CHAPTER III

GENERAL TENDENCIES

So far we have dealt with the religion and philosophy of the Vedic period. We have now to give an account of the growth of Indian thought between the close of that period and the beginning of the age of the systems. These limits are not easily determinable; but, as stated in the Introduction (p. 15), it is certain that they were separated by a long interval when speculation made great strides. The diversity of doctrines which we found characterizing the previous period becomes more pronounced now, and the views that we have to deal with here include not only those whose development we have thus far described, but also those that are the result of a secession from them. This schismatic tendency, no doubt, existed in earlier times also, the Upaniṣadic doctrine itself in some of its chief aspects being a departure from the earlier teaching of the Brāhmaṇas (p. 48). But these earlier differences were either such as could in course of time be somehow composed or such as did not attain to sufficient prominence in the period to find a conspicuous place in its literature. It was otherwise in the period we are now to consider when definite heterodox schools of thought emerged, the breach between which and the old faith has never since been wholly repaired. In addition to Hindu thought, we shall consider in this Part two such prominent schools—Buddhism and Jainism. The doctrines of this period, whether orthodox or heterodox, exhibit certain common features which it is instructive to note. First, they are not intended, broadly speaking, for any specific sections of the community, but are for all, without distinction of caste or sex. It is not only Buddhism and Jainism that manifest this liberal spirit; Hinduism also does the same, as is clear from the view entertained to this day that the Mahābhārata—a very important source of information for this period—is designed chiefly for the instruction of such as have no direct access to the sacred scriptures, viz. women,
śūdras and degenerate Brahmins.¹ This extended appeal
should have started with the teachers of heterodox schools;
but soon, and probably as a consequence of it, the orthodox
also threw open their teaching in substance, if not also in
form, to a wider public. Secondly, the thought of this period
is predominantly realistic. Buddhism and Jainism are
avowedly so. Hinduism, so far as it is the outcome of
Upaniṣadic influence, no doubt still retains the old idealistic
background; but it also manifests a certain concern to
emphasize the reality of the external world as such and
prefers to dwell on the idea of the cosmic Absolute rather
than the acosmic, remodelling it into well-defined theism.
Characteristics like these unmistakably point to a general
awakening of the common people at the time, but it is not
necessary for us to enter into the details of this popular
movement, which is a matter for history rather than for
philosophy.

Our authorities for the period in respect of heterodox
views are, in addition to Sanskrit sources, a vast literature
written in one or other of the Prākrit languages such as Pāli in which the teachings of early Buddhism appear. As regards orthodox thought, we have for our source of
information, some out of the many remaining Upaniṣads and
a species of literature consisting of concise aphorisms and
known as Kalpa with its triple division into the Śrouta, Gṛhya and Dharma Sūtras.² The Upaniṣads, though
setting forth the doctrine of the Absolute, exhibit a develop-
ment particularly on theistic and realistic lines. The
classical Upaniṣads all alike deal with practically the same
doctrine; but the later ones fall into groups, each dealing
predominantly, if not exclusively, with a special topic which
is either new or is but briefly touched on in the earlier
ones. Thus there are Upaniṣads treating of contemplation
(yoga) or renunciation (saṁnyāsa) as means of salvation or
glorifying Śiva or Viṣṇu conceived as God supreme. But we

¹ Bhāgavata I. iv. 25–26; Mbh. xii. 327, st. 44 and 49 (Bombay Edn.).
² Much of the material in the smṛtis like that of Manu relates to
this period, though the version in which it now appears is generally
late.
cannot take them all into consideration here, as there is considerable doubt regarding the date of many of them. We shall select as a representative of the class but one, viz. the *Maitri Upaniṣad*, about whose assignment to this period there is a more general agreement, though even that *Upaniṣad* is not free from portions appended later. Of the latter, viz. the *Kalpa*, the Śrouta-sūtras profess to systematize the sacrificial lore of the Brāhmaṇas, but doubtless include much later material. The *Grhya*-sūtras portray the ideal of life from the standpoint of the family and describe ceremonies such as marriage and upanayanam or the initiation by the teacher of the pupil into the study of the Veda. The *Dharma*-sūtras, dealing as they do with customary law and morals, present the norm of life from the standpoint of the state or society. All these aphoristic codes, like the *Mantras* and the Brāhmaṇas, are concerned chiefly with priestly life; and whatever advance they indicate or whatever further amplification they contain is ritualistic in character so that their interest for philosophy is but indirect. A much more valuable source of information for us here than either the Upaniṣads or the *Kalpa*-sūtras is to be found in the older sections of the epics, especially of the *Mahābhārata*, which has been described as a great store-house of post-Vedic mythology and doctrine, and whose comprehensive character is well indicated by a statement occurring in the last of its eighteen sections—'Whatever is worthy to be known in matters relating to the welfare of man is here; and what is not here is nowhere else to be found.' Strangely, however, it contains orthodox and heterodox views side by side and often mixes up one doctrine with another 'without any apparent sense of their congruity.' This is accounted for by the fact that it is not the work of a single author or of a single age, but represents the growth of many generations—even of centuries. Though it contains a good deal bearing upon the period we are now considering, it includes much that is undoubtedly subsequent to it; but it is very difficult to distinguish the old from the new in it. This cause, combined with the vastness of the work and the uncritical character of its editions so far published, prevents us from
entering into details. We can indicate only the broad tendencies of thought discoverable in it so far as the period we are now considering is concerned. We shall take up the Sanskrit works in the present chapter, postponing to the last two chapters of this Part the consideration of Buddhism and Jainism whose early teachings have come down to us through the medium of Prākṛt. We shall also in dealing with the Mahābhārata reserve the Bhagavadgītā for separate treatment on account of its great importance.

I

All the four currents of thought alluded to in the previous Part are represented here—Ritualism, Absolutism, Theism and what, following Bloomfield, we have described as 'Vedic free-thinking.' But each exhibits more or less important modifications which we shall now briefly indicate:

(1) Ritualism.—This is the teaching of the Kalpa-sūtras, whose aim is to elaborate and systematize the ritualistic teaching of the Veda. For this purpose they attempt to consolidate the literature in which that teaching is contained. They define its limits and lay down strict rules for its study and preservation, speaking of the very recitation of the Veda (svādhyāya) as a ‘sacrifice’ and as the highest form of self-discipline (tapas). In this connection they further regulate the institution of the four āśramas (p. 75)—particularly that of the religious student by whom the Veda is to be studied and that of the householder to whom most of its behests are addressed. The Sūtras are thus essentially retrospective in their attitude and represent the conservative element in the thought of the period. Ritualism as a creed is not of much consequence for us now; and whatever further observations on it are necessary will be postponed to the chapter on the Mimāṁsā system in the next Part. The

1 We shall take as the chief basis for our conclusions the Mokṣadharma of the Śānti-parva, which is the biggest philosophical section of the epic and which in importance stands next only to the Bhagavadgītā.

