SECTION III. (Continued.)

CHAPTER IV. (Continued.) Sub-Section (ii.)

THE SACRIFICES MENTIONED IN THE YAJUR-VEDA.

The significance of various yajñas or sacrifices.
—The five daily sacrifices or the pañcha-mahā-yajñas, and the bali-vaishnavādeva, the bali-praḍāna and the bali-bhūta.—Ashva-medha, gō-medha, nara-medha, aja-medha and mahiśa-medha.—Agni-hoṭra, vājapeya, ḍikṣāḥ.

This highest or 'spiritual' knowledge is subserved by, is built upon, the 'action' of sacrifices, expounded in the Yajur, to understand and properly perform which action, again, knowledge

1 The Sanskrit word yaj, to sacrifice, to offer up, to give or devote to the service (of some cause of good), as well as its English equivalent 'sacrifice,' to render sacred, to consecrate to some purpose or to the will of a higher being—seem both to have equally narrowed down in significance in latter days. But there is a tendency arising again to restore them to their original breadth of significance, to recognise that no work can be done, no living form newly created or nourished and no effete form destroyed without yajña or sacrifice conscious or subconscious, on the part of some individual being of high order or low.
is necessary. Without such knowledge, the objects meant by the words \textit{a\textit{sh}va}, \textit{m\textit{ed}ha}, and others, those concerned with 'the five great daily sacrifices,' or with the rites relating to 'the sacrifice for all creatures,' etc., would not be understood rightly. In other words, action depends on knowledge and knowledge on action, and both on desire, all in inseparable relation, and \textit{muk\textit{ti}} by \textit{karma} alone is impossible, as it is impossible by \textit{j\textit{n\text{a}na} alone, or by \textit{ich\textit{ch}ha} alone. Every sacrifice, \textit{karma}, should be made and done with knowledge, \textit{j\textit{n\text{a}na}, and with universal love, \textit{bh\textit{ak\textit{ti}}, also.}

\textit{Ash\textit{ova}} means that whereby the \textit{j\textit{iva}} approaches, \textit{ashy\textit{ate}, comes up to, all beings, i.e., cognition}; and \textit{med\textit{ha} is the act of cognising or knowing. The performance of an \textit{ash\textit{ova-m\textit{ed}ha} is therefore the making, the acquiring, of knowledge for the good of all beings. Hence too are \textit{ash\textit{ova} offered up to the fire. \textit{Ash\textit{ova} are objects, things, word-meanings, born of knowledge (i.e., intellectual objects, ideas, or,}

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1 Hence the organs, primarily of sensation, the senses, and secondarily of motion or action. In the current \textit{Upani\textit{sh\textit{ats}} the senses are often referred to as the horses which have to be controlled. The \textit{Brha\textit{d-\textit{ar}an\textit{yaka Upani\textit{sh\textit{at}}} speaks of the \textit{u\textit{sh}ha\textit{, the dawn, (the morning-time of life, the period of acquiring knowledge) as the head of the sacrificial horse.

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\textbf{The Sacrifices.}
yogam. By this fivefold yajña, the falsity, the heresy, the illusion, of separateness is destroyed gradually. Such is the primary duty of the householder; and hence the need to know the truth of Brahman before entering the household wherein the avoidance, the expiation of the five daily sins, sūnā, by the five daily yajñas, is possible and necessary.

1 The current interpretation of these five daily sacrifices is of course different from the metaphysical one given here. The sins, sūnā, slaughtering-places, are not interpreted in the text; but they may well be supposed to be the opposites of those acts of merit which constitute the sacrifices, acts of exclusiveness, separateness and selfishness. The current view of these daily sins and their expiatory sacrifices is as below: A. (1) sweeping (2) husking (3) grinding (4) cooking and (5) watering, all which operations involve the slaughter of animals and insects. B. (1) study (2) hospitality to guests (3) oblations to the departed ancestors (4) offerings to the devas and (5) giving of food to insects and animals. It should be borne in mind that the metaphysical interpretation does not contradict or conflict with the current and literal one, any more than the existence of a general law conflicts with particular instances of its working.

