa already as the name of a singer in the Rigveda. When now two persons with these names come before us in intimate relation with each other, this is certainly striking; but it is not necessary for us on this account to see in them embodiments of day and night or the like; two entirely simple possibilities present themselves as an explanation. Either the figure of Arjuna as a side-piece to Kṛṣṇa has been freely invented when the latter was already enveloped in myth; in such cases the people love a parallelism of names, and in this case especially the name Arjuna had a double justification as the name of the hero, in whom the race of the Pāṇḍavas, *i. e.*, the sons of the White, was in a measure personified.¹ Or, there was actually among the Pāṇḍavas a friend and dependent of Kṛṣṇa with the name of Arjuna. Even if one should decide in favour of this side of the alternative, one might conjecture that Arjuna may have been originally a surname or the abbreviated form of a surname which was derived from the white pair of steeds of our hero, as Arjuna bears in the Mahābhārata the surnames Śvetavāha, Śvetavāhana, Śvetāśva, Sitāśva. In this case the contrast with Kṛṣṇa would also have contributed to the origin of the name Arjuna. It is scarcely conceivable that Arjuna was simply an actual personal name. It is true that from ancient times designations according to colour are exceedingly frequent as proper names in India; I would instance besides Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, and Pāṇḍu, also Asita, Kapila Citra, Nīla, Rāma, Rohita, Lohita, Virūpa, Sukla, Śyāma, Syāmaka, Śyāva, Śyāvaka, Sveta, Hari, Harita. Although it follows from this list which might certainly be increased, that every particular colour has been used in India as a personal name, I cannot yet bring myself to accept the view that the friend and disciple of Kṛṣṇa as

¹ Lassen sees not only in Arjuna but also in Kṛṣṇa the personification of a people and understands by the two heroes the representatives of two Aryan tribes distinguished from each other by fairer and darker complexions. See *Indische Altertumskunde*, I² 789 ff. especially 791: "There must be a meaning in this distinction according to colour and this can only be that the Pāṇchālās as well as the Yādavas who are represented by Kṛṣṇa belonged to the Aryan races which had migrated into India at an earlier period and had become darker in complexion through the influence of the climate than the more recent immigrants from the North and were called black in contradistinction to the latter." But how does the fact that Arjuna in the Mahābhārata is frequently described as dark-complexioned agree with this? Cf. Hopkins, *Great Epic*, 383.

a child received the name Arjuna. For the play of coincidence that brought together two men of the names Black and White would be too remarkable and improbable ; in the case of Black and Red or Black and Yellow the probability would be much greater.

The development of the Bhāgavata religion, which, according to the usual view, begins first in the Indian Middle Ages, but, according to my opinion as established above, begins much earlier, proceeded along two lines—in a speculative direction and in the inward growth of the religious sentiment.

The genuinely Indian disposition to combine religion and philosophy, and particularly the strong speculative tendency of the Kṣatriya caste, brought about the result that the Bhāgavata religion received a philosophical foundation when the interest in philosophical questions had laid hold of wider sections of the people in Ancient India. For this purpose the two oldest systems which India has produced, the Sāṃkhya and Yoga, were utilized.¹

This manner of providing a philosophical foundation for the Bhāgavata religion is still clearly discernible in the Bhagavadgītā, the proper book of devotion of the sect. May I here further point to a conjecture to which I gave expression in "Sāṃkhya Philosophie", p. 56. In place of the "Ancient Viṣṇuism with a Sāṃkhya Metaphysic" which A. Barth in his Religions de l'Inde, p. 117, deduces from the traces of a dualistic conception of the world to be found in many places in the Viṣṇuite writings, we shall have to substitute probably simply the religion of the Bhāgavatas which sprang up indeed within Viṣṇuism and imparted to the latter its own conception. R. G. Bhandarkar in his Report, at the bottom of p. 74, speaks of the "religion of Bhakti or Love and Faith that had existed from times immemorial". So ancient an existence of the *bhakti*, the believing trustful love of God requires not merely to be asserted, but also to be proved. So long as this last has not been accomplished it cannot be accepted as probable that *bhakti* was entirely peculiar to the Bhāgavata religion, although this conception has furnished, in later times, the

¹ See Lassen, Indische Altertumskunde, II² 1123.

characteristic feature of this religion and its derivatives. The inquiry as to the age and origin of *bhakti* is for our discussion of such importance that we must occupy ourselves with it somewhat more in detail.

As the oldest instance of the word *bhakti* in the sense just stated, we have the closing verse of the Svet. Up. *yasya deve parā bhaktiḥ*; "he who cherishes the highest love to God" and this expression has contributed along with other considerations to the conjecture that has frequently been put forward of the post-Christian origin of the Śvet. Up.¹ I do not believe that this conjecture is justified; for this reason that several verses of the Śvet. Up. had already passed over into the original Bhagavadgītā, which, according to my opinion (see Chapter IV), has its origin in pre-Christian times. If it could be proved that the Brahmasūtras really, as Śaṅkara teaches, in several cases refer to the Śvet. Up. the existence of this Upaniṣad in pre-Christian times would be fully assured. But meanwhile we must leave it out of consideration in deciding the question of the age of the "Love to God" in India.

Weber has repeatedly asserted that the idea of *bhakti* has been borrowed from Christianity and takes his stand in regard to this, namely on the remarkable legend contained in the 12th book of the Mahābhārata, which relates that the sages Nārada (Adhy. 337, ed. Calc.) and Ekata, Dvita, Trita (Adhy. 338) had gone to the Śvetadvīpa, the white island or the island of the white people, and that Nārada had brought with him thence the Pāñcharātra doctrine proclaimed by Nārāyaṇa. Weber's explanation that this narrative is intelligible only "if one recognises in it traditions regarding journeys of Indian saints to Alexandria and the acquaintance with Christianity which they gained there"² is at first sight attractive. When we read in the Mahābhārata that the white men dwelling in the Śvetadvīpa were filled with love to an invisible God, Nārāyaṇa (Mbh. XII. 12798), that

¹ For example by Weber, Ind. Stud. I. 421—423, and by Röer in the introduction to his translation of the Upaniṣad, Bibl. Ind., Vol. XV, p. 36.

² The Greeks in India—Report of the Berlin Academy of the Sciences, 1890, p. 930, compare also Ind. Stud. I. 400, II. 398 ff., the Rāma-Tāpaniya Upaniṣad, Transactions of the Berlin Academy of the Sciences, 1864, p. 277; on the Kṛishṇajanmāshṭami (Krishna's Birthday celebration) in the Transactions of the same Society, 1867, pp. 318—324; "Zur indischen Religionsgeschichte", p. 30, and elsewhere.

they worshipped him in their hearts with gently murmured prayers (XII. 12787), this sounds at least as extraordinarily Christian. Even Lassen who, however, in other respects has opposed resolutely the theory of Weber as to the influence of Christianity on the development of Kṛṣṇaism has been led (Indische Altertumskunde, II² 1118, 1119) by this description of the Svetadvīpa to assume "that some Brahmans had become acquainted with Christianity in some country lying to the N.-W. of their own land and had brought some Christian doctrines to India"; he conjectures that this country may have been Parthia, "because the tradition that the Apostle Thomas preached the gospel in this country is an ancient tradition". Nevertheless I have not been able to convince myself in reading these remarkable passages that there lies in that legend the historical kernel which Weber and Lassen believe they find in it. The story is so wonderful and fantastic that I can see in it only the description of a purely mythical country of blessed creatures. The view of Barth (Religions de l'Inde, p. 132), and of Telang¹ that here we have before us merely a product of poetic fancy seems to me to be thoroughly to the point. The Śvetadvīpa lies north-east (XII. 12703) or north (XII. 12774) from Mount Meru on the other side of the Ocean of Milk; the white clear-complexioned inhabitants of that country have no senses, live without nourishment, are beautifully perfumed and sinless; they blind with their brilliance the eyes of sinful men and are endowed with other fabulous properties (XII. 12704 ff., note especially *sama-muṣka catuṣkāḥ*). When one reflects that for centuries the Indians had had abundant contact in their own land with the Greeks, it seems to me incredible that an Indian visit to Alexandria, Asia Minor, or Parthia should have brought home such impressions as would furnish the foundation for such a legend developed in a comparatively brief interval of time. The circumstance that the sages Ēkata, Dvita, and Trita are described as the sons of the god Brahman, and especially that Nārada, makes this successful journey to the Śvetadvīpa, is in favour of the view that nothing actual

¹ This is taken from Pratāpa Chandra Rāy, Mbh. translated XIII, p. 752, note, probably following the introduction to Telang's metrical translation of the Bhagavadgītā which is not accessible to me. Also Hopkins, Religions of India, pp. 431, 432, finds in the Svetadvīpa Episode no allusion to Christianity.

lies at the foundation of this narrative; since Nārada comes before us continually in Indian literature as the intermediary between men and the gods in whose heavens he is as much at home as on the earth. Moreover, apart from the above mentioned apparently Christian features, the whole narrative bears a thoroughly Indian character.