2 ADS. I. xii. 1 and 3.
only point that may be noticed is that we are here almost entirely in the realm of tradition regarded as an inviolable authority. Respect for tradition can be traced in the Brāhmaṇas also, which now and then, by way of supporting their views, cite an earlier text or mention an old teacher. But it is only implicit there, and is not formally recognized as here. The tradition itself is two-fold; it is either that of the Veda or of samaya, as it is termed, which means the habitual observances of the cultured Aryans (śīṣṭas). But the Kalpa-sūtras try to make out that such observances also are based upon the authority of the Veda, if not in its extant form in some other which, as it is naively declared, has since been lost.¹ The diligent attention paid to the codification of old laws and customs implies a consciousness of inferiority in its authors as compared with their forefathers.² It also signifies a fear that their social and religious institutions might become corrupt by outside influence—a fear justified by the fact that the heretical sections were then growing in strength and had begun to exhibit constructive power and formulate their own rival doctrines.

In the later Upaniṣads, as we have already had occasion to notice (p. 49), there is a tendency to revert to sacrificial worship as taught in the Brāhmaṇas. In the Maitri Upaniṣad, which we have chosen as our specimen for the period, the tendency reaches its climax, for there we find adherence to Vedic ceremonial represented as indispensable to a knowledge of the self. After defining duty as ‘what is taught in the Veda,’ the Upaniṣad adds that no one that transgresses it can be said to lead a disciplined life.³ But these Upaniṣads at the same time contemplate a state when the obligation to perform Vedic rites is transcended so that their attitude towards ritualism, though not unfavourable, is not the same as that of the Kalpa-sūtras which subordinate everything else to it. Thus the same Upaniṣad,⁴ speaking of a knower, says: ‘He

¹ All rules for guidance, it is stated, are given in the Brāhmaṇas, but where there is no quotable text to support a current practice, its existence once is to be inferred from such practice. See ADS. I. xii. ¹⁰. There were also other ways of justifying samaya. See com. on GDS. i. 6.
² Cf. ADS. I. v. 4. ³ iv. 3. ⁴ vi. 9.
meditates only on himself; he sacrifices only in himself—a statement which, in the light of the view the Upaniṣad takes of Vedic ceremonial in general, should be understood not as suggesting any hostility towards it, but only as denying the need for it in the case of one that has passed the stage of preparatory discipline. Here we find a new conception of ritual which becomes quite prominent later. It is neither a seeking of material favours from the gods nor a mere magical device, but a ‘cure for sin’ (durita-kṣaya)—a means of purifying the heart and thereby qualifying for a successful pursuit of the knowledge that brings salvation.¹ ‘Discipline leads to purity; and purity, to discrimination. Discrimination wins the self, winning which one does not return to this life.²

The attitude of the Mahābhārata towards Vedic ritual is quite indefinite. Passages can be cited from it which glorify sacrifice; but there are others in it whose general spirit is unfavourable or even antagonistic to ritualism. Thus in one of the chapters,³ significantly styled ‘Reviling of Sacrifice’ (Yajña-nīndā), is narrated the story of a pious Brahmin dwelling in a forest who, desiring to perform a sacrifice, but unwilling to injure any living being, presents only grains to the gods. Observing this, an antelope living there, which in reality is only Dharma or the god of righteousness in disguise, addresses him on the futility of such a rite and offers itself to be sacrificed. The Brahmin at first declines the offer, but when the animal reminds him of the good that will result to itself thereby, he assents—a turn in the story obviously to bring out the sophistry of those that were justifying animal sacrifice on the ground that the victim like the sacrificer stood to gain by it. But the story adds that the moment the antelope was immolated the Brahmin lost all the merit that he had acquired by his previous pious life, and that the animal, reassuming its original divine form, taught him the principle of non-injury (ahimsā), describing it as ‘virtue entire’ (sakalo dharmaḥ).⁴

¹ This idea is already found in the Śvetāsvatara Up. (ii. 7). Cf. El. p. 53.
² Maitri Up. iv. 3.
³ xii. 272.
⁴ Ahimsā is an integral part of heterodox thought as we now know it from Buddhism and Jainism. But it should not be taken as
(2) *Absolutism.*—While it is evident that monism is the prevalent teaching of the later Upaniṣads, there is, as in the case of the earlier ones, an ambiguity sometimes as to what particular form of it they inculcate. Passages can easily be found in them which taken by themselves support either the cosmic or the acosmic view. But the general tendency is to lay stress upon the realistic side—to look upon the physical world as an actual emanation from Brahman—and to dwell upon the distinction between the soul and Brahman as well as that between one soul and another. The latter, for instance, is very well brought out in the *Maitri Upaniṣad,* where the empirical self or jiva is termed bhūtatman—the self as enmeshed in the body constituted out of the five elements, and is described as another (anya) and as different (apara) from Brahman. ‘Overcome by nature’s qualities, it feels deluded and therefore fails to perceive the almighty Lord dwelling within itself.’ The distinction no doubt is not intrinsic, being entirely due to the association of the jiva with the physical body, as signified by the name bhūtatman; and it can be overcome and oneness (sāyujya) with Brahman attained by the jiva when it realizes that truth. But yet the recognition of its provisional separateness from Brahman here is clear and its implication is that the physical universe, springing into being from Brahman, is real. Such views already appear in the older Upaniṣads, but the point to be noted is the elaboration and the emphasis they receive here.

As regards the epic, the influence of the Upaniṣads is unknown to the orthodox. The Kalpa-sūtras like that of Gautama give quite a prominent place to it in their teaching (ii. 19, 23; ix. 70); and it is also found taught in the *Ch. Up.*, for instance, in III. xvii. 4. The fact is that it was originally part and parcel of the vānaprastha ideal of austere life to which the objection commonly urged against this virtue being Vedic, viz. that it is incompatible with the sacrificing of animals, is not applicable. See El. pp. 165–6 and Prof. Jacobi. SBE. vol. XXII. pp. xxii. ff.

1 The Kalpa-sūtras refer to ‘self-realization’ (atma-lābha) and ‘oneness with Brahman’ (brahmaṇaḥ sāyujyam) as the highest end of man. But the reference is quite incidental, their foremost aim being to expound ritual. We shall recur to the former aspect of their teaching in the chapter on the Mimāṃsā system in the next Part. See ADS. I. xxii. 2 ff.; GDS. viii. 22–3; iii. 9.

2 iii. 2.