An explanation of them sometimes given is that the first sacrifice, that to the devas, is the recognition of the interdependence between the physical and

Bali-pradāna is the offering up of action. All bali, i.e., action, effort, should be offered up to the Vishvēdevas, should be regarded as done by the Whole and not by one's own small self.

The devas of the vishva, the world, are all jivas, i.e., the totality of jivas, from the atomic to the infinite-seeming. Indeed this host of jivas is itself called vishva. For such reasons are the five mahā-yajñas, bali-vaiśha-deva, and bali-pradāna prescribed for the householder. The distinction between the last two is that the latter of them is directed towards individuals and the former to the all. These five mahā-yajñas commencing with the super-physical worlds, and the rightful co-operation of their inhabitants with each other. The sacrifice to the pīrs is the steady pursuit of study with a view to the teaching of others; that to the pīrs is the recognition of the past and the endeavor to hand on the legacy, enriched, to the future; that to men, the feeding of the poor; that to hāyas, the kindly tending of animals. Each of these duties should be performed every day, and thus the householder comes into and maintains right relations with his surroundings. (A. B.)

1 The Prāṇava-vāda seems to regard bali-vaiśha-deva and bali-pradāna as distinct from the five daily sacrifices; modern custom mixes them with the five.
personal and selfish, śvārtha, end in duty for duty's sake, paramārtha. Hence has it been declared that the service of guests and travellers and worthy yatīs, brāhmačāris and sannyāsis, in the five ways, leads gradually from egoism to disinterestedness, and the householder acquires an increasingly generous nobleness of character, abandons all calculations of personal results, and comes to regard the whole world as one family, without distinction of mine and thine; in every 'this' and 'this,' he sees the I, the universal I alone, and not the personal, and thus realises the AUM.

It is true that cognition, desire, action and their summation are only four, while we have five kinds of yajñās; this is because of the adhīśhṭana, the substratum.1

Cognition, desire and action correspond respectively to bāli-vaiśhavaṭva, bāli-bhūṭa, and bāli-praṇāṇa. The Ātman is the first; it is the great deva or Over-lord of all the World-process, and all is for it. The Śamsāra is the bāli-bhūṭa,2 the Anātma

1 The meaning is not clear, but see the paragraph on māhiṣa-madhana infra.
2 The bāli-bhūṭa, not before mentioned, is probably intended to cover the five māhā-yajñās. The text is far from clear on these points. Just before, it has been stated that bāli-praṇāṇa is the offering up of all action to the Vaiśvedevas that 'binds' with the words, 'me,' 'thee,' and so forth. The Negation is the bāli-praṇāṇa, connecting the others together.

These three are the daily sacrifices of the householder, and the steady performance of all duties as subsidiary to them brings unshakable knowledge to him. The agnikoṭra-duty is covered by these three. All this world should be offered up, reduced, brought into agni which is light, i.e., all the world should be comprehended in the light of Brahma. The 'offering up' is the burning up of personal desire. What has been offered up into the fire, i.e., performed without personal desire, in the light of universal reason, as a matter of duty, reaches all beings, and is for the good of all. In another sense, also, objects cast into the fire assume new forms and reach subtler jīvas of other worlds or planes. Transmutation of the forms of objects is one result of all yajñās. The rites of yajña, well-performed, reach to and affect the best and subtlest beings; hence the ordainment to offer up the 'most excellent' objects, rice, butter, and so on.

which would seem to identify it with bāli-vaiśhavaṭva; and in the current view bāli-bhūṭa is only one of the five great daily sacrifices.