Further, Weber is of opinion in the passage quoted that the name of Christ "the son of the Divine (?) Virgin" having become known in India reminded the Indians of the Kṛṣṇa worshipped by them as the son of Devakī (apparently 'the Divine') and that thus it has come to pass "that also numerous Christian materials and legends, specially those of Christ's birth amongst the shepherds, of the stall, the manger as the place of His birth, of the murder of the children of Bethlehem, of the taxing by the Emperor Augustus, and others of the same kind are found again in the Indian legends of Kṛishṇa." But as is shewn in Weber's very full treatise "on the Kṛishṇajanmāshtamī (Kṛishṇa's birth festival)" the Christian elements in the Kṛṣṇa-myth are demonstrable only at such a late period that they are of no account in regard to the question now under discussion; and some features for which Weber assumes a Christian origin can, with certainty, be established as belonging to a pre-Christian time. (Compare Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, III. 14 ff.). The view of Weber that already in the first centuries after Christ an influence of Christianity on India, especially on the doctrines of the Pāñcharātras is to be discerned has been already sufficiently refuted by Lassen (*Indische Altertumskunde*, II² 1121—1128); and also other weighty voices have been raised against it.

For the position that the idea of *bhakti* with which we are now concerned has been borrowed from Christianity, there has not yet been brought forward the shadow of a proof. Whatever religious content lies in the word, *bhakti* is not at all something specifically Christian. The love of God and trust in God has developed gradually, not only in the monotheistic religions, but even outside the monotheistic circle of ideas it is to be found.¹ And just in India we have every

¹ Barth, *Religions de l'Inde*, p. 132: . . . in the religions of Osiris, of Adonis, of Cybele, of Bacchus in their time and independently of the entire influence of Christianity.

reason to regard *bhakti* as an indigenous fact, as Barth puts it; since monotheistic ideas run from the time of the Rigveda through almost every period of Indian religious history, and the powerful striving after the Divine which has, from the beginning, been peculiar to the soul of India's people was bound to produce such feelings as Love to God and Devotion to God in a monotheism of popular form.

Edmund Hardy (Lit. Centralblatt 1903 Nr. 38 Sp. 1269) draws attention to the fact that *bhakti* (in the Pāli form *bhatti*) appears in the Jāt. V. 340. 3, 6; 352, 11 in the sense of "Love, Devotion" and points to the Theragāthā v. 370 for the transition to the specific sense of "Love to God". In this latter sense Pāṇini IV. 3. 95 in connection with 98 may be quoted. From these passages it follows that the word *bhakti* was used in India in the Fourth Century B.C. in the ordinary sense of "Love, Devotion, Attachment" and that at the same period the way was prepared for the application of the term to the relation of man to God. Even if "the *bhakti* which is treated of (in Pāṇini IV. 3. 95) with reference to rules 96—100, is to be taken only in the simple sense of Love, Devotion—according to rule 95 it is used of inanimate things, according to the Calcutta Scholiast, of cooking and baking—" (Weber, Ind. Stud. XIII. 349-350), the use of the word *bhakti* in reference to Vāsudeva in Rule 98 is *at least* a proof that in Pāṇini's time the use of the word *bhakti* in the sense of "Love to God" was in process and the interpretation by Patañjali of that passage (*bhakti* with reference to *tatra-bhagavat*) discussed above on p. 17 shews that this signification was perfectly common in the Second Century B.C. and certainly earlier. The assumption that the use of the word *bhakti* in a specifically religious sense was brought about by a conception imported from without ought thereby to be refuted.

Although "Love to God" can thus scarcely be claimed for the original Bhāgavata religion, the faith of the worshippers of Vāsudeva was, at any rate, filled with this sentiment before the Bhagavadgītā was composed; since a *new idea* is wont to be proclaimed in a different way from that followed by the Bhagavadgītā, in which this sentiment is demanded as something absolutely to be taken for granted.

If one might divide the development of the Bhāgavata religion into periods, it would be reasonable to regard the first as continuing during the interval in which this religion carried on its own separate life outside Brahmanism. To this period, which I would reckon from its beginning, which cannot be precisely fixed, till about 300 B.C., belong probably all the events in religious history which have been hitherto discussed in this chapter, *i. e.*, briefly summed up, the founding of the popular monotheism by Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, the philosophical framework based on the Sāṃkhya-Yoga, the deification of the founder and, as I believe, also the deepening of the religious sentiment by the requirement of *bhakti*.

The second period is marked by the Brahmanizing of the Bhāgavata religion and the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu. The great popularity of the myths and legends which gathered round the figure of Kṛṣṇa must already have attracted the attention of the Brahmans, but the basis for the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu was first supplied to them when Kṛṣṇa was definitely raised from the position of a hero of his race to that of a god. Against this view it might be objected that Rāma also as a purely human hero was made by the Brahmans a manifestation of Viṣṇu and was only deified in consequence of this identification; why should not therefore in like manner Kṛṣṇa even as a hero be explained as an incarnation of Viṣṇu? The reply to this is that the two cases are very different: Rāma the mild, pious, self-denying hero of virtue was a genuinely brahmanic character who could be much more easily assimilated to the Viṣṇu faith than the popular figure of the powerful and energetic Kṛṣṇa of whom the Brahmans knew very well through tradition that he had in his teachings rejected the authority of the Veda and had attacked the priestly sacrificial system, the great source of income for the priesthood (compare the Bhagavadgītā), as a greater than he, Buddha, had done with greater success. Even at a time when the Bhāgavatas had been absorbed in Brahmanism, Śaṅkarācārya in his criticism of the Bhāgavata-Pāñcharātra religion (Commentary on the Brahmasūtras II. 2. 42—45) calls attention at the close to the anti-vedic character of the sect. How can one then

doubt that the Brahmans, only against their will, but with a shrewd eye to their own advantage, in order to be able to work more effectively against Buddhism, drew over the Bhāgavatas to themselves? Could they do that with the appearance of justification before the Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva had become for the Bhāgavatas a being that shewed an inner relationship with the brahmanic Viṣṇu? The Brahmans then easily disposed of the older character of Kṛṣṇa, his *humanity* and his warriorship as these lived in the epic tales by falling back on their convenient Avatāra theory.

Weber in his Ind. Stud. XIII. 353, Note 1, mentions the passage in the Mahānārāyaṇa Up. Taitt. Ār. X. 1. 6. as the most ancient witness to the identification of Viṣṇu with Nārāyaṇa Vāsudeva, the god of the Bhāgavatas.

Since, however, we cannot say when this Upaniṣad compilation was added as its last book to the Taitt. Ār., this witness loses all value for chronological purposes. But the fact which was known long ago that Megasthenes in his narrations under the name Herakles describes Kṛṣṇa as an Avatāra of Viṣṇu is decisive. The parallelism of Herakles with Dionysos (= Śiva) proves—in spite of what Weber states, Ind. Stud. II. 409, 410,—that Kṛṣṇa at the time when Megasthenes was in India was regarded no longer as a mere tribal hero but already as Viṣṇu, that is to say his manifestation. Between 302 and 208 B.C. the identity of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu was already established¹ and not for the first time only in the Fifth and Sixth Century is the proper Kṛṣṇa cult to be traced, as Weber many years ago asserted (Ind. Stud. I. 400, Note at the end).