3 iv. 4.
distinctly traceable both in its thought and in its expression, and monism is a prominent feature of its teaching. But owing to the general uncertainty attaching to such accounts found in the work, it is not easy to determine what particular shade of it we have in any section of it. Both the cosmic and acosmic conceptions appear, and often an account which begins with the one easily drifts on to the other. It is equally hard to say which of these two conceptions is the older there. To judge from the popular character of the original epic, the cosmic conception should be the earlier. Though the same as the Upaniṣadic account, it is set forth with added detail, for, like other epic accounts, it also appears in a mythological setting reminding us of early Vedic thought. Thus in a long section professing to reproduce the conversation between sage Vyāsa and his son Śuka, the Creator is described as having his own ‘day’ and ‘night’—each of which, speaking from the human standpoint, is of almost infinite duration. Creation takes place each day at dawn, and at its close what was created is withdrawn. Brahman is described here as the sole reality existing before creation—‘without beginning and without end, unborn, resplendent, above decay, constant, imperishable, difficult to be thought of or known.’ It is said to evolve (vikurute) into the universe so that the view is what we have described as Brahma-parināma-vāda (p. 62). There emerge from it first ‘intellect’ (mahat) and ‘mind’ (manas); then in order, the five elements beginning with ākāśa, each with its own unique property. In other words, the undifferentiated primal Being becomes differentiated or the timeless comes to be in time. But these seven principles—psychical and physical—each standing apart from the rest, cannot help on the process of evolution. So they combine together to produce an organic body (sarīra). Spirit as embodied in it, the ‘first-embodied’ (prathama-ja) as it is sometimes styled, is Prajā-pati and he creates individual beings—both animate and inanimate—constituting the world as we know it. Dissolution takes place

1 xii. 231–255. 2 xii. 231. 11. 3 xii. 231. 32. 4 xii. 232. 2–7. 5 See Note 6 on p. 82 ante.
in the reverse order when Brahman retracts the whole universe into itself. The processes of evolution and dissolution go on successively as implied by the terms 'day' and 'night' in the above account. The points of special interest here are (1) that Māyā has no place in the scheme of creation; (2) that evolution takes place in two stages—the first proceeding from Brahman and giving rise to what may be described as 'cosmic factors' or physical and psychical elements in the aggregate, and the second proceeding from Prajā-pati and bringing into being individual things; and (3) that creation takes place periodically, involving the idea of kalpa which, though not unknown to the earlier literature (p. 65), is by no means conspicuous there.

(3) Theism.—We have indicated the place of Theism in Vedic literature. The transformation of the impersonal Brahman or the Absolute into a personal God which was still in progress in the older Upaniṣads is now complete, the earliest of the monotheistic conceptions to appear in the post-Vedic period being Brahmā. According to the evidence of early Buddhistic literature, this conception occupied the highest rank already in Buddha’s time. It is to be met with in the earlier portions of the epic; but owing to an old confusion between Prajā-pati and Brahman, who are alike deemed the source of all, Brahmā, whose conception is derived from the latter, is frequently identified with Prajā-pati. To illustrate his supremacy, we may cite the section known as the 'Dialogue between Mrtyu and Prajā-pati,' which propounds in the form of a legend an

1 There is indeed a reference to avidyā in one of the two accounts here (Ch. 232, 2); but, as observed by Prof. Hopkins (The Great Epic of India; p. 141), it is an after-thought.
2 Respectively known as sāmaśṭi-sṛṣṭi and vyāṣṭi-sṛṣṭi.
3 We restrict ourselves here to the epic, as theism has but a small place in the Kalpa-sūtras or even in the later Upaniṣads, if we leave out those that glorify Viṣṇu or Śiva specifically.
4 Macdonell: History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 285; and India's Past, p. 34.
5 Cf. Mrs. Rhys Davids: Buddhism, p. 57.
6 Mbh. xii. 256-8. It is not suggested that these sections, in the form in which we now have them, necessarily belong to the period under consideration. They only contain an allusion to what is recognized on all hands now to be the earliest form of post-Vedic monotheism.
answer to the important problem of death. As set forth here, Prajā-pati, who is the same as Brahmā, creates living beings; and when, after the lapse of some time, he finds the three worlds dense with them—‘oppressed as it were for want of breath’—he gives vent to his wrath in order to bring about total destruction. All ‘movable and immovable things’ begin to be consumed by the fire of his anger. Thereupon god Śiva, filled with compassion, approaches Brahmā offering prayer to him. Moved by that prayer, Brahmā substitutes for total destruction individual death, the implication being that death in some form is necessary, in order that life—universal life—may continue and that the disappearance of the particular, so far from being an evil, is imperative for the preservation of the world as a whole. He appoints for the purpose of determining who should die and when, one that is figured, strangely enough, as a lovely maiden sprung from his own wrath. The maiden shows great reluctance to play this doleful part, especially as she is to put an end to the lives of the young as well as the old, but is pacified by Brahmā, who assures her that no sin or blame will attach to her for assisting in the work of destruction, since she acts according to law. The goddess of Death is the goddess of justice (dharma). The underlying thought is what has so long characterized the Indian view of life and is the essence of the belief in karma that neither death nor any other form of punishment is inflicted by an external agency, but is merely the recoil of the deed upon its doer. The wicked suffer in consequence of their sin. Brahmā is here termed the supreme God (paramo devah). He controls all the affairs of this world being its creator, preserver and destroyer. He is depicted as subject to the emotions of anger, love and pity, indicating that the conception is fully personal. He is higher than all the gods and goddesses for even Śiva admits his inferiority by saying that he has been employed by Brahmā to look after the welfare of the world, and goddess Death thinks of nobody else to pray to for escaping from the terrific work that has fallen to her lot.

The shifting character of Vedic monotheism is to some

1 258. 13. 2 258. 4. 3 257. 11.
extent repeated here and Brahmā’s place comes to be taken by Śiva. The conception of Śiva seems to have attained to this position of eminence by the time of the Greek invasion.\textsuperscript{1} It occupies that rank in certain comparatively late portions of the epic. The elevation, however, is merely ascribing supremacy to an old Vedic god, for Śiva or Rudra, as he usually appears there, is not only older than Brahmā, but also Prajā-pati, whose conception is not found till the later Vedic period. Being a nature-god, he also represents a different type of divinity. It is interesting to trace the history of this conception from the very beginning. Amongst the powers worshipped by early man there would naturally be benignant as well as malignant ones. Rudra was one of the latter—the ‘howling’ god that went about spreading devastation with the assistance of Maruts or storm-gods represented as his sons. But in course of time he came to be designated Śiva or ‘the auspicious.’ A truly divine power cannot in itself be malignant; and whatever dread it may inspire should be ascribed to a sense of sin in man. It is the recognition of this truth that in all probability explains the change in the title of the deity.\textsuperscript{2} In this double form of Rudra-Śiva, he was the object of love as well as of fear; and, as his importance gradually grew, he became the supreme God. In the Atharva-veda\textsuperscript{4} and at least once in the Rgveda,\textsuperscript{5} where there is a reference to his ‘universal dominion’ (sāmrājya), Śiva seems to assume that role already; but taking all things into consideration, his pre-eminence there should be explained as due to the henotheistic tendency to which we have alluded (p. 38). The Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad\textsuperscript{6} alludes more than once to this god and there he does more definitely stand for the Highest; but the con-

