

SECTION III. (*Continued.*)

CHAPTER XII.

THE SHĀKHĀS OF THE VEDAS.

The *Shākhās*, 'branches,' or appendices of the *Veda*.—The *Kṛṣhṇa* and *Shukla*, or 'black' and 'white,' sub-divisions of Scripture.—The *Shākhās* as links between them.—Light-atoms and dark-atoms.—The number of *Shākhās* of each *Veda*.—The *Yantra-shāstra*.—The completion of Scripture proper.

Each of these four, *Veda*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Upa-niṣhaṭ* and *Upa-veda*, has two divisions known as the *Kṛṣhṇa* or black and the *Shukla* or white. The black comes first in order. It corresponds to the U. The next in order, *i.e.*, the white, corresponds to A. The *Kṛṣhṇa-Veda* expounds *ṭama* or darkness; the *Shukla*, *prakāśha* or light.

The distinction of these two, light and darkness, is well-known. It is true that in reality there is no distinction or separateness between them, (for not only can neither be defined without reference to the other, but the words and facts are purely comparative also, so that what is light to one is dark to another, and *vice versa*); still, the duality is also a practical and unavoidably necessary fact. Each has an actual existence

from the standpoint of the other, though the reality is that which transcends them both.

All over Samsāra we have this dual and joint rule of light and darkness; the former dwelling in the A and the latter in the U, while M is beyond them both.

The result is that we have a *Black Rk* and a *White Rk*, a *Black Yajuh* and a *White Yajuh*, and so on with the *Sāma*, the *Aṭharva*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Upaniṣhats* and the *Upa-vedas*.

The dark-aspect and the light-aspect of each *ṭaṭṭva* or element are described respectively in the black and the white sub-divisions. The formation of atoms follows the same order; such and such atoms are concerned with light, such with darkness.

Now the *Shākhās* deal with the relation between the two (the dark-atoms and the light atoms, or the *Black-Veḍas* and the *White-Veḍas* generally?); indeed the idea of the Negation, the nexus, governs their treatment of everything, and they expound the combinations and dissociations of each atom of the whole of *samsāra*; as that such and such a dark-atom is related to such and such a light-atom, such and such light or dark-atoms are employed or required in such and such circumstances, etc.

Dark-atoms, or 'darkness-atoms,' have the function of *nairbalya*, absence of force, weakness,

disappearance of energy; light-atoms, on the other hand, possess *prābalya*, presence of force, strength, they produce or evolve energy. Cognition corresponds to light-atoms, action to darkness. Because desire is inherent and immanent in all these, therefore it is not counted separately here.

To acquire definite knowledge of these matters 'the *Black* and *White* divisions of the *Veḍas* should be studied together with the *Shākhās*.'¹

The *Rk* has four *Shākhās* appended to its white, and as many to its black, division. In all these the element of cognition is dealt with.

The *Yajuh* has similarly eight *Shākhās*, four for each of its two divisions, all dealing with action.

¹ The wording employed throughout this small chapter, in the original, leaves it wholly doubtful as to what exactly is the relation between the *Veḍas*, the *Kṛṣhṇa* and *Shukla*, and the *Shākhās*, and whether they are all separated from each other or not. At one time, the words are, 'the Black Branches and the White Branches'; at another, 'the Black and the White and the *Shākhās*', implying three sets instead of two. The general impression left by the whole is that they are three sets; *i.e.*, to say, the *Veḍa* proper is as the trunk of the tree, Black and White are two main branches, and *Shākhās* are minor branches springing from each of these two; not that *Kṛṣhṇa* plus *Shukla* is equal to *Veḍa*-

The *Sāma* has ten *Shākhās*, 'by the measure of the figure ten' (?); otherwise indeed its branches are beyond count, for it deals with desire, which is endless and includes everything. In the popular saying, that the *Sāma* has a thousand branches, the word thousand signifies this same countlessness only.

The *Aṭharva* has also eight *Shākhās*, half belonging to each division.¹

These branches constitute what is called the *Yantra-Shāstra*, that whereby the world-process

proper or that all the *Shākhās* of Kṛṣṇa added together are *Kṛṣṇa*, and so on.

¹ In the current *Mahā-Bhāṣya* of Patañjali, and in some of the 'minor' *Upaniṣats*, the statement occurs, with slight variations, that: The *Rk* is twenty-one-fold, the *Yajuh* one hundred and one-fold, the *Sāma* a thousand-fold, and the *Aṭharva* nine-fold. But what it exactly means, (1) rescensions, different versions of different schools, or (2) chapters, sections, divisions, parts, or (3) separate appendices, as here, the modern Paṇḍit cannot say. So far as 'black' and 'white' sub-divisions are concerned, only in respect of one *Veda*, the *Yajuh*, is such a distinction current now; and the two are regarded as two different rescensions of what is in substance, and very largely in words also, the same. They are also spoken of as the two *Shākhās* of the *Yajuh*, the 'of' indicating identity, as in 'the city of Benares'.

is *yanṭryaṭe*, 'bound together,' 'determined,' 'compelled,' or 'constrained (as by *yantra*, figure, scheme, diagram, machine)'.¹

Yantraṇa, binding together, organisation, is possible only as regards *samūha*, groups; and groups are of atoms only, atoms of light and atoms of darkness. The allocation and functioning, or radiation and expansion, of these is described in these *Shākhās*. They tell us what and how many atoms of each kind are present and active in any place. As a fact we see the functioning of both in the world. In some places light preponderates, in others darkness; in still others both are equal. In some places there is an excess of energy, in others a deficiency; in still others an evenness and balance of power. In this fashion arise endless varieties of objects. The description of these belongs to the *Shākhās*.¹