We may accordingly place the identification of Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu and also the deification of Kṛṣṇa which preceded it not long before 300 B.C.; since the second period in the development of the Mahābhārata text, which Hopkins, Great Epic, p. 398, with good grounds, but

¹ It may be remarked in passing that Βαζοδηο (Bazodeo=Vāsudeva) which occurs as the name of a King "an Indoscythian it appears" on numerous coins shortly before and after the beginning of our era (Weber, Ind. Stud. XIII. 353, Note 2) is manifestly an abbreviated form of a proper name that carries the idea of a god. In this we would have an additional evidence—if such was indeed wanted—of the Kṛṣṇa cult from the time before the birth of Christ.

naturally claiming only reasonable probability, reckons as 400—200 B.C., knows Kṛṣṇa still only as a demigod (no evidence of Kṛṣṇa's divine supremacy). It is true that the idea is not without justification that the Editors of the Epic have, notwithstanding the deification of Kṛṣṇa, clung to the character which Kṛṣṇa possessed in the popular tradition; but they would not have been able for any length of time to escape from the brahmanic view of the identity of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu when once this had been raised to the position of a dogma.

I believe that we may fix the second period of the Bhāgavata religion as from before 300 B.C. to somewhere about the beginning of our era. At any rate the original Bhagavadgītā—without intending by this remark to express for the present any view as to its date—belongs to this period, because in it Kṛṣṇa is not yet identified with Brahman, but is designated in several passages as Viṣṇu (of the three passages X. 21, XI. 24, 30 the last two belong to the old poem) and because IV. 6-8 contains an allusion to the Avatāra theory. The third period of the Bhāgavata religion for which I am disposed to assume the time from the beginning of our era down to the beginning of the Twelfth Century is characterised by the identification of Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu with Brahman; but in spite of the vedanticising of Kṛṣṇaism, the old Sāṃkhya-Yoga elements persist. The recension of the Bhagavadgītā was undertaken in the early part of this period.

Side by side with the pantheistic conception of God which, as time went on, was carried more and more to its logical consequences, an erotic conception of Kṛṣṇa¹ is developed exactly corresponding to the metaphysical-sensuous twofold nature of the Indian—which runs riot chiefly in the description of his love-play with the shepherdesses, but at the same time shews a mystical trait. These relations of Kṛṣṇa to the shepherd-life are derived from the recollection that the human Kṛṣṇa proceeded from a shepherd-race and was celebrated as its leader.

I date the fourth period of the Bhāgavata religion from its systematization by Rāmānuja in the first third of the

¹In the latest parts of the Mahābhārata and in Harivaṃśa, this development reaches its culmination, as is well known, in the Gītāgovinda.

Twelfth Century. The system of Rāmānuja which, up to the present day, reckons numerous adherents, especially in South India, but also in the north is diffused as a hereditary form of belief in many Brahman families, has been described in briefest outline by R. G. Bhandarkar in the passage cited above, page 12.¹ But when Bhandarkar, p. 74, at the foot of the page says, "It was Rāmānuja's endeavour . . . to seek a Vedantic and philosophic basis for the religion of *Bhakti* or Love and Faith . . . and thus the Pāñchrātra system which was independent of the Vedas before became a system of the Vedānta or an Aupanīṣada system" he is decidedly incorrect. For the Bhāgavadgītā, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and other texts teach us that the Vedantic fundamental ideas were not for the first time introduced into the religion of *bhakti* by Rāmānuja but had found entrance there many centuries before him. I should like also to controvert another error which one occasionally meets with, namely that Viṣṇuism is divided into Rāmaism and Kṛṣṇaism according as it shews a tendency to contemplation and speculation or to an unrestrained enjoyment of life and that accordingly the system of Rāmānuja or indeed the religion of the Pāñcarātras is described as Rāma-itic.² It is the case that the Kṛṣṇaite sect established by Vallabhācārya about the year 1500 inscribed on its banner the unrestrained enjoyment of life, and the lower classes amongst the adherents of Caitanya, who, about the same time, revived the religion of *bhakti* in a popular manner, a manner hostile to Brahmanism by requiring a glowing ecstatic love to Kṛṣṇa, are scarcely distinguishable in point of morality from the adherents of Vallabhācārya. But from this we ought not to draw conclusions reflecting back on the ancient time in which Kṛṣṇaism was just as speculative as Rāma-ism. And so far as the system of Rāmānuja is concerned Rāma-itic elements had found their way into it in so far,

¹ Compare also Sarvadarśanasamgraha, Chap. IV; Wilson, Essays and Lectures, ed. R. Rost, I. 34-36; Colebrooke, Miscellaneous Essays, ed. Cowell, in the Article on the Pāñcarātras or Bhāgavatas, I. 437-443; K. M. Banerji, Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy, 401 ff.; Hopkins, Religions of India, 496 ff.

² This view has been well challenged by Wilson, Essays and Lectures, I. 38, Note 40; and Colebrooke, Miscellaneous Essays² I. 211 (but see on the other side, p. 439).

for example, as in the system Rāma, just like Kṛṣṇa, is regarded as a *vibhava*, a manifestation of *īśvara* and finally every difference of conception as between Rāma and Kṛṣṇa vanished—as indeed also Viṣṇu and Śiva coalesce in the person of Harihara—but on that account the system of Rāmānuja is fundamentally thoroughly Kṛṣṇaitic as the continuation of the Pāñcarātra religion, the Kṛṣṇaitic character of which does not need first to be proved, but is already assured by the divine name Vāsudeva.

Amongst the modern works in which the doctrine of *bhakti* is developed in connection with the Bhagavadgītā the Śāṅḍilyasūtras, an imitation of the philosophical sūtras, take the first place.

I have traced here in a compendious representation the development of the Bhāgavata religion beyond the period of the Bhagavadgītā for the sake of completeness, and because Kṛṣṇaism since the composition of the Bhagavadgītā and not least by reason of the powerful success of this poem has gained considerably in importance in the religious life of India.

III.—THE DOCTRINES OF THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ.

The situation in the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is well known. Yet a brief sketch of it may perhaps be welcome to one or other of those who will peruse this work.

The Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas range themselves after long years of strife against each other equipped for open battle with the leaders and allies of both sides on the Kuru field, the region of the present Delhi. Although the two nearly related families have a like claim to the name of Kurus or Kauravas, this designation is generally restricted to one of the parties, *i. e.*, to the blind old King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, his uncle Bhīṣma and his sons, of whom the eldest is Duryodhana; only Arjuna is, notwithstanding his belonging to the other family, called six times in the Bhagavadgītā "Shoot of the Kuru" or the like.¹ The course of the battle is reported to the blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra by his charioteer Saṁjaya

¹ See in the edition of Schlegel-Lassen the Index of proper names under the word Kuru.

on whom Vyāsa, the reputed author of the Mahābhārata, has bestowed the supernatural power of discerning all the incidents of the conflict. One of the first passages in this report by Saṁjaya includes the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna who calls "the secret doctrine proclaimed by the exalted one" by its full name Bhagavadgītā or simply Gītā. At the sight of near relatives in the hostile army Arjuna shrinks from beginning the conflict and is directed by Kṛṣṇa, who stands at his side in human form as charioteer, to the command of duty. As they proceed further Kṛṣṇa's exhortations and instructions grow more profound and in the eleventh hymn he reveals himself to Arjuna as the one only God, as the Lord of all the Worlds who has assumed the form of the Yādava hero.

Hopkins, *Great Epic*, 384, describes the Gītā as a purely priestly product, which seems to me to be an absolute misunderstanding of the nature of this poem in which the Veda and the Brahmanic ritual are rejected and the cunning avarice of the Brahmans is chastised (II. 42-46). Its significance in the history of religion lies chiefly just in the fact that the Gītā is not a priestly product.