\textsuperscript{1} Macdonell: History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 286.
\textsuperscript{2} See Bhandarkar: Vairnavism, Śaivism, etc. p. 102. Compare also what Nilakantha says in his commentary on Mbh. xii. 284. According to others, the new name is only euphemistic—due to the habit of referring to the dreadful by a gentle name (Macdonell: India's Past, p. 30).
\textsuperscript{3} To this duality of nature is doubtless due the conception of Śiva as half man and half woman (ardha-nāriśvara).
\textsuperscript{4} IV. 28. 1. \textsuperscript{5} VII. 46. 2. \textsuperscript{6} See e.g. iii. 4.
ception appears in it assimilated to the philosophic Absolute (p. 83), and is hardly that of a people’s god as it generally is in the epic. As an instance of his supremacy in the Mahābhārata, or rather as that of a stage in his attaining to it, we may refer to the section\(^1\) where the well-known story is narrated\(^2\) of the destruction of Dakṣa’s sacrifice by the emissaries of Rudra because their chief had not been invited to it, and where he is described as the highest of the gods and as both creator and preserver of the world.

About the same period and probably in a different part of the country\(^3\) Viṣṇu, another god, came to prominence. He also, like Śiva and unlike Prajā-pati, is an old Vedic god and appears in the Ṛgveda as a minor deity or at best only on a footing of equality with the others. He is there intimately associated with Indra and is even in later mythology known as ‘the younger brother of Indra’ (Indrāvaraja). In the Brāhmaṇas, his position is more exalted\(^4\); and he is repeatedly identified with the sacrifice—an honour which he shares with Prajā-pati and which foreshadows his coming supremacy. He gradually supersedes the other gods and becomes supreme. His elevation, especially above Prajā-pati, can be distinctly traced, for the achievements once ascribed to the latter are gradually transferred to him. Thus according to the Sata-patha Brāhmaṇa,\(^5\) Prajā-pati assumes the forms of a tortoise and of a boar; but they later come to be represented as the avatāras or incarnations of Viṣṇu. The desire to manifest himself in this way for saving mankind is indeed regarded now as a mark of Viṣṇu, showing his special characteristic of benevolence. The word avatār, we may state by the way, means ‘descent,’ i.e. a coming down of God to earth and the thought contained in it is that of a deity that intervenes when man, forgetting the divine within him, shows a tendency to lapse into the state of a mere natural being. ‘When righteousness wanes and unrighteousness

\(^1\) xii. 284.
\(^2\) The antagonism to the sacrificial cult implied here may be noted.
\(^3\) See Macdonell: History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 411.
\(^4\) Prof. Keith: Religion and Philosophy of the Veda, pp. 110–12.
\(^5\) VII. iv. 3, 5; XIV. i. 2, 11.
begins to flourish, then I become incarnate.' Assuming a mortal form then, he re-establishes dharma; and in doing so serves as an embodiment of the ideal for man which he should ever keep before himself. There is evidence to show that, like the conception of Śiva, that of Viṣṇu also had reached pre-eminence by the time of the Greek invasion. There was also another conception, viz. that of Nārāyaṇa, gradually evolving in the later Vedic period. The word 'Nārāyaṇa' means 'descendant of Nara or the primeval male,' i.e. Puruṣa from whom the whole universe springs into existence (p. 45), according to the Puruṣa-sūkta. He appears as supreme in certain passages of the Brāhmaṇas, and later is identified with Viṣṇu giving rise to the conception of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, parallel to that of Rudra-Śiva. Thenceforward these two conceptions dominate the religious thought of India. Brahmā 'has his origin and basis in speculation rather than in popular cult and therefore he did not appeal, in spite of his sublime character, to the religious feelings of the masses.'

The supremacy of the Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa conception appears oftenest in the Mahābhārata. But it is generally found blended there with another, whose origin and general features we must now indicate. This second current of theistic thought is what is described as theism of the Bhāgavata type. It recognized only a transcendent God while Vedic theism, as may be expected from its kinship with the Upaniṣads, tended to view him as both immanent and transcendent. The Bhāgavata creed seems to have been non-Brahminic in its origin, though not non-Aryan. It probably originated in that part of the country which lies west of the classic Madhya-deśa between the Ganges and the Jumna, where most of the early Upaniṣads were composed. The creed was founded long before Buddha's time by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a hero of

1 BG. iv. 7.
2 Sāta-patha Brāhmaṇa, XIII. vi. 1. 1.
3 But neither, like Brahmā prior to them, is a sectarian deity. That phase of Indian belief is still later and belongs to a period subsequent to the one we are now considering.
the Aryan tribes dwelling there. Its essential features were belief in a single personal God, Vāsudeva, and in salvation as resulting from an unswerving devotion to him. Briefly we may say that it resembles the Hebraic type of godhead which we found in Varuṇa (p. 34) in the Rgveda. In fact the influence of Christianity has been traced in it by some like Weber, the German orientalist; but, since the existence of the creed long before the Christian era is indubitable, the theory has not commended itself to scholars in general.

Later, as it so often happens, the hero who preached this creed was himself deified and identified with the Supreme. In Śrī Kṛṣṇa's time, the designation of the supreme God was probably 'Bhagavat' or 'the worshipful,' whence the name Bhāgavata or 'worshipper of Bhagavat.' The name 'Bhagavadgītā' ('Lord's song') given to the well-known work, which appears as an inset in the epic, suggests that when it was composed Śrī Kṛṣṇa had come to be worshipped as the Supreme. This religion in still later times was amalgamated with the theistic teaching of the Madhya-deśa, probably as a set-off against the secessions that were gaining strength in the East; and then Śrī Kṛṣṇa was identified with Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, who had by that time come to be looked upon there as the Highest. In this final form the doctrine is very elaborately treated of in the sections of the Mahābhārata known as the Nārāyanīya; but it there indicates a development which almost certainly is in advance of the period with which we are now concerned. An earlier phase of the same is seen in the Bhagavadgītā where, for instance, the identification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa does not yet appear. It may be assigned to the period under consideration.

1 'The worship of Krishna seems to have been popular during the first centuries of the development of the Jaina creed'—Prof. Jacobi: SBE. vol. XXII. p. xxxi. n.
2 See e.g. Prof. Winternitz: History of Indian Literature (Eng. Tr.), vol. i. p. 431 n.
3 It could not, however, have been the exclusive title of this god, since it is used of Śiva in Śvetāsvatara Up. (iii. 11). Compare also the term śiva-bhāgavata used in the Mahābhāṣya under V. ii. 76.
4 xii. 334-51.
now, and we shall consider it in some detail in the next chapter.