1 In the hurry and bustle of life where 'familiarity breeds contempt' instead of affection, men's minds grow coarse and callous and superficial,
The five medhas or sacrifices, by the performance of which and of anि-hoترا, etc., the jiva attains to the highest goal, are: the gо-мeదha, the аsһva-мeదha, the nаrа-мeԁha, the аjа-мeԁha, and the mаhі̄s̄a-mеԁha. These and the vаjа-pеyа, the аgni-hoترا, and the three kуrmand раrites of dикsh̄а bring happiness.

and lose the finer instincts and more ethereal susceptibilities of the simpler and deeper child-nature. To understand the appropriateness of the qualification ‘most excellent,’ we have to put ourselves in the attitude of the Manu who ordained that the food that nourishes life shall be honored and eaten with reverence. And what things more ‘excellent’ than milk and butter, the produce of the mother-instinct of the cow, and the food-grains, the produce of the mother-instinct of the Earth. King Mïdas, of the old Greek story, who regarded gold as the ‘most excellent’ object, realized his error too late when, under the boon he had craved and received at the hands of the gods, his food was turned to gold at his touch. Those who have suffered from famine know the ‘excellence’ above all things of the food that gives them life. Also, special articles have special super-physical merits and excellences.

1 These five are known as the nаніміт̄іка, or ‘for special reason or occasion’ in contradistinction from the five daily sacrifices which are known as the ні̄т̄yа or ‘constant,’ ‘daily.’

Gо-мeԁha is the sacrifice of sound (the sanctification of speech); it signifies the giving or making intelligible of gа or speech by the mеԁha or intelligence; it is the giving to all of the science of sounds or words. As said before, аsһva-мeԁha is the accumulation of all knowledge for the use of all. Even the ‘deniers,’ наs̄тіkаs, who believe the world to be without an Īshvāra and without Āтмā, who think that whatever is is of itself, and neither was nor shall be, i.e., who confine themselves to the present moment and refuse to trace any causes and motives for anything into the past or the future, even they actively endeavour to impart their opinions to others. For if all this сaмsаrа is self-accomplished and without any cause or motive, what is the use to them of entering into this advisory relation with others? Indeed, they do not act up to their views and thereby prove the fallacy of the latter. They find themselves compelled to recognize relations between things; otherwise all advice, counsel and conversation between human beings, such as they also recognize the validity of and themselves indulge in, would be impossible. It appears thus that аsһva-mеԁha ought always to be performed; and, indeed, is necessarily and always being performed in greater or lesser degree by every one even without special or conscious effort on his part.
The transcendental consciousness, inherent in everything, ‘May I become many,’ is always manifesting itself in the fact of the exposition and propagation by every one of his own views for the acceptance of others. Especially is it the duty of kings to perform this sacrifice; for they are the guardians of dharma, indeed they exist only to guard it; and their prime duty is to provide for the giving to all of such instruction as will enable each to perform his dharma.

Nara-mēḍha is the link between the preceding two. Nara is the name for that which is the support and substratum of all, and that is ichchā which holds together all; therefore the sacrifice which makes fruitful the mutual dependence of the two others is the nara-mēḍha.

The go-mēḍha corresponds to the A; the asḥva-mēḍha to the U; the nara-mēḍha to the M; and the ajā-mēḍha is the samāhāra. When there is born the consciousness that nothing is born and nothing dies then is the ajā-mēḍha performed; ajā means etymologically

1 Compare the theosophical view that desire is predominant on the astral plane which is connected with the āpas-taṭṭva, ‘water,’ parjanya, ‘clouds,’ and that our present human consciousness is mostly astral; and Maha’s statement that “the waters are called nārāh, and are the abode of him from whom our present life springs and who is therefore called Nārāyaṇa.”

the unborn. Thereafter comes the fifth or māhishāma-mēḍha, which is ever performed by Brahmā and is ever connected with all things.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Mahā-Viṣṇu and others perform these five yajñas and the world manifests in consequence. They correspond to cognition, desire, action and summation, and, fifteenth, the transcendental aḥiṣṭhāna, substratum, known as the Praṇava. All these