So far as the teachings of the re-edited Bhagavadgītā are concerned, one can even to-day refer to the well thought-out exposition of W. v. Humboldt whose famous treatise asserts its worth, although naturally the learning of our day takes a different view of particular details and too much, in my opinion, has been often put into the words of the Gītā by this profound master of research.

If we keep in view the original not yet vedanticised Gītā as I have attempted to extract it as a kernel out of its traditional form, it is in the first place scarcely necessary to point out that it shares the universal Indian belief in the transmigration of souls, in the continuously working power of *action*, and in the possibility of redemption from the painful cycle of life.

Not only the fundamental feature of the Bhagavadgītā which regards love to God as the crown of all wisdom, marks out this poem as a *text book of the Bhāgavatas*; but this fact is also discernible in the designations of God (Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, Bhagavat, Puruṣottama). I find also

in a special, but important, point Bhāgavata teaching in the Gītā, namely, XV. 7, where God declares that the individual soul has proceeded from Him and is a part of Himself.¹ We have above in Chap. II seen that finally the connection of Monotheism with the doctrines of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga is a characteristic feature of the sect of the Bhāgavatas.

This connection rendered necessary many a misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the two systems, since only thus could the theism of the Bhāgavatas be fringed with the teachings of the frankly atheistic Sāṃkhya system and of the Yoga system which was only provided externally with a theistic etiquette. If, on this account, the Gītā shews numerous deviations from the genuine Sāṃkhya-Yoga doctrines, *i. e.*, from the views represented in the text books of the two systems, it would be an utter mistake to discover here more ancient stages of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga.

The Sāṃkhya-Yoga is six times expressly named in the Gītā (II. 39, III. 3, V. 4, 5, XIII. 24, XVIII. 13; compare also XVIII. 19) and its principal doctrines are set forth with unadulterated purity, II. 11-16, 18-30, III. 27-29, V. 14, VII. 4, XIII. 5, 19 ff. Besides, the whole poem is interpenetrated by the influence of the Sāṃkhya doctrines, especially the theory of the three *Guṇas*. But the terms of the Sāṃkhya are throughout in the Bhagavadgītā not always used in their technical meaning, but more frequently in the sense which belongs to them in current vernacular usage. Thus it is true that in many places *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas* are used to designate the three inner organs of the Sāṃkhya system, but usually *buddhi* and *manas* are met with having the meaning of "sense, heart, intelligence, insight" and *ahaṃkāra* in the sense of "self-seeking, arrogance". Also *prakṛti* is not always matter or primeval matter, but stands in III. 33, IV. 6, VII. 4, 5, 20, IX. 8, 12, 13, XI. 51, XIII. 20, XVIII. 59, in the sense of "Nature, Essence, Natural Condition". Similarly *ātman* has frequently not a philosophical signification; but is to be translated as "Essence, Spirit" or the like. Pretty frequently (*e. g.*, V. 21, VI. 10, 36, 47, XIII. 24) Śaṃkara

¹ See besides the well-known passages on the Pāñcarātra doctrine Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in Weber, Ind. Stud. I. 11.

explains *ātman* by *antaḥkāraṇa*, "inward organ"; still in these cases we must perhaps understand the empiric Self bound up with its determinations (the *viśiṣṭātman* of the text books). On several occasions (IV. 21, V. 7, VI. 10) the commentators even interpret *ātman* as "body".

The relation between the Bhāgavata religion and the Yoga doctrine rests upon mutual influence. The Bhāgavatas took over the idea of *yoga*, but gave it a new interpretation and assigned to the word the meaning of "devotion to God, worship directed to God".¹ On the other hand, the Yoga doctrine borrowed from the Bhāgavata religion the conception of God. How the idea of God is conceived of in the Yoga sūtras, how it has been inserted into this edifice of doctrine in a manner that is entirely external and unconnected (unmediated) and even so as to disturb the context, I have explained in the "Encyclopedia of Indo-Aryan Research" III. 4, p. 50. If we were to eliminate the Yoga-sūtras I. 23-27, II. 1, 45 which treat of God, this would occasion no hiatus in the text book—only something would be allowed to drop which is in conflict with the entire presuppositions of the Yoga system. If already the admission of the conception of God into the Yoga system implies an acceptance of the doctrine of the Bhāgavatas, this holds in an increased degree of the (Yogas, I. 23, II. 1, 45) *īśvara-praṇidhāna*, surrender to God, in which already Rājendralāla Mitra in his Yoga Aphorisms, p. 28, has recognised a borrowing from the *bhakti*-system, *i. e.*, from the religion of the Bhāgavatas. *īśvara-praṇidhāna* is completely synonymous with *Yoga* in the Bhāgavata sense.

I leave it as doubtful whether the many-sided rôle which the Yoga plays in the Bhagavadgītā quite agrees with the position it has taken in the Bhāgavata religion or whether the author of the Gītā has not emphasized in too strong a degree the views of the Yoga system. I am, however, inclined to accept the latter view.

The words *yoga*, *yogin*, or etymologically allied forms are exceedingly frequent in the Bhagavadgītā, but require

¹ "The *bhaktimārga* fitted into the Yoga and has sprung from it." Jacobi, Gött. Gel. Anz. 1897, 277.

in translation to be represented by a whole series of different expressions ; at times the significations so run into each other that one may often be in doubt as to the choice of the expression to be used. The following passages, some of which do not contain the word *yoga*, deal clearly with the Yoga exercises which are the subject of Patañjali's text book : IV. 27, 29, 30, V. 27, 28, VI. 10 ff., VIII. 8-14, XVIII. 33. In the great majority of the passages, however, *yoga*, *yogin*, and verbal derivations from the root *yuj* have the meaning that is characteristic of the Bhāgavatas and signify devotion to God, reverence and the god-devoted, the reverently pious respectively. Further, *Yoga* when it is combined with *karman* (III. 3, 7, V. 1, 2. IX. 28, XIII. 24) stands in the original sense of "practising, carrying out (works)".¹ Resting on this meaning of the word, the Yoga-doctrine (especially in Hymn III and V. 2 ff.) appears transformed in meaning to become the doctrine of action according to duty and is placed in contrast to the Sāṃkhya which stands for the theory of right knowledge. Also the author was not the first to adopt this change of meaning for *yoga* ; rather we must regard the recognition of the two ways of salvation, the *jñānayoga* and the *karmayoga*, which, (Bhag. III. 3, XIII. 24, in the latter passage *sāṃkhyena yogena* being used in the sense of *jñānayogena*), are named side by side, and which also, without being expressly named, are opposed to each other in the poem, likewise as a doctrine of the Bhāgavatas. The *karmayoga* of the Bhāgavatas, it is true, coalesced later with the ritualistic *karmamārga*, but in the Bhagavadgītā it exhibits its genuine signification, "the carrying out according to duty of a call without any personal interest". The *jñānayoga* of the Bhāgavatas consists of the knowledge of God and the knowledge of nature in the Sāṃkhya sense and involves the renunciation of the efficacy of works.

It is certainly worthy of notice that, even at so late a stage in the development of the Bhāgavata religion as we have in the system of Rāmānuja, the *karmayoga* and the *jñānayoga* are mentioned as the first two of the five ways that lead to

¹The instrumental *yogena* in this use of the term takes on a meaning which has for our linguistic sense exactly or nearly the signification of a preposition "vermitteltst" (by means of). Compare Böhtlingk's Notes on the Bhagavadgītā, III. 3, XIII. 24.

redemption.¹ The third of Rāmānuja's ways of salvation is the *bhaktiyoga* (already found also in Bhagavadgītā XIV. 26); the fourth, *prapattiyoga*, is a derivative from the *bhaktiyoga*, and the fifth, *ācāryābhimānayoga*, is manifestly a modern addition.

Finally, we meet with the word *yoga* in the Bhagavadgītā in still another sense which probably has been developed out of the idea of the efficacy of works, *viz.*, in those passages in which the *yoga* of God is spoken of, *i. e.*, his miraculous power (IX. 5, X. 7, 18, XI. 8, 47) or in which God is called in accordance therewith *yogin*, "possessed of miraculous power" (X. 17) or *yogeśvara* "Lord of miraculous power" (XI. 4, 9, XVIII. 75, 78).