(4) *Heretical Views.*—It is perhaps necessary to remind the reader that by 'heretical' we mean nothing more than antagonism to the Vedas (p. 16), particularly to their sacrificial teaching and the customs and institutions directly connected with it. We know (p. 43) that the opposition to Vedic religion is very old and that allusions to unbelievers are found so early as the hymns of the Ṛgveda. There is plenty of evidence to show that it was continued in the period under consideration and was further strengthened under the influence of the general reawakening of the people already mentioned. Buddhistic and Jaina works refer to numerous philosophical schools other than the Vedic, as having existed when Gotama and Mahāvīra taught. Hindu tradition also, reaching back to about the same time, refers to the courts of ancient kings, teeming with teachers expounding separate doctrines including heretical ones. Yāska again, the well-known Vedic exegete who flourished about 500 B.C., mentions in his *Nirukta* one Kautsa, who seems to have criticized the Veda as either meaningless or self-contradictory, and controverts at length his anti-Vedic opinions. The Kalpa-sūtras also occasionally refer to infidels (nāstika) classing them with sinners and criminals. It is this heretical thought, almost as ancient as the doctrine of the priests and now become prominent, that gives rise to the distinction between the ideals of the Brāhmaṇas and the Śramaṇas or non-priestly ascetics, frequently mentioned in the records of the period and noticed even by foreigners like Megasthenes.

These views from their very nature must have originated outside the hieratic circles, but it does not mean that Brahmins were not connected with them. We know that there were Brahmins that dwelt in the forest who were not

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1 *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i. p. 150.
2 See e.g. *Mbh.* xii. 218. 4–5. 3 I. xv–xvi. 4 Cf. GDS. xv. 15.
5 *Cambridge History of India*, vol. i. pp. 419 ff. Compare also Prof. Winternitz: *Ascetic Literature in Ancient India*, already mentioned pp. 1–2.
priests by profession. It is most likely that they contributed not a little towards the development of such doctrines. This is also corroborated by tradition. Thus while Vidura, who is of 'low origin,' appears as the spokesman of this type of doctrine often in the epic, there are others like Ajagara who expound the same, but are Brahmins. According to the evidence of early Buddhistic literature also, there were Brahmins as well as Śramaṇas who denied a surviving soul and refused to believe in transmigration. In fact, we have here an exact parallel to what happened in the case of the Indian language. As in the history of the Indian language we have an epic phase distinguished from the language of the priests (śiṣṭas), so we have in the history of Indian philosophy a creed, with ramifications of its own, of the upper reflective classes other than the professional priests. The influence of the heterodox doctrine is transparent in more than one sphere of Indian thought, as we now know it. It has given rise directly or indirectly to religious systems like Jainism and Buddhism and in later scholastic philosophy it is represented, however inadequately, by the Čārvāka system. On the other schools also like the Sāṅkhya it has, as we shall see, left its indelible mark. But it is sometimes very difficult to say in the case of a tenet whether it owed its origin to the priests or to the others; for, as in the case of language whose evolution serves as a pattern for us here, the secular creed, as we may term it, has influenced the orthodox

2 xii. 179.
3 See e.g. passage quoted from the Samyuttaka-nikāya in Oldenberg's Buddha (pp. 272-3).
4 Cf. Keith: Classical Sanskrit Literature, pp. 11-12.
5 To complete the parallel, we have to mention the existence of popular faiths corresponding to the many Prākrts spoken by the common folk.
6 'The similarity between some of those 'heretical' doctrines on the one side, and Jaina or Buddhist ideas on the other, is very suggestive, and favours the assumption that the Buddha, as well as Mahavira, owed some of his conceptions to these very heretics and formulated others under the influence of the controversies which were continually going on with them.' SBE. vpl. XLV. p. xxvii. Cf. also Prof. Winternitz: op. cit. pp. 1 and 18.
belief and has in turn been influenced by it leading to the obliteration in great part of the distinction between the two sets of tenets (p. 25). The very early alliance with Vedic teaching of the Upaniṣadic doctrine, which should have initiated many a 'heretical' view, is also largely responsible for this result.

Though the heretical doctrine represents so important a stream of thought and incidental references to it in philosophical works are far from scanty, no detailed exposition of it is to be found in any part of early Sanskrit literature. It no doubt appears now and then in the Mahābhārata; but owing to the revision which the epic has undergone at the hands of its later editors, it appears re-touched or largely mixed up with the tenets of other faiths. That the doctrine as now found set forth in that work has also come under the review of unsympathetic thinkers and has possibly suffered distortion is clear from its being traced there often to such objectionable sources as demons (asuras).¹ Though thus modified, the Mahābhārata account is the only considerable one from which we have to draw our information about it for the present period. The doctrine seems to have had its own divergences. The Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad already mentions nearly half a dozen² views of the kind, and the epic accounts also suggest a similar diversity in its teaching; but we cannot state the exact scope of any of them. Two of them, however, may here be distinguished for their knowledge will be of service to us in understanding certain aspects of the later history of Indian thought. They are 'accidentalism,' described as Yadṛcchā-vāda or Animitta-vāda, and 'naturalism' or Svabhāva-vāda. Both are found separately mentioned in the Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad and later works also make that distinction.³ While the one maintains that the world is a chaos and ascribes whatever order is seen in it to mere chance, the other recognizes that 'things are as their nature makes them.'⁴ While the former denies causation altogether,

¹ For example, Bali and Prahrāda appearing respectively in xii. 224 and 222 are asuras.
² i. 2.
³ Cf. Kusumāṇḍ jali, i. 5. There is a reference to Animitta-vāda in NS. IV. i. 22–24.
⁴ Svabhāva-bhāvino bhavān. Mbh. xii. 222, 27. See also st. 15 ff.
the latter acknowledges its universality, but only traces all changes to the thing itself to which they belong. Everything is unique and its entire history is predetermined by that uniqueness. Hence according to the Svabhāva-vāda, it is not a lawless world in which we live; only there is no external principle governing it. It is self-determined, not undetermined. So this doctrine, unlike the other, recognizes necessity as governing all phenomena; but it is a necessity that is inherent in the very nature of a thing, not imposed upon it by any external agency. It is because we are blind to this fact that we imagine that things obey no law or that we can intervene with success in the course of events. Both the doctrines are at one in rejecting the idea that nature reveals a divine power working behind it or indeed any transcendental being which controls it or is implicated in it. Nor does either school seek for its views any supernatural sanction. In the former of these, we have to look for the main source of the later sensualist doctrine of the Carvaka, which also ascribes the events of life to mere accident. It is the latter that is of real philosophic importance and we shall therefore say a few words more about it.