¹What is the meaning of these atoms of light and atoms of darkness? We can catch but the vaguest glimpses of the possibilities of knowledge and its application contained in this *Yantra-Shāstra*, 'material science,' *i.e.*, physical plus superphysical science, in the fullest sense of the term. There is a theory under discussion in modern times, which speaks of two kinds of atoms, 'holes in ether' and 'vortex rings of ether'; one in which or through which energy 'sinks' and disappears and another through which or from which it evolves and 'wells' forth. Theosophical literature speaks of *laya* centres, 'critical

Hence the injunction that the *Veda* should be studied with, 'the *Shākhās*, with the *Kṛṣṇa*,

states' or points of transformation from one condition to another. Where everything is dual, positive and negative, why should not atoms be dual also, corresponding to positive and negative? If electricity is material, as is surmised by some, may not negative electricity consist of a stream of one kind of atoms, electrons, ions or however else they are named, and positive electricity of a stream of the opposite kind? (That an atom is divided into two halves, one positive and one negative, and that its stability is due to the presence of these opposite conditions which attract each other, is one of the many theories as to the nature of the atom put forward by the modern scientist. But the text seems to indicate much more than this, and is much the same as the theory respecting atoms that are "wells" or "founts" of energy and atoms that are "sinks" of energy, *i.e.*, in which energy disappears. These two kinds of atoms have also been called "male" and "female" atoms. A. B. See *Occult Chemistry*). It is said in the text that the light atoms correspond to A, the Self; and the dark atoms to U, the Not-Self; in *The Science of Peace* and in various foot-notes and the text here occasionally, it has been suggested that of every pair of planes, the subtler and inner corresponds to the Self and the denser and outer to the Not-Self; the atoms of the two may be opposed in quality to each other. It has been said, in theosophical literature, that all these planes within

with the *Shukla* and 'Samvṛta (?)'.¹ Otherwise it is useless. It is true that these branches or

planes are arranged as an endless chain of alternate worlds of causes and worlds of effects; this implies another aspect of the same thing.

Psychically, with reference to such a statement in the text as that the *Rk* dealing with cognition has two sets of appendices, belonging respectively to its two divisions of black and white, we may conjecture that the error-division of cognition would deal with dark-atoms and the truth-division of it with light-atoms. So under desire, love appears as bright smiles and hate as dark frowns, and shades of love and hate have corresponding shades of color associated with them, as pale with fear, red with shame, green with envy, rosy with love, black with rage, and so on. So under action, well-directed and successful industry produces vigor and 'glowing' health, and the opposite, 'black' depression and fatigue and enervation, anæmic 'lividity,' and so on. The *Yoga-Sūtras* speak of actions of three colors.

Yet, again, with reference to the statement in the text, that cognition corresponds to light and action to darkness, we may remember that cognition is acquisition, is the storing up of energy, the building up of healthy organic tissue, whereas action is expenditure, the discharge or setting free of energy, the disintegration of tissue into toxins.

¹The word *samvṛta* is difficult to understand. In ordinary modern Samskr̥t it means 'enveloped.'

appendices are part of and not separate from the *Veḍas*, yet they are generally regarded as *u p ā k h y ā n a*, supplementary expositions, whence the need for the injunction.

The authors of these *Shākhās* are, as before the subordinates of Mahā-Viṣṇu, *viz.*, Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Shiva, and their subordinate executive.

After the formulation of these *Shākhās* is the whole of the *s a m s ā r a* framed and carried out, from the *b r a h m ā ṇ d a* up to all that is reckoned within a *s a m s ā r a* (in the technical sense of 'the world-system of a Mahā-Viṣṇu,' and not in the general sense of the World-process). And in accordance with the methods laid down here does the progressed *j ī v a* become the creator of new *s a m s ā r a s*. And this is its attainment to the condition of *P a r a - B r a h m a n*.

Such is the universal *Brahma-Vidyā*, the Science of *Brahman*, embodied in the *Veḍa*,

It is also a technical class-name in Samskr̥t grammar, for certain letters of the alphabet. In this work, later on, *s a m v ṛ t a* and *p r ā v ṛ t a* are said to be the names of sensations corresponding to the two subtler elements, *ā ḍ i* and *a n u p ā ḍ a k a*. In Vāchaspaṭi's *Yoga-Bhāṣhya-Tikā*, the word occurs in one or two places, but in an equally elusive manner. There are indications on his works that Vāchaspaṭi had access to some literature which is not now extant.

composed of light and darkness, without acquiring which the high estate of *Brahman* may not be achieved, nor the supreme bliss of a transcending peace attained. To gain that lofty peace this highest science, this all-comprehending knowledge, must be gathered, and for the gathering thereof the *b r a h m a - c h a r y a* stage of life has been ordained and set apart.

Yet far beyond the reaching and the teaching
Of all the *Veḍas*, *Mantra*, *Samhitā*,
And *Brāhmaṇa* and *Upaniṣat* too,
And *Kṛṣṇa*, *Shukla*, *Shākhās*, soars the Self,
Eternal Consciousness apart from all;
Not by conjunctions of minutest atoms,
Nor by disjunctions of them is It gained;
Nor mineral, nor plant, nor animal,
Nor human, nor divine, nor other lives
And lines of evolution, subtle, gross,
Stretching unendingly, behind, beyond,
May compass or exhaust Its Plenitude,
Infinite, Universal, All-Pervading,
Formless, and yet all forms at once in One.