

*Th. Sect.*

*Part II.*

II

T H E S I S

The Religious and Moral Teaching of

T U L S I D Ā S

in his poem

R a m c h a r i t m ā n a s

by

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"a man's mother becomes death to him and amrit changes to  
 "poison; the Ganges is as baleful as the river of hell, and  
 "the world burns hotter than fire."

Broken by terror and remorse, with the arrow still close at his heels, he resolved to seek Rāma himself and ask to be forgiven. Returning to the forest, he cast himself at the divine feet,- and Rāma had mercy. The only punishment he inflicted was to deprive Sītā's assailant of an eye.

The poet next goes on to tell us of how Rāma, realising that their settlement was too near Avadh, decided after a few months' stay at Chitrkut, to travel farther south. The first hermitage they came to was the dwelling of Atri. After being greeted in a lengthy hymn of praise Rāma asked his host in what part of the forest he would advise them to settle. This called forth another outpouring on the part of the sage.

"Oh, Rāma, it is your favour that Brahmā, Shiva and the other  
 "gods seek after, as do also those who speak of the supreme  
 "reality. Now I know the cunning of Lakshmi; she forsook every  
 "other god and worships you only; How is it possible that I  
 "should tell you where to go. Oh, Lord, thou art Antaryāmi."

5. (2)4.

This term, antaryāmi, is an epithet of God. It means checking or regulating the internal feelings, and thus refers to the Supreme Spirit, as regulating and guiding mankind. More commonly it means acquainted with the heart. Very naturally we find it used of Rāma over and over again. The desire to use such

language in reference to Rāma is specially strong when he professes himself ignorant of something, and asks for information, as if he were an ordinary mortal. Thus, very soon after the incident about to be recorded, we read that when in the company of certain sages, he saw a heap of bones lying on the ground, and asked what they were, they answered:-

"You know - Why do you ask? You see all things, "  
 "you know all that is in the heart (sab antaryāmi)"  
 "These are the bones of saints whom demons have de-"  
 "voured.' On hearing this, tears filled the eyes "  
 "of Raghunāth. He raised his arms and vowed that "  
 "he would rid the earth of demons." <sup>(1)</sup> 12, (5) 13.

The three exiles resumed their journey. Wherever they went, the rivers, forests and mountains knew their master and made a path easy to his feet. Even the clouds gathered to give the travellers a welcome shade from the sun's rays. In course of time they reached another hermitage, where they found another holy <sup>man</sup> impatiently awaiting their coming. This individual had resolved to go to heaven, and the funeral pyre had been prepared for him. But he would not go until he had seen Rāma face to face. When Rāma did appear, he said:-

"I was setting out for the dwelling place of Brahmā"  
 "when I heard that Rāma had come to the forest. "  
 "I have been watching the path day and night; now "  
 "I have seen the Lord, my heart is at peace. I am "  
 "altogether lacking in achievement (sādhan) but "

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(1) Shortly before Rāma had killed a cannibal Rākshas (demon) as big as a mountain, and a hundred times swifter than the wind. As a result of seeing Rāma, the demon assumed at death a beautiful form, and the hero sent him to his own heaven! Aranya, 9 (3) 10.

"but recognising that I am a humble person you have"  
 "had mercy. I therefore make no request, oh god(dev)!"  
 "I had made my vow, oh stealer of the souls of men, to"  
 "wait until I met you, the friend of the humble, and "  
 "then abandon my body. The meditation, sacrifices, pray-  
 "ers, penance and fasting I have performed, I did for "  
 "the Lord, and I have obtained the <sup>gift of devotion</sup> ~~boon of faith~~ (bhakti)!..  
 " .. May the Lord whose body is dark as a raincloud, "  
 "who has become endowed with qualities (sagun) as the"  
 "blessed Rāma, live for ever in my heart with Sītā "  
 "and Lakshman." 12, (5) 13.

What followed is told very briefly and in obscure words, but it gives expression to what is taught elsewhere, that the worshippers of Rāma do not seek absorption in God, but conscious communion with Him:-

"When he had said this, the fire of Yog consumed his "  
 "body. By the favour of Rāma, he went to Vaikunth "  
 "(the heaven of Vishnu). The saint was not absorbed"  
 "in Hari, for this reason, that from the first he had"  
 "received the gift of <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~." 12 (5) 13.