The Svabhāva-vāda should once have been well known, for we come across references to it in old philosophical works like those of Śaṅkara. In the Mahābhārata, there are allusions to it in more than one place. What needs to be noticed about it first is its positivistic character which is implied by the contrast that is sometimes drawn between it and the Adṛśta-vāda or 'belief in the supernatural.' In this it differs from the supernaturalism of the Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas on the one hand, and, on the other, from the metaphysical view of the Upaniṣads. This positivistic character of the teaching—its 'mundane metaphysics'—seems to have been the original significance of the term lokāyata ('restricted to the experienced world'), more generally applied to the doctrine in later literature. Another

1 See e.g. Śaṅkara on VS. I. i. 2; BUV. I. iv. 1487.
2 E.g. xii. 179, 222 and 224.
3 Nilakaṇṭha makes this distinction in his com. on the Mbh. xii. 213. II.
point of importance regarding it is its denial of a trans-
migrating soul, although it might have admitted a self last-
ing as long as life does.\textsuperscript{1} In this respect the doctrine may be
contrasted with what is described as Adhyātma-vāda, which
took for granted an immortal soul. One of the Mahābhārata
sections, on which our account is based, states ‘Death is the end of beings.’\textsuperscript{2} In fact the repudiation of such trans-
scendental entities is the very aim of this doctrine. As a
necessary corollary to the rejection of a permanent soul, the
Svabhāva-vāda, it seems, did not believe in the law of karma\textsuperscript{3} as commonly understood. As regards the ultimate
source of the material universe, we have no means of
deciding whether it was conceived as one or many. There is
evidence in support of both in the epic accounts. Thus in one
of them, the animal organism is finally traced to the five
elements\textsuperscript{4}; and the epic elsewhere\textsuperscript{5} explicitly associates the
Svabhāva-vāda with belief in the ultimacy of the elements.
Another account seems to favour a unitary source, describing
the infinite phenomena of existence as its modifications.\textsuperscript{6}

Before we leave this part of our subject, it is necessary to
mention another tendency of thought noticeable in the epic
which seems to be a modification, particularly under the
influence of the Svabhāva-vāda, of the Absolutism of the
Upaniṣads—more especially that aspect of it which is
described as Brahma-parināma-vāda. Its aim is realistic and
pluralistic. It tends to do away with the conception of the
Absolute and to set soul or puruṣa against matter or prakṛti

\textsuperscript{1} See BP. p. 135 for the prevalence of such a view in the period.
Cf. also Katā Up. (I. i. 20 ff.), where the point raised is not the
general one whether there is a soul or not, but only whether it
survives the body (prete). See also SAS. p. 175.
\textsuperscript{2} Bhūtānām nidhanam niṣṭhā śrotasāmiva sāgarah: 224. 9. cf.
NM. p. 467.
\textsuperscript{3} Compare the following statement of Guṇaratna in his com. on the
Sadārṣana-samuccaya (st. 50): Aṅye punarāhuḥ: Mūlatah karmaiva
nāsti; svabhāva-siddhaḥ sarvopyayam jagat-prapāṇca iti. ‘Others
again say: All the variety of this world is explained by its own
nature and there is no karma whatever serving as its basis.’ Cf. also
SV. p. 166.
\textsuperscript{4} 224. 17.
\textsuperscript{5} 232. 19. Svabhāvam bhūta-cintakāḥ. The Śvetāsvatara Up.,
however, distinguishes between the two.
\textsuperscript{6} 222. 26 and 31.
as mutually independent entities, conceiving the former at the same time as many. But this result has not been completely effected. The notion of the Absolute as the supreme—or sometimes that of God—is retained, with puruṣa and prakṛti regarded as subordinate to, though distinct from, it. The relation between the Absolute and prakṛti is not further defined; but it is clear that the latter is taken to be the source from which the whole of the physical universe emerges. Puruṣa and prakṛti are sharply distinguished. The one is the subject in experience; and the other, or rather its products, the object—each with characteristics which, generally speaking, are not predicable of the other. It is a knowledge of the distinction between them which is commonly hidden from man that is believed in this new doctrine to qualify for release from samsāra. The noteworthy point here is the conception of the Absolute as passive and the transfer of creative activity almost entirely to prakṛti.¹ In the recognition of permanent souls, the doctrine differs from the Svābhāva-vāda as we have sketched it above. But it resembles that doctrine in endowing matter with practically all the power necessary to unfold the whole universe out of itself. Similarly the view, though resembling Absolutism in finding a place for a cosmic spirit conceived as pre-eminent and eternal, differs from it in being dualistic, admitting matter as virtually a second entity by the side of spirit. These characteristics look much like those of the Sāṇkhya doctrine; and some like Garbe are of opinion that it is the fully fledged Sāṇkhya itself appearing in the epic in a popular form.² But it seems preferable to regard it, as we shall point out in the next Part, as only proto-Sāṇkhya or Sāṇkhya in the making. It occupies in the epic a very prominent place, comparable only to that of Theism in it. Its importance in the history of Indian thought is great, but for an adequate consideration of it we have to wait till the Sāṇkhya system is taken up. We may observe in passing that this alliance of a heretical doctrine with orthodoxy gave rise to a new stream of tradition in ancient India which

¹ Cf. Mbh. xii. 314, 12; BG. iii. 27, ix. 10, xiii. 19, 20 and 29.
can be described as neither quite orthodox nor as quite heterodox. The old heterodoxy, like the old orthodoxy, continued to develop on its own lines. That may be represented as the ‘extreme left,’ while the new became a middling doctrine with leanings more towards orthodoxy than towards heterodoxy. Accordingly orthodox belief itself henceforward may be said to run in two channels, the distinction between which often leads to important controversies.¹ There is indirect reference to this extension of the sphere of orthodoxy in the literature of the early classical period as, for example, in the Vedānta-sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa.²

II

So much about the theoretical teaching of the period. It will be useful to bring together in the same way the various modes of discipline commended then for reaching the goal of life. Broadly speaking, this disciplinary teaching is threefold, viz. (1) karma, (2) yoga and (3) bhakti, which are respectively to be associated, though only predominantly, with the first three of the four schools of thought briefly sketched above:

(1) **Karma.**—By the term karma, as used here, is to be understood the sacrificial rites and acts allied to them as first taught in the Brāhmaṇas and later systematized in the Kalpa-sūtras, as well as certain duties and practices which, though not explicitly set forth in the Veda, had become sanctified by tradition. But it must not be thought that ordinary virtues—whether social or self-regarding—were ignored,³ for ethical purity was made the necessary condition

¹ Such, for example, as the one relating to the question whether the Veda is pauroṣeṇa or not, See Ch. X.
² See e.g. II. i. 1, where two classes of smṛtis are distinguished—one like that of Manu based upon the Veda and therefore fully authoritative, and the other like that of Kapila, which, though recognized by some śiṣṭas, are not so, because they do not go back to the Veda.
³ The emphasis on moral merit which the word dharma in its popular, as distinguished from its technical, use often signifies is to be traced to this insistence on the initial condition of purity of character.
for entering upon the path of karma as shown by statements like the following from Vaśiṣṭha: "Neither the Veda, nor sacrifice, nor liberality can save him whose conduct is base, who has departed from the right path." The nature of virtues insisted upon can be gathered for instance from the following characterization by Āpastamba of the religious student: "He is gentle and serene. He exercises the highest self-control. He is modest and courageous. He has cast off all lassitude and is free from anger." Gautama not only prescribes, in addition to religious rites, what he calls 'the virtues of the soul' (ātma-guṇa) or the inner ethical virtues, viz. kindness towards all, forbearance, absence of envy, purity, perseverance, cheerfulness, dignity and contentment but also places them on a higher plane than mere ceremonial. Karmas in the above sense are either (i) 'permitted' or 'optional' (kāmya) which aim at specific results such as the attainment of heaven, (ii) 'prohibited' (pratiṣiddha), indulgence in which will lead to sin and to its unwelcome consequences, or (iii) 'obligatory' or 'unconditional' (nitya) which comprehend the duties appropriate to the four varṇas or classes of society and to what we described in the last chapter as the four āśramas (p. 75). It is not necessary to enter into the details of these varieties of karma. We shall merely draw attention to one or two principles underlying this view of discipline which are of interest to us here.