1 If we may hazard a guess as to the meaning of this fifth, it seems to be something like this: however much we may endeavour to define and declare the Absolute in words there always remains behind something which is recognisable only by and in the silence of the sub- or supra-consciousness (for the obvious reason that the whole cannot be comprehended by a part); if we say that the consciousness or the World-process the Absolute is triple we, as a matter of fact, think only of a limited whole, a system, made up of similarly circumscribed three, and, therefore, we find that there is a fourth also, of the nature of summation; but when we have expressly stated this summation, it becomes, not identical with the totality of the three but a fourth, side by side with, besides, and other than the three; and then we have to resort to a fifth as the summation of the four; but if we should expressly state this fifth its fate would be the same and we should have to sub-consciously think of a sixth, and so on.
medhas, yajnas and kriyas are included in Ah-am-Etat-Na. The mahisha-medha is included in the Negation, 'there is no fruit to be looked for, nothing to be done, all is born of Svabhava'. Included in the Not-This together with the Ah-am is the ajame-dha, the summation and the combination of is and is-not. Included in the Etat is the naramedha.¹

The ashramedha is the combination of I-This and This (?). The I alone, the supreme sound, the Shabda-Brahman is the gomedeha.²

Because of this significance of the yajnas is it declared: He who, gaining knowledge,¹

giveth it to others, he is the wise man and virtuous, and he knoweth the dharma. This imparting of knowledge to others is the first karma. Conduct in accordance with the knowledge gained is the second. The accomplishment of wishes by means of good conduct is the third. There is no conduct, good or bad, no knowledge and no ignorance, all is Brahman, embodied Sat-chit-ananda—to realise this is the fourth. The fifth is constant endeavour for the good of all. And all this together is moksha. Not to perform these sacrifices is to incur sin, for he who gives not to others the knowledge gained by him, in him the jnana aspect of the Atma is distressed, narrowed, atrophied, and all his action vitiated. For this same purpose of spreading knowledge do all incarnations take place; and by such yajna-sacrifice alone the world was born, exists, and shall continue.

The significance and purpose of agni-hotra, vaja-peya and diksha are similar. Agnihotra, is the offering up, into the fire of Brahman, of what has been acquired, by oneself. In the vaja-peya, while the acquired is offered up, the unacquired is striven after and sought. Diksha, initiation, is the connecting together of the agnihotra and the vaja-peya in this relation, viz., that the acquired and the unacquired are all the same in all-time and
all-space, and that Brahman includes all.

-commerce is the instruction, if this is done, such will be the result, this is the right thing to do on this occasion.

The agni-āh ofra corresponds to the Λ; vājapeya to the U; diksha-karma to the M; and the totality of all these is samākāra, initiation, consecration, which corresponds to the summation.

To those in the household, action is the bringer of mokṣa. The five māhāyajñas and bali-vaishvādeva, etc., are the nityayajña, the constant or daily sacrifices. The five modoḥas and agni-āh ofra, vājapeya, dikṣa, etc., are the naimiṭṭha or occasional, performed because of special reason, occasion. He who passes through this high samākāra attains Brahman. The former corresponds to Λ; the latter to U; to M corresponds the a-naimiṭṭa which is neither, but which is the whole of the duty of the system of castes and life-stages that is summed up in the AUM. Samākāra, sacrament, is the cause of differentiation (of physical and superphysical qualifications of special kinds).1

1This and the next para indicate still another aspect of these initiations, that of 'occult ceremonies' whereby the ranks of the hierarchies, the spiritual rulers and guides of evolution are recruited. There is nothing mystical or even obscure in these matters even though they are not public. Their nature seems to be the same as that of the preparations, tests and examinations for and installations in various offices in the various departments of the outer physical life of a nation; but the details are of course very different.