As the story proceeds, we are again and again made to realise the spirit of devotion roused in Rāma's worshippers. A disciple of the great Agastya hears of his approach:-

"In thought, word and deed, he was a servant of Rāma's"  
 "feet; not even in a dream had he thought of any other"  
 "god. When his ears heard of Rāma's approach, he "  
 "rushed out, full of desire. 'Oh Vidhi,' he cried, "  
 "'will Raḡhurāya, who is a brother to the lowly, have"  
 "'mercy on such a worthless thing as I? The holy "  
 "'Rāma and his younger brother will meet me as if I "  
 "'were their own servant. In my heart there is no "  
 "'steadfast trust, no devotion, no self-control; in my"  
 "'mind no knowledge, no association with good men, no"  
 "'meditation, no prayer, no watchings, no constant "  
 "'love for the lotus feet; only the word of him who "  
 "'is the treasure house of mercy. 'He is my loved "  
 "'one who goes to no other.' "  
 "'Today my eyes will be rewarded by seeing him who "  
 "'liberates from existence (bhav mochan)'" 14 (6) 14.

Eventually he came to a standstill. He could neither advance nor retreat. He was in so great a maze, that when Rāma did arrive, nothing could rouse him till Rāma put off his human form and shewed himself as the four-armed god (chaturbhuḡ). Then the hermit awoke. He fell at Rāma's feet overwhelmed with love and gladness. The hero raised him from the ground and folded him to his breast:-

"I adore Rāma, Nirḡun and <sup>Saḡun</sup>~~Nirḡun~~, like and unlike, beyond"  
 "thought, speech and comprehension, pure and faultless, "

"everywhere and illimitable; the breaker of the "  
 "world's burdens; a grove of the trees of heaven (1)"  
 "for those devoted to him; the destroyer of passion,"  
 "greed, pride, and lust; the bridge over the ocean "  
 "of life; the banner of the Solar race. May he be "  
 "always our protector..... Though he is without passion,"  
 "all-pervading, eternal, and dwells for ever in the "  
 "hearts of all, nevertheless, may he dwell in my heart"  
 "as the wood-wandering enemy of demons, along with Sītā"  
 "and Lakshman. Those who know, know you, oh master,"  
 "to be Sagun, Agun, Ur antaryāmī (with qualities, "  
 "devoid of qualities, the knower of the heart). May "  
 "he, who is the lotus-eyed king of Koshal, dwell in "  
 "my heart." 15 (7) 15.

Rāma next passed to the hermitage of Agastya. From this  
 holy man the hero asked for a strange boon. "Give me a "  
 "charm (mantra) by which I may destroy the persecutors of the"  
 "hermits." When he heard this strange request, the sage<sup>(2)</sup>  
 smiled and said:-

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(1) In Indra's heaven there were trees which yielded all  
 one's desires.

(2) This was the sage who drank up the ocean. He and  
 Vasishth are sometimes said to be the offspring of the gods  
 Mitra and Varuna.

(180b)

"You ask of me?" My lord, what do I know? Oh des-"  
"troyer of sin, because of my worship of you, I know "  
"something of your greatness. Beholding the play of"  
"your eye-brows, men ever remain enchanted with your "  
"lotus feet. With your own hand you cast down various"  
"Brahmās, saints and Shivas. Your power is very great,"  
"as all the world knows. But there is something else "  
"I wish to say. Listen, Bhagwān. Your Māyā is a "  
"wide-spreading fig tree; the many multitudes "



"of worlds (Brahmāṇḍ) are its fruit; while all things that have"  
 "life are like the insects that dwell within the fruit). They "  
 "know nothing else.<sup>(1)</sup> This fruit is consumed by harsh and 2  
 "formidable Time; Time, who, in his dread of you, is always "  
 "afraid. You, who are the lord of all the worlds, ask a ques-"  
 "tion of me, as if you were only a man. I ask this boon, oh "  
 "mine of mercy; dwell in my heart with Sītā and Lakshmaṇ. Give"  
 "me steadfast devotion, compassion, fellow-ship with pious men, "  
 "and a love for your lotus feet that cannot be broken. Though "  
 "you are Brahm, indivisible, eternal, beyond the reach of per- "  
 "ception, whom holy men worship, nevertheless I know you and "  
 "declare your manifestation as Brahm and Love embodied (sagun"  
 Brahmṛati).