The whole code of conduct presupposes the survival of the self after death and takes for granted that the present life is essentially a preparation for the coming one. Whatever we may think of the metaphysical basis of such a view, its disciplinary value is apparent. By emphasizing the enduring character of the self, it discountenances present indulgence

1 Dharma-sūtra, vi. 2 and 6. See E.I. p. 90.
2 ADS. I. iii. 17–24.
3 GDS. viii. 20–23.
4 The chief subject on which the Brāhmanas talk is death; for this present life, they hold, is like the season passed in the womb, and death for those who have cultivated philosophy is the birth into the real, the happy life. For this reason they follow an extensive discipline to make them ready for death'—Megasthenes. See Cambridge History of India, vol. I. p. 419.
in all its forms and leads to the cultivation of self-restraint in whose train so many virtues follow. The rule for the disciple here is, as Vaśiṣṭha says, ‘Look far; not near. Look toward the highest, not toward that which is less than the highest.’ In the result, an austere life replaces a life of instincts and passions. The discipline does not indeed aim at abolishing desire altogether as in some other schools of thought, for it holds out the prospect of one’s own welfare in a future life and may therefore be characterized as ‘self-seeking beyond the grave.’ But it does dissuade a man from pursuing the goods of this world for their own sake. The true ideal of life is well indicated by the formulation in this period in a definite way of what are called the puruṣārthas or human values—literally, ‘the aims of man.’ They are three (tri-varga), viz. dharma, artha and kāma, if we leave out mokṣa, which, though not wholly excluded from the Kalpa-sūtras, occupies by no means a prominent place there. Artha and kāma stand respectively for the acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of the present life, while dharma represents religious merit. The first two also are accepted as legitimate so that worldly aims are not despised. In fact the Sūtras sometimes speak of succeeding in this world as well as in the next, thus linking up, as it has been so well put, ‘the realm of desires with the perspective of the eternal.’ But dharma is under all circumstances to be preferred. He that adheres to dharma, says Āpastamba, reaps worldly benefits also; but if he does not, it matters little for the attainment of dharma is the supreme aim. The idea of dharma is accordingly of great importance here, as indeed it is in understanding the Hindu view of life as a whole. The word, which may be compared to the earlier rta, means literally ‘what supports or upholds,’ i.e. the final governing principle or law of the universe. In the present period it stands for all established ways of living—secular, moral and religious. This all-embracing significance of the term explains

1 Dharma-sūtra, x. 30; xxx. 1. See E.I. pp. 91-2.
2 GDS. ix. 48.
3 Cf. ADS. II. xx. 22-23.
4 Prof. Radhakrishnan: The Hindu View of Life p. 79.
5 Cf. GDS. ix. 49; ADS. I. xxiv. 23.
6 ADS. I. xx. 3-4.
the vagueness sometimes met with in its use. But, however
diverse the significance, dharma is essentially what bears
fruit in a future life and implies moral purity as a necessary
condition of earning it. So persistent is this idea that in
popular mythology it comes to be identified with Yama or
the god of death, who allots rewards and punishments to
men in another life according to their deserts. The authority
for deciding what is dharma or adharma is the Veda and
tradition traceable to it. This is the significance of the term
vidhi which about this time comes to be used,¹ and stands
for a behest from above. That is, dharma in its technical
sense is extra-empirical and can be known only through a
channel other than common experience, viz. a divine or
traditional code. Apastamba explicitly says that the prin-
ciples underlying the conventions and observances of the
Aryas are not knowable in the ordinary way: 'Dharma and
adharma do not hover about us saying—'We are so and
so.'"² Where empirical considerations alone sufficiently
explain conduct, there is no need for such a code. The
cultivation of worldly prudence is all that is needed.

(2) Yoga.—This term is cognate with English 'yoke' and
means 'harnessing.' It is essentially a process of self-
conquest and was not unoften resorted to in ancient India
for the acquisition of supernatural or occult powers.³ But
we are at present concerned with yogic practice as the
means of securing release. In this sense it is practically the
same as upāsana taught in the Upaniṣads (p. 78), and is
predominantly associated with Absolutism. We should
remember that yogic meditation is to follow intellectual
conviction regarding the unity to be realized and is therefore
very far from being an artificial process of self-hypnosis or
anything of the kind. It has, on the other hand, been
compared to 'the entirely healthy and joyous phenomenon
of aesthetic contemplation.'⁴ Yoga is thus really a joint aid

¹ Cf. ADS. I. xxiii. 6.
² ADS. I. xx. 6.
³ Cf. ADS. II. xxvi. 14, which implies a distinction between two
types of ascetics—one described as dharma-para and the other,
as abhicāra-para, which may respectively be rendered as 'bene-
evolic' and 'malevolent.'
⁴ See PU. p. 383.
with jñāna or right knowledge, the need for which in one form or another is admitted by nearly all the schools of thought.\(^1\) This means of attaining oneness with the Absolute was known to the early Upaniṣads and, since we have already alluded to it under the name of nididhyāsana, nothing more need be said about it here. It undergoes systematization in this period, but it will be convenient to refer to its details in the chapter treating of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system in the next Part. We have, however, to observe, before passing on to the next mode of discipline, that the path of yoga in this form, like that of karma, does not neglect the discipline of common morality, whatever may be said of its other forms, which were also in vogue then and aimed at securing various supernatural powers or worldly ends. The *Katha Upaniṣad* for example—to mention an old authority—in referring to concentration of mind as an indispensable aid to Brahma-realization expressly couples it with ethical purity.\(^2\)

(3) *Bhakti.*—This is ‘loving devotion’ and is the disciplinary means specially appropriate to theism, with belief in a single personal God. Speaking generally, it represents a social attitude\(^3\) while yoga does the reverse. The bhaktas meet together and they find spiritual exaltation in the company of others that are similarly devoted. The yogins, on the other hand, are apt to seek God or the Absolute singly. Their aim is to be alone with the Alone. Bhakti again is predominantly emotional while yoga is predominantly intellectual, for it adds an element of love to devotion. There has been in modern times a good deal of discussion on the origin of the bhakti cult in India.\(^4\) Some have traced it to Christian sources; but, as in the case of the Bhāgavata religion, the hypothesis of a foreign origin has not commanded the assent of scholars in general. The word bhakti derived

\(^1\) The necessity for this element appears least in ritualism; but even there a distinction is made between a blind performance of Vedic rites and a knowing pursuit of them. The latter is spoken of as fetching a greater good, showing thereby that the value of jñāna was not overlooked. See GDS. xv. 28. Cf. also Ch. Up. I. i. 10.