Now we can pass on to set forth in brief outline the *Teachings of the genuine Bhagavadgītā*, *i. e.*, the Bhāgavata-faith equipped with the elements of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga with various modified interpretations. In this it is not advisable to follow the order of thought in the Bhagavadgītā which meanders for one thought to another and especially in its practical demands continually mixes up with one another the different recognised standpoints.

We begin with the systematic part and here we take the person of God. God is—as it is scarcely any longer necessary to repeat after the points brought forward in the preceding discussion—a conscious Eternal and Almighty Being, the "great lord, without a beginning, of the world" (X. 3.) He is not only distinct from the perishable world, but also from the imperishable spirit of beings (XV. 17-19), is thus Spirit in another and higher sense than the *ātman* of all created things. When it is said in vii 4-6, that God possesses two natures, a higher spiritual nature by which the world is upheld, and a lower material nature which consists of everything which according to the Sāṃkhya belongs to *prakṛti*, this is not to be understood as meaning that matter constitutes one-half of his being; it is rather meant that matter unfolds itself not independently, following its own blind impulse, but under the leading of God, in other words, that God works in matter and through it. This is placed beyond doubt by other passages of the

¹ R. G. Bhandarkar, Report 1887, p. 69.

Bhagavadgītā. God places in matter the germ of its unfolding (XIV. 3, 4), is thus the father of all creatures, while matter can be compared to the mother's womb (XIV. 4). God guides the origin, development and dissolution of the Universe (IX. 7, 8, 10) and in this sense he calls himself the origin and the end of the whole world (VII. 6, X. 8) and identifies himself with Death (XI. 32). All the conditions of beings have their origin in Him (X. 4, 5); he guides their fate, *i. e.*, rewards them according to their deeds and thus lets beings in the cycle of life "whirl round like figures on a puppet-stage" (XVIII. 61). Every act of God takes place merely for the sake of the world, for He Himself has no wish to be fulfilled, no goal to be reached (III. 22, 24). "Every time when the Right is declining and the un-right is on the increase" God who, however, is from eternity and imperishable, creates Himself anew, *i. e.*, assumes new forms of manifestation "for the protection of the good and the destruction of the evil" in order to establish the Right (IV. 6—8). Because the action of God is an affair which concerns the matter ruled over by Him, and never springs from an egoistic motive, God is not fettered by His action (IV. 13, 14, IX. 9); he can never be entangled in the present world-existence. The visionary description of God in Hymn XII is a dramatic adornment which is intended to work on the imagination, but is of little significance for the proper teaching of the Gītā. The relation of God to the world of men is not only determined by the rigid law of retribution, but God loves men who know Him and are devoted to Him with all their heart (VII. 17, XII. 14-20, XVIII. 64, 65, 69), and He redeems from all sins him who betakes himself for refuge to Him alone (XVIII. 66). Here (and similarly XVIII. 56, 58, 62, 73) lies before us already the belief in the divine grace (*prasāda*) which we come upon in some Upaniṣads of the middle age (Kath. Śvet. Mūṇḍ) ¹ and which in the subsequent period plays so prominent a part in the Indian sects.

Although God guides the world-process, still, as we saw above, it is *matter* which does all the works (III. 27, V. 14, XIII. 20, 29). The world unfolds itself out of the primeval

¹ See Hopkins, Great Epic, 188.

matter and passes again back into it (VIII. 18, 19); the idea of evolution and reabsorption, as well as the conception of world-periods, is thus taken from the Sāṃkhya system. Generally speaking, all the views regarding matter found in the Bhagavadgītā agree with the Sāṃkhya teaching. The three *gunas* play here the same part as in the Sāṃkhya system; they, by their influence, cast the soul into fetters (XIV. 5 ff.) and the consequences of their activity make themselves felt in life at every step, as is minutely worked out in Hymns XVII and XVIII. Also the physiological conceptions regarding the inner organs and the senses are those of the Sāṃkhya system (III. 40, 42, XIII. 5). But all these agreements are not of such significance with reference to the teachings of the Gītā as the fundamental view regarding the nature of matter taken from the Sāṃkhya from which the philosophical disquisition in Hymn II starts. It is true that matter is not in any way created by God, but exists from eternity, but it is subject to incessant movement and change; all its products and its activities are perishable; its influences, especially joy and pain, come and go, thus do not serve to bring it about that man should allow himself to be determined by them (II. 14).

Over against this mutability of all that matter produces stands the immutability of spirit. The spirit (the soul, the self) is indeed so far like matter as both are eternal and indestructible; since what is, has ever been, and ever will be, "to the non-existent no existence comes, to the existent no non-existence" (II. 16); but the great contrast between matter and spirit consist in this, that the latter is never susceptible of change. When it is said in XIII. 21 that the Spirit enjoys (the expressions of) the *gunas* and that the inclination to these *gunas* is the cause of its re-birth, we are here dealing with a figurative mode of expression which is to be interpreted completely according to the Sāṃkhya teaching. In reality the Spirit dwells absolutely inactive in the body "neither acting nor causing action" (V. 13-15) and remains untouched by all the influences and workings of matter. This is set forth in noble language in the IInd Hymn. He who knows that the Spirit is the true Ego which leaves the used up bodies and enters into new ones, as one lays aside old clothes and puts on new ones (II. 22), that the Spirit can be neither wounded nor destroyed, does

not complain of the suffering and death of a man, *i. e.*, not of things by which only the perishable body can be affected.

All this is pure Sāṃkhya doctrine; but notwithstanding this, the conception of the spiritual principle is in the Bhagavadgītā an entirely different one from that which we find in the Sāṃkhya system, not one which is exclusively philosophical, but one which is predominantly religious. The individual soul has, according to the Gītā, which proclaims the faith of the Bhāgavatas, not from all time led a separate existence, but has separated itself as a portion from the divine soul (XV. 7; compare also XVI. 18, XVII. 6). The expression *mamai 'vā 'mśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ* (XV. 7), is so clear that one would first require to be a follower of Śaṅkara in order to interpret the word *aṃśa* in this important passage in the Vedānta sense, as "the imaginary, visible part." The individual souls are thus of divine origin; they have entered into a connection with matter which is not able to bring about any change in themselves, but which has brought life and consciousness into the world. The task of man is so to bear himself that his soul may be able to return again to the point from which it started, to God.

With this we come to the *practical part* of the teaching of the Gītā. Here over against each other stand the two ways of salvation, of which the one consists in a withdrawal from the life of the world and a striving after knowledge, the other in desireless acting according to duty. Although the second way is in several places (III. 8, V. 2, XVIII. 7) described as the better and, according to the entire context of the Gītā, is to be regarded as the proper moral ideal of the poem, the author who, according to what has been said above, p. 33, is for me, also in his practical teachings a faithful interpreter of the Bhāgavata faith, has not dared to reject the way of salvation which lies in renunciation of the world and abstract knowledge. The idea that redemption from the cycle of life was to be won by meditation in complete separation from the world, already had been for centuries so rooted in the thoughtful circles of the Indian people that it could no longer be seriously controverted. There remained nothing else than to allow the two views to stand side by side and to teach that right action, as well as

knowledge, which presupposes the giving up of works, the not-acting, leads to redemption. By reason of this that in the *Gitā* now one, now another standpoint is represented and occasionally even the ideal of quietism is placed above that of activity (VI. 3) all sorts of inconsistencies and obscurities have arisen, which could have been avoided if the quietist standpoint had been decidedly rejected. The two standpoints are in the *Gitā* assimilated to each other by the explanation that action according to duty, which is carried out without any regard for the consequence and without any personal interest, loses its subsequently operative power, and thus involves for the doer no continuance of the present world-existence in the future. Action of this nature accordingly approximates in this respect to the not-acting that is characteristic of the way of knowledge.