Of the long years that follow we learn nothing except the statement that as a result of Rāma's presence, the holy men who lived in the forest had no further cause to be afraid. In this ensuing peacefulness birds and beasts, rivers, trees and mountains shared. Even of the conversations in which the exiles would indulge, we obtain only one glimpse, though we are

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(1) As Growse puts it, "And think their own particular fig tree the only one in existence." p 428.

told that some days were spent in talking about asceticism, knowledge, virtue and conduct. This single glimpse is, however of great value and must be recorded in full.

"Once upon a time, as Rāma was seated at his ease, Lakshman " "said very meekly, 'Oh king of gods, men and saints, of all'" "that moves and that does not move, I wish to ask you a ques-'" "tion. You are, as it were, my own life. Give me an ex-'" "planation, oh god; I have abandoned all to serve the dust '" "of your feet. Describe to me knowledge, self-control and '" "Māyā. Describe to me that devotion (bhakti) to which you '" "show mercy. Tell me, my lord, and explain it all, the dif-'" "ference that subsists between God and the soul. (Ishwar '" "jivahi bhed) by means of which arises love<sup>(nati)</sup> for your feet '" "and grief and error vanish." ❧ ❧ (❧ ❧). 20(10)18.

To this appeal Rāma replied,

"Listen, brother, and apply your intelligence and heart (to " "what I say). I and mine, thou and thine <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ the product of" "Māyā. Māyā has brought the multiplicity of souls into its " "power. The senses and the objects of sense, as far as the " "mind can reach, are all Māyā. Understand that brother. " "Listen while I tell you of its divisions. They are two, " "namely, knowledge and ignorance; the one exceedingly evil, " "grief embodied, by whose control the soul falls into the pit" "of existence; the other which created the world, dominated "

"by the three qualities. It did so by the direction of the"  
 Lord (prabhu) not by its own power. Knowledge, in which "  
 "there is not any self-confidence, sees the form of Brahm in"  
 "everything. He is called the greatest ascetic who surrend-"  
 "ers the fruit of asceticism, and the three qualities as if "  
 "they were a blade of grass. 21 (11) /b.

"Soul is that which because of Māyā does not know its-"  
 "self to be God, the giver of bondage and of liberation, God"  
 "over all, the sender forth of Māyā, the boundary. From the"  
 "practice of religious rites, asceticism springs, from the "  
 "practice of meditation (yoga) knowledge. Knowledge is the "  
 "giver of liberation, so the Veda says. But that by which "  
 "I quickly exercise mercy, brother, is devotion to me; it "  
 "yields happiness to my devotees. It is self-sustaining, "  
 "it needs no other support. Both knowledge and ignorance "  
 "are subordinate to it. Devotion! brother, there is nothing"  
 "to be compared to it as a source of happiness. It can be "  
 "obtained if holy men (sant) are favourable. I shall describe"  
 "how devotion can be realised. It is a path easy to travel,"  
 "by which men find me. First a great love<sup>(priti)</sup> for the feet of "  
 "Brahmins and, in one's own actions, taking delight in the "  
 "teaching of revelation. Having done this the result is a "  
 "mental aloofness from the things of sense; then there springs<sup>2</sup>  
 "up a love<sup>(anurāgā)</sup> for my feet. The nine acts of devotion<sup>(bhakti)</sup>, exercised"  
 by means of the ear, etc. become strong, and there is born in"

"the mind a great love (rati) for my exploits, <sup>and</sup> a great love " (prem) for the lotus feet of holy men (sant). In mind, deed "and word, worship becomes a confirmed purpose. Father, " "mother, relative, master, god, all treated like myself, re-" "ceive steadfast service. When singing my virtues, the hairs" "of the body stand on end, the voice trembles, water flows " "from the eyes. I always come under the control of those in" "whom there is no lust, pride, deceit or other vices. Those" "who <sup>in word, deed and thought guilelessly</sup> sing the praise of my incarnation (gati), in their lotus" "hearts I take my rest for ever." ~~22, 23 (12, 15)~~ 22(12) 20.

This discourse afforded great satisfaction to Lakshman who bowed his head at his brother's feet. He said, "My lord," "listening to your words has removed my doubts, knowledge has " "come. New love has grown in my heart." (1)

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(1) The modern reader will have difficulty in agreeing with Lakshman's opinion. Tulsidās is not at his best when he assumes the role of a philosopher. Rāma's laboured invitation <sup>to</sup> for his brother to listen and understand shews how the poet's genius forsook him when he ventured into regions which were not congenial to his faith.