\(^2\) I. ii. 24.

\(^3\) Cf. BG. x. 9.

\(^4\) See Bhandarkar: *Vairāṇavism, Śaivism, etc.*, pp. 28-30.
from a root meaning 'resorting to,' signifies an attitude of mind towards the godhead which was not unfamiliar to the Vedic Indian. Varuna, for instance, inspired it to a conspicuous degree. Again in the Mantras, we often come across epithets like 'father' prefixed to the names of gods which indicate that a certain intimacy of relation was felt by the worshipper between himself and the deity which he thus addressed. The very first hymn of the Rgveda gives expression to such a feeling: 'O Agni, be easy of access to us, as a father is to his son.' The same idea of love towards what was held to be the Highest can be traced in the Upaniṣads. The Katha Upaniṣad possibly alludes once to the need for divine help, the reward of bhakti, before one can be saved. The Svetāsvatara Upaniṣad uses the very word and speaks of the necessity for the highest devotion not only to God but also the guru, 2 who is the channel through which a knowledge of God comes to us. Finally, the grammarian Pāṇini (350 B.C.) has a separate aphorism to explain the word, though only as meaning 'the object of loving devotion.' 3 Thus the ideas of devotion to God and of his grace (prasāda), the reward for it, were well known to the Indians long before the Christian era; and there is no need to seek for their source outside India. Of the three Gods whose supremacy belongs to this period, Viśṇu-Kṛṣṇa is most prominently connected with this idea of bhakti; but it is found mentioned in respect of the others also, as, for instance, Śiva, who is described as 'kind to the devotee' (bhaktānukampin). 4

Of these modes of discipline, yoga alone can be associated with the heretical views, and even that only as a way of withdrawal from the world and not as a means of attaining union with the Ultimate. It seems to have been so prominent a form of discipline amongst the heterodox that their ideal man, it is stated, 5 was not the half-divine rṣi as among the orthodox, but the world-renouncing yogin. As in the case of the other doctrines, the need for moral purity is not ignored here also. Prahrāda, who appears as a heretic in the Mahābhārata, is described as 'adhering to principle'

1 I. ii. 20 and 23. 2 vi. 23. 3 IV. iii. 95. 4 Mbh. xii. 284. 167. 5 Prof. Winternitz: op. cit. p. 3.
(samaye ratam). But, as may be expected, the heretical teachers, unlike the orthodox, did not believe in the cleansing effect of Vedic karma; and the course of preliminary training which they prescribed was exclusively ethical. Our knowledge of the different heretical schools in the early part of this period is so imperfect that we cannot speak in detail of the moral training prescribed in them. As a general characteristic, we may note its stoic severity. It is a discipline of denial and is intended to free man entirely from personal desires, which are regarded as the prime source of all the ills of existence. Such a view, no doubt, has a pessimistic basis; but, to judge from the generality of accounts found in the epic, it is as far removed from cynicism as it is from hedonism.

Over and above these modes of discipline, we find saṃnyāsa or formal renunciation of the world also recognized in this period, particularly in the heretical schools. Ajagāra for instance, to whom reference has already been made is described as a muni and he dwells in the forest. Similarly Samanga, who has achieved complete equanimity of mind, says: ‘Having given up artha and kāma, having given up desire and delusion, I traverse the earth without pain and without torment.’ Though an outstanding feature of the practical teaching of this period, saṃnyāsa was by no means universal, at least among the orthodox. Some of them refused to include it in the normal scheme of life. The only legitimate āśrama other than studentship, according to them, was that of the householder; and the two remaining āśramas of the anchorite and of the monk were explained as intended only for such as were for some reason or other disqualified for performing the karmas appropriate to a householder. This is probably the oldest view, for it is here that full significance attaches to the numerous rites that are with so much elaboration taught in the Brāhmaṇas.

Even according to those among the orthodox who accepted saṃnyāsa as a normal stage of life, it could be assumed

1 xii. 222. 4.  
2 Cf. xii. 179. 18 ff.  
3 xii. 179. 2.  
4 Mbh. xii. 292. 19.  
5 GDS. iii. 36.
only last. From this standpoint, then, the modes of discipline prevalent in the period admit of a fresh division into the positive and the negative. The former is described as the path of pravṛtti or active life, because it insists on strict adherence to Vedic ritual and the discharge of the manifold duties taught in the Kalpa-sūtras; and the latter, as that of nivṛtti or quietism, because it demands an escape from the absorptions of social and sacrificial life in order that one may devote oneself entirely to contemplation. The distinction, we shall find to be of value in following the later development of Indian thought.

What is the nature of the condition that is to be reached by such discipline? According to those that follow the ideal of the three-fold aim of man (tri-varga), the goal of life is the attainment of heaven after death by means of earning religious merit (dharma) in this life. Those on the other hand that recognize mokṣa as the highest ideal, conceive of it in more than one way. It may be union with the Ultimate as in Absolutism, or reaching the presence of God as in Theism, or the merely negative one of escape from the trammels of samsāra as in some heretical schools. In the last sense, it is more often styled nirvāṇa (literally 'blowing out'), which brings out clearly its negative character. But however it is conceived, the ideal of jīvan-mukti continues and, we may say, receives greater emphasis in this period. In a series of verses in the Dialogue between Sagara and Ariṣṭanemi ending with the burden 'He indeed is free,' the Mahābhārata proclaims an attitude of passionless serenity attainable in this life as itself mokṣa. This ideal, though adhered to by many of the orthodox schools like the Advaita, may have originated in heretical circles with the general world-view of some of which it so well agrees. The conception of mokṣa

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1 Cf. Manu-smṛti, vi. 35. It was only later that restrictions ceased to be placed on the freedom of the individual to select, after student-ship, the course of life he preferred. The only criterion thereafter is detachment; Whoever has it is entitled to renounce the world. Cf. Yadahareva virajet tadahareva pravrajet: Jābāla Up. 4. See Note 3 on p. 21.

2 xii. 288, st. 25 ff.
as a condition to be attained after death is incompatible, for instance, with the Svabhāva-vāda, which did not look forward to a future life; and it should naturally have represented the ideal as achievable within the limits of the present one. But on account of the early mixing up of doctrines, already mentioned, it is difficult to be sure about it.¹

¹ Compare in this connection ADS. II. xxi. 14–16.