The knowledge to be reached along the quietist way of salvation is described in several passages of the *Gitā* (XIII. 23, XIV. 19) entirely in the sense of the *Sāṃkhya* system as the distinguishing between spirit and matter; and as a consequence of this distinguishing (XIII. 23), without regard to the conduct of the one who knows, deliverance from the necessity of re-birth is set forth in prospect. This may be regarded as an isolated recognition of the genuine *Sāṃkhya* ideal. In general, the knowledge that redeems is not, according to the view of the *Bhagavadgītā*, limited to the distinguishing between matter and spirit, but this distinguishing can be regarded as only a condition precedent to the knowledge of God which only in reality leads man to his highest salvation.

The other way of salvation, the selfless fulfilment of duty, is preached in the *Bhagavadgītā* at every step with the most diverse turnings. The fulfilment of duty would not alone lead to the goal so long as it is still accompanied in any degree by the hope of the result. What is ordered must be done without passion, with restfulness and equanimity, the mind filled with the same feeling towards every one, esteeming pleasant and unpleasant, joy and pain, success and failure as alike, without any desire and without any personal interest. He who acts with such a disposition of mind, without troubling himself about the perishable actions of matter (II. 14), merely at the command of duty and after the divine example

(III. 22), he who leaves to God the consequences of all his works, his works are not subject to the law of retribution (IV. 22, 23, IX. 27, 28, XVIII. 12, 17). The requirements which are here laid down presuppose the rejection of the Vedic service of works which in the original Gītā is expressed without any restriction.¹ All ceremonies of the brahmanic ritual serve indeed entirely personal desires, and stand accordingly in pronounced contradiction to the moral ideal of the Gītā. Therefore it is said in XVIII. 66, "give up all sacred usages" and in II. 42-45 open scorn is expressed for the promises of the Veda which has reference only to the material world and can only offer the prospect of a perishable reward (compare also IX. 20, 21). Indifference towards what the Śruti teaches is thus at any rate a condition precedent to the attainment of salvation (II. 52, 53). That in this demand also there lies before us a genuine Sāṃkhya doctrine needs scarcely to be stated.

But whichever of the two ways of salvation a man may tread in both cases he has to overcome obstacles which lie in his own natural disposition. When it is said (III. 33) that "beings follow their nature" and when (XVI. 1 ff.) a distinction is drawn between those men who are born for a divine existence and those who are born for a demonic existence this predestination is to be interpreted as a result of an earlier *karman*. Of predestination in the strict sense there is no mention in the Gītā; rather is the assumption of moral freedom discernible throughout the poem. It is entirely left to the man whether he will fight against the obstacles which lie in the path to redemption or no, whether he will strive after lower aims or the highest goal. On the way to the latter congenital ignorance opposes itself to *jñānayoga* (V. 15), and the similarly congenital desire which is the characteristic enemy of man opposes itself to the *karmayoga* (III. 37, 43); but also unbelief and the vice of doubt are destructive (IV. 40). As helps to the successful combating of these obstacles suitable Yoga-exercises are recommended (V. 27, 28, VI. 10 ff., VIII. 10, 12 ff.). Even when a man does not succeed in quenching these, his Yoga-exercises are nevertheless not in vain; for such a man is born again under favourable conditions and attains finally the highest goal (II. 40, VI. 41 ff.).

¹ Compare p. 9 above.

I come now in conclusion to the most important demand which the Gītā makes on the man who wants redemption. As is well known, the Bhagavadgītā is the *Song of Songs of bhakti*, the believing and trustful love of God. Both by the way of knowledge and that of the selfless fulfilment of duty, love to God leads to the goal with absolute certainty. The whole poem is filled with this thought; to proclaim it the poem was composed. Out of love to God springs the knowledge of God (XVIII. 55), and it likewise brings it about that the believer refers all his works to God and leaves the consequences to Him. To everyone without distinction of birth or of previous conduct *bhakti* assures the certainty of redemption; even to bad characters, to women, to Vaiśyas and Śūdras. But this is not to be a question of a passing stirring of love to God, but the whole being of a man must be filled with an unchangeable (*ananya, avyabhicārin*) love to God. When that is the case, the thoughts of the man also are directed in the hour of death to God. On this point especial emphasis is laid in the Gītā (VIII. 5, 9, 10, 13) because a man enters on that form of existence (*bhāva*) of which he is thinking in the hour of death.

How are we now to understand the condition of the soul set free from this world-existence and gone to God? As unconsciousness, as is taught in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga? Is the individuality of the soul, which, once a part of the divine soul, severed itself from the latter, extinguished on its return to its source? Most of the expressions which the Gītā employs with reference to the existence of the redeemed one are colourless and contribute nothing to the answering of this question: *siddhi* (XII. 10, XVI. 23), *parā siddhi* (XIV. 1), *parā* or *paramā gati* (VI. 45, VIII. 13, IX. 32, XVI. 22, 23), *pada anāmaya* (II. 51) and *śāśvata pada avyaya* (XVIII. 56). In addition the Bhagavadgītā, however, describes the condition of the redeemed soul in several places also as rest (*śānti*) or as highest rest (*parā* or *naisthikī śānti*, IV. 39, V. 12, XVIII. 62), and by this it does not mean the extinction of consciousness for all eternity, but the condition of the blissful peace of the soul continuing its individual existence in the presence of God. The Bhagavadgītā gives us no information as to how a soul can lead a conscious existence without relation to matter according

to the postulates of the Sāṃkhya-yoga. Manifestly we are here dealing with a view which has its origin in the oldest times of the Bhāgavata religion and from of old constituted a support of that faith; therefore, when this faith was being amalgamated with the elements of the Sāṃkhya-yoga this view could not be thrust aside by the contrary teaching of the two systems. Believing confidence helped to get over the theoretical difficulties of system which manifested themselves in this connection.

That in fact the author of the Bhagavadgītā understood by the entrance of the redeemed soul into God a conscious, individual, continued existence can be proved from the following passages in the poem. Kṛṣṇa says (VII. 23): "Those who sacrifice to the gods enter in to the gods, while my worshippers enter in to me" and IX. 25 he repeats the same promise somewhat more fully. Now that the entering in to the Devās (or *pitaras* and *bhūtāni*, IX. 25) can only describe the conscious continued existence of an individual being is clear. If mention is made alongside this of the entering in to Kṛṣṇa (or God) then by reason of the parallelism and of the coincidence in the expression (*yā* with the accusative) it is not possible to understand by this "entering in" anything different. But any one who is disposed still to call in question this conclusion I would refer to XIV. 2, where those redeemed by God are described in the words *mama sādharmaṃyā āgatāḥ* "those who have reached a similarity of being with mine."¹ *Sādharma* signifies not unity, being one with, identity (*aikya*, *aikātmya*, *tādātmya*) but qualitative likeness. From this it follows that redemption, according to the Bhagavadgītā, is to be thought of as an elevation of the soul to god-like existence, an individual continued existence in the presence of God. In the same sense may further be adduced the fact that (XVI. 23) the condition of the redeemed is designated by *sukha*, "delight, blessedness" in addition to *siddhi* and *parā gati*.

The teachings here briefly unfolded are set forth, not only in the Bhagavadgītā, but also in many other passages of the Mahābhārata and particularly the whole circle of views found

¹ In this passage the synonymous expression "*madbhāvam āgatāḥ*" "have entered my being," IV. 10, finds its explanation.

in the re-edited, vedanticized Gītā cannot be regarded as something standing isolated in the Mahābhārata.¹ But I believe that the conjecture is not too bold that the Bhagavad-gītā is the source from which these doctrines have flowed into other parts of the epic, apart from those borrowings and imitations mentioned above, p. 10, which are clearly recognisable as such.

I have still to say a few words by way of remark on the question with reference to Buddhistic and Christian influence in the Bhagavadgītā. One might be disposed to see Buddhistic influence in the recommendation of the golden middle path (VI. 16, 17) and support this assumption by pointing to the occurrence of the word *nirvāṇa* in the preceding verse (VI. 15). But since, as is well known, the use of the word *nirvāṇa* is by no means confined to Buddhist usage (*brahmanirvāṇa* occurs four times in the recension of the Gītā) and since the idea of the wise observance of measure is explained by universally human considerations, the Buddhistic influence in this passage must be regarded as extremely doubtful, at the best as being far-fetched. And the pessimism which finds expression in XIII. 8, is not to be traced back to Buddhistic influence, but to be derived from the views of the Sāṃkhya-philosophy which in this, as in other respects, forms the foundation of Buddhism.²

More important is the question with regard to the influence of Christianity on the Bhagavadgītā, which has been often asserted and often controverted. In the original Gītā the Christian influence is for me excluded by the age which, I believe, I shall be able in the next chapter to establish for it as probable. I would refer also to what I have above (pp. 20 ff.) established with respect to the genuinely Indian origin of *bhakti*. In the case of the author of the recension, the historical possibility of an acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity is to be admitted without doubt; but, in my judgment, no one has succeeded in raising this possibility to probability and still less to certainty. I have not met in the Gītā any thought which could not be satisfactorily explained from the rich store of ideas or the peculiar spiritual

¹ Compare Hopkins, Religions of India, p. 401, at the head of the page.

² The treatment of this question by Telang (Introduction 24 ff.) rests on the erroneous assumption that the Gītā is older than Buddhism.

disposition of the Indian people. In this question I occupy precisely the opposite standpoint to that of F. Lorinser, who, in his Introduction, Notes and Appendix to his metrical translation of the Bhagavadgītā (Breslau 1869), with an earnestness and zeal which compel respect even from an opponent, affirms his conviction that "the author of the Bhagavadgītā not only knew, and, in many places, utilized the Scriptures of the New Testament, but also has woven, for the most part, Christian ideas and conceptions into his system" (p. V.). Lorinser thinks indeed he is able to prove from which writings of the New Testament more and from which less "sentences are borrowed," that "the whole of the epistles of St. Paul with the exception of those to the Thessalonians and to Philemon were utilized" (p. 285), and more to the same effect. Lorinser was certainly a good theologian; but here he betook himself to a region with which he was not sufficiently conversant. That the Indian words often appear in his work with a false orthography, and with a false article, is not a mere externality, but a symptom of the fact that he was not equipped with the requisite philological knowledge which would entitle him to form a judgment in regard to things Indian. If Lorinser had been better acquainted with the history of the spiritual development of India he would not have drawn from the "coincidences" collected by him such exceedingly bold inferences. These coincidences are for the most part of an entirely vague nature; they are concerned with echoes in thought and expression which find their explanation in the similarity of the fundamental feature of the New Testament and the Bhagavadgītā. Even Weber, who was inclined to grant a wide field for Christian influences in India, says in his *History of Indian Literature*,² p. 367, that Lorinser has estimated *far too highly* the bearing of his evidence, and that the question as to whether the Bhagavadgītā is to be assumed to shew an acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity or not is still *sub judice*. Besides, Lorinser's theory has been combated so resolutely by such qualified experts as E. Windisch, John Muir, Max Müller, C. P. Tiele and Telang, that I may decline to enter upon a detailed refutation.¹

¹ Compare A. Holtzmann, "The Mahābhārata and its Parts," II. 152.

IV. —THE AGE OF THE BHAGAVADGĪTA.

To the list of works which have done most to advance our understanding of the Bhagavadgītā belongs without doubt K. T. Telang's English translation of the Poem in the Sacred Books of the East, Vol. VIII (Oxford 1882).¹ But the attempt of Telang to establish for the Bhagavadgītā a great antiquity—greater than that of Āpastamba's Dharmasūtra—has quite properly found no support amongst European Indologists. Telang in the Introduction to his Translation, p. 34, comes, after searching argumentation, to the conclusion that the Gītā in any case must be older than the Third Century B.C., although how much older cannot be stated. Since now we know as the result of Bühler's researches that the Āpastamba Dharmasūtra is to be assigned² to the Fourth or Fifth Century B.C., the Gītā must on Telang's showing belong to a period not later than the Fifth Century B.C.

The whole line of argument followed by Telang has been critically examined by Böhtlingk in the beginning of his "Remarks" and shewn to be completely untenable. Telang's proofs are in fact so weak that one cannot but wonder how a man of his learning and penetration failed to recognise their weakness, did not a psychological consideration supply the explanation. Telang, like every Hindu, even the most enlightened, had a heart-craving after a belief in so great an antiquity for the Bhagavadgītā. And when a craving of this sort is strong, criticism, as every one knows, is at an end.

The problem of finding a date for the Gītā is of course recognised by every one who has attempted the solution to be one of very great difficulty; and the difficulties increase when the task is doubled and the problem is to determine both the date of the original Bhagavadgītā and also that of its recension. I am afraid that here, for the most part, not certainty but only probability is to be reached.

If we begin with the Gītā in its traditional form for determining the lower limit, we can leave out of consideration all evidences of its existence which are later than Kālidāsa.

¹ The second but however not much altered edition of 1898 is unfortunately not accessible to me.

² See Bühler's Introduction to his translation of the work, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XIV.

Kālidāsa is the oldest author who refers to the Bhagavad-gītā, and that he does so has been established by Telang (Introduction, p. 29). Of the two passages¹ adduced by Telang in proof of this, the second is especially convincing, Kumārasambhava, VI. 67, where Aṅgiras says to the Himālaya: *sthāne tvām sthāvarātmanaṃ Viṣnum āhur manīṣiṇaḥ*, "Rightly do the sages call thee Viṣṇu in the form of a mountain". Here the reference to Bhagavad-gītā, X. 25 (also recognised by the commentator Mallinātha), is unmistakable both in form and content. For Kālidāsa, who must be placed as far back as the middle of the Fifth Century A.D.,² the Gītā was thus an authority; we must, therefore, fix for it as lower limit a period somewhere about 400 A.D.

But we must not suppose that the traditional Gītā has its origin not earlier than some period lying very near the lower limit to be fixed for it. The recension of the poem belongs to the period in the development of the text of the Mahābhārata which Hopkins, Great Epic, p. 398, estimates as from 200 B.C. to 100—200 A.D. ("Remaking of the epic with Krishna as all-god, intrusion of masses of didactic matter, addition of Puranic material old and new"); the traditional Gītā at any rate may be placed not earlier than the second half of this period. This is rendered necessary for this reason that a considerable time must have elapsed before any one could dare to subject the original Gītā to any recension and alteration that was worth naming. Thus, in view of the age of the genuine Gītā, as I shall immediately endeavour to fix it, the recension (remaking) of the Gītā cannot have been undertaken earlier than the First or Second Century A.D.; and if I decide on the Second Century A.D. I should be placing the traditional Gītā still somewhat higher in time than has usually been done and as, for example, John Davies (The Bhagavadgītā, 183, 194, 200)

¹ In the first passage we must read Raghuvamśa X. 31 not 67 as it stands in Telang.

² See the latest literature on this question given by W. Klemm Z. D. M. G. (Journal of the German Oriental Society), 58, 290.

has done, who with Lassen and Weber accepts the Third Century A.D.¹

Substantially later than this the Bhagavadgītā, as it has come to us, cannot be; this we know from the history of the development of the text of the Mahābhārata. The main point now is to look for further grounds for holding that it is not earlier. These grounds are given in the following observations.

In the verse, Bhagavadgītā XIII. 22, which belongs to the Recension, and Nṛsimhatāp. Up. II. 9, 2 the words *upadraṣṭṛ* "spectator", and *anumantr* "assurer" stand side by side, of which the latter is of such rare occurrence that the historical connection of the two passages is not open to doubt. As in the case of all other references to the Upaniṣad literature, the Bhagavadgītā is the borrowing party, we must also in this case see in the passage of the Nṛsimhatāp Up. the original and in the first quarter of Bhagavadgītā XIII. 22 the copy, because the word *anumantr* as the designation of a form of the highest spirit has its originality guaranteed in the Nṛsimhatāp. Up. by the whole content of the text; for *anumantr* is synonymous with the word *anujñātṛ* used elsewhere in this Upaniṣad, a name regularly given in the second part to a form of *ātman* (II. 2. 8, 10, 13, 14; 3. 1, 6, 14; 8. 6, 7; 9. 33, here *anujñātṛ* beside *upadraṣṭṛ*). Now Weber has in his History of Indian Literature², p. 186, placed the Nṛsimhatāp.

¹ The manifold coincidences which the Gītā exhibits in thought and expression with the Upaniṣads of the older and middle section establish nothing with regard to the age of the poem since we have here simply cases of the dependence of the Gītā on texts which are partly of a considerably higher antiquity. Telang has in the notes to his translation in the Sacred Books of the East, VIII, pointed out numerous parallels, to the Bṛhadār., Chānd., Kauṣ., Īśā, Kaṭha, Muṇḍ., Praśna, Maitr., and Śvet. Upaniṣads; but verbal or almost verbal borrowings from verses or portions of verses are limited so far as I can see to the Kaṭha and Śvet. Up.

Bhagavadgītā	II. 19	Kaṭh. II. 19
"	II. 20	Kaṭh. II. 18
"	III. 42	Kaṭh. III. 10 (cf. VI. 7)
"	V. 13	Śvet. III. 18
"	VIII. 9	Śvet. III. 8
"	VIII. 11	Kaṭh. II. 15
"	XIII. 13, 14	Śvet. III. 16, 17
"	XV. 1	Kaṭh. VI. 1

For fixing the date of the Bhagavadgītā only references to later Upaniṣads could be regarded as of account as I also in the immediate sequel shall make use of such a reference to the Nṛsimhatāp. an undoubtedly secondary Upaniṣad, for this purpose.

Up. in the Fourth Century A. D. but later in his Ind. Stud. IX. 62, 63 has repeated this dating only with reserve. As a matter of fact it follows from Weber's statements in the latter passage that the ground on which Weber based his dating is not tenable. Weber has been inclined in the case of many Indian works to place them low down in point of time and this is true in the case of the Nṛsimhatāp. Up. Certainly this secondary Up.—and at the same the Uttaratāpaniya, which as the source of the Gītā-verse now cited must be taken into consideration—cannot be earlier than the time after Christ, and the use of it by the re-editor of the Bhagavadgītā is evidence that he lived at any rate not earlier than the Second Century A. D.

The accurate perception of John Davies (The Bhagavadgītā, 192 ff.) that our poem is connected with the Purāṇa literature by mythological and even linguistic relations, points in the same direction: "In fact it is impossible to read the Bhagavadgītā and the Purāṇas without feeling that we are treading upon the same ground." The view which for a long time was dominant that the Purāṇas represent a modern family of literature connecting itself with the Mahābhārata must probably now be generally abandoned since Hopkins¹ called attention to the fact that the 18 Purāṇas were known before the Mahābhārata was completed. Nevertheless, the coincidence in character of the Bhagavadgītā and the Purāṇas may be regarded as a proof that the traditional Gītā cannot be placed before the Second Century A. D.

To the same effect I should like also to add a linguistic observation which I admit does not by itself carry great weight. The verse, Bhagavadgītā X. 25, which belongs to the recension contains the word *Himālaya*, the modern form of the older *Himavat*, which, as is well known, has persisted down to the later literature. As is pointed out by the P. W. (Petersburg Dictionary) Kālidāsa is the oldest author, whose date can be fixed, who employs the form *Himālava* (and corresponding forms *Himagiri*, *Himādri*). Although the word *Himālaya* was certainly used before Kālidāsa still its use gives the impression of something relatively modern. On the whole, I believe, therefore, although I can adduce no

¹ American Oriental Society Proceedings, October 1888, p. 5, Great Epic., 48.

strict proofs, that I am not far wrong in the fixing the period of the re-edited Gītā in the Second Century.

When we now turn to the original Gītā, it is unfortunately impossible to reach a chronological result from the coincidence between it and the Mānava Dharmśāstra. W. von Humboldt has already drawn attention to parallels between Manu's Law book and the Bhagavadgītā¹; but there is only one verse which (with unessential deviations) is common to both works: Bhagavadgītā VIII. 17 and Manu I. 73. Telang, in his Introduction to his metrical translation of the Bhagavadgītā, 135,² is of opinion, on the ground of his conviction of the high antiquity of the Gītā, that Manu has taken the verse from the Bhagavadgītā. Exactly the converse may also be the case and there remains still the third possibility that we have here an ownerless verse of brahmanic tradition which both works independently of each other have taken advantage of. When, further, Hopkins, Great Epic, pp. 19, 22, has, as the result of his thorough-going researches on the Mahābhārata and Manu, reached the conviction that the traditional form of the Manu-text is more modern than that of the Epic, but more ancient than the didactic Epic, while Bühler (Introduction to his translation of Manu, p. 98) declares our Manu-text to be more recent than our Mahābhārata text, the attempt to take advantage of the coincidence just quoted in order to fix the date of the original Gītā is perfectly hopeless.

I believe, however, that I shall be able to take up the investigation of the age of the genuine Gītā at another point with some prospect of success. In the beginning of the fourth hymn, which is held by every one to be ancient, Kṛṣṇa says he had imparted the mystery of Yoga-doctrine in the ancient time to Vivasvat (= Sūrya, the sun-god, the source of the warrior-caste, *sarva-kṣatriya-vamśa-bīja-bhūtāyā'dityāya*, according to Madhusūdana) through whom it reached Manu, Ikṣvāku and the ancient sages of the warrior order (rājārṣi).³ In the course of time this

¹ See now the comparative lists in A. Holtzmann, The Mahābhārata and its Parts, IV. 127, top of the page.

² In Holtzmann in the passage cited.

³ "It is worthy of remark that here, not priests but kings are named as the ancient preservers of the Bhagavadgītā": Holtzmann, The Mahābhārata and its Parts, II. 157. It might perhaps more correctly be said "as the ancient preservers of the Yoga-doctrine set forth in the Bhadavadgītā".

Yoga-doctrine had passed into forgetfulness on the earth and to-day has been anew proclaimed by him to Arjuna.

Now how does it stand in reality with regard to the age and fate of the Yoga-doctrine? That it is pre-buddhistic is established according to the investigations of Kern (Buddhismus I. 470 ff.) and Jacobi (Nachrichten der Göttinger Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften 1896, 45 ff.). We know nothing of any consequence with regard to this system outside the period between Buddha and Patañjali, and what is said in Bhagavadgītā IV. 2 about the decline of the Yoga teaching may probably correspond to historical truth. (*sa kālene 'ha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ*). The composition of the Yogasūtras by Patañjali must have taken place at approximately the same time as that of the Mahābhāṣya, *i. e.*, in the middle or in the latter half of the Second Century B.C. Now I venture to assert that the Yogasūtras, in which the Yoga-doctrine was fixed and awakened to new life, at the time when the original Gītā was composed either did not yet exist or had not yet attained to general knowledge and recognition; otherwise in the passage of the Bhagavadgītā referred to, the words respecting the Yoga which have just been cited, could not have been put into the mouth of Kṛṣṇa since the poet makes his heroes speak, even in the case of incidents which are to be thought of as belonging to the distant past in a manner which corresponds to the ideas of his own time. I infer accordingly from Bhagavadgītā IV. 1-3 that the author of the genuine Gītā did not know the Yogasūtras and that he must, therefore, have lived before Patañjali, probably in the first half of the Second Century B.C. The context and language of the Gītā is evidence against any substantially higher antiquity.

Should anyone be disposed to allege in opposition to these positions that in the case of the Yoga referred to in the Bhagavadgītā a different Yoga from that contained in the Yogasūtras is meant, the answer to this is that the altered interpretation of the word Yoga as "Surrender, Devotion" presupposes the genuine Yoga-conception, "concentration of thinking" and that in the Bhagavadgītā the *yoga, yogin* are still sufficiently often employed in their original technical signification.¹

¹ See above pp. 32, 33, 39.

According to my view, the original Gītā has its origin in the first half of the Second Century B.C. and the Recension of the Poem in the Second Century A.D.