THE ABDUCTION OF SĪTĀ

Agastya advised Rāma to settle near the river Godāvāri. And it was from there in the thirteenth year of his exile that Sītā was carried off by Rāvaṇ.<sup>(1)</sup> How that happened has been already described in the <sup>first</sup> ~~introductory~~ chapter. Here it is our business to relate how Rāma himself acted, and what were the opinions of the demons with regard to him.

When Kharā and Dushan, the brothers of Rāvaṇ came to avenge their sister, they first sent heralds to the prince, demanding the surrender of Sītā. Rāma replied, "Though I " "am a man, I am the destroyer of the demon race; though I am " "a child, I am the protector of holy men and the exterminator " "of the wicked." 28 (14) 22. In the battle that followed, Lakshman and Sītā retired to a cave, and Rāma engaged a host of fourteen thousand demons, single handed. The difficulty of slaying them was increased by the fact that no sooner were they killed than by virtue of their magical powers, they came to life again. This alarming situation filled the gods with dread, but their fears were allayed when Rāma, the lord of illusion (Māyā nāth) exercised his own still greater powers and brought the battle to an end by destroying every one of

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(1) The abduction of Sītā is described in the second half of the Forest book.

his opponents. As the souls of the demons parted from their bodies, they cried out 'Rām, Rām,' and thus attained nirvāna. "When Rāvaṇ heard of his brothers' death, he said, 'Gods, " "men, demons, serpents, there is not one of them equal to " "my servants. Kharṇ and Dushan were equal to me in strength. " " Who can have killed them, if it was not God (bhagwān). If " " If the lord of the world (jag̃dīsh), the giver of joy to " " the gods, and the remover of the earth's burden, has become " "incarnate (avatār) then I shall go and fight with him. By " "means of the arrow of the Lord (Prabhu) I shall cross the " "ocean of existence. For this demon shape of mine, prayer " "is of no avail ..... If he is only a man, some king's son, " "I shall defeat them and carry off the woman.'"

To assist him in his enterprise, he called upon his friend Mārīch. The advice he received was discouraging:

"He is the god of all that moves and all that does not move. " "Don't fight with him, my son. If he kill you, you die; if " "you live, it is he who gives you life." 38 (20)32.

When he saw argument was of no avail, Mārīch consented to assume the form of a deer, and beguile the princess. But he knew that his deceit would have a fatal issue.

"Thus pondering, he went with the Ten-headed. Undivided love " "was in his heart for Rāma's feet. He was very glad, but he " "did not shew it. 'Today I shall behold the one I love best..."

"I shall place in my heart the feet of the abode of mercy, with  
"Sītā and Lakshman. His anger confers nirvāna. His devotees "  
bring him under their control. Hari, the ocean of happiness, "  
"will fit an arrow to his bow with his own hands and slay me."  
39. (21)33.

In the meantime, knowing what was about to happen, Rāma in the  
absence of Lakshman who had gone in search of herbs and fruit,  
said to Sītā;

"Listen, oh beloved, faithful, and amiable spouse. I am about "  
"to play a part after the fashion of a man. Make your dwell- "  
"ing in fire until I destroy the demons. ~~Whenever~~ Rāma had "  
"said ~~all~~ he had to say, Sītā placed the Lord's feet on her "  
"breast and entered into fire. She left behind her shadow "  
"only, but it was the same in appearance, amiable and gentle. "  
"Lakshman did not know the secret, or what God (bhagwān) had "  
"planned." 37 (19).31.

The poet represents what follows as unreal. So far as  
one can judge, Sītā's desire to secure the skin of the lovely  
deer was real. But Rāma knew that the deer was not a deer,  
that it was the demon in disguise. And so when Sītā begs  
her husband to secure it, the poet tells us:

"Raghupati knew the reason of it all. He got up, glad in "  
"heart to accomplish the purpose of the gods..... The deer "

"seeing the Lord coming after him, ran away. Rām pursued " "him. He, whom the Veda calls Neti, and whom Shiva cannot " "fathom, ran after a mimic deer (māyā mrig)" 40, ~~41~~ (22) 34.

As the deer fell dying before the shaft of Rāma, he called out in a loud voice, "Lakshman," and then remembered Rāma in his mind. "At the hour of death, as he abandoned his body, " "he remembered Rāma and Sītā. The benevolent lord understood " "the love that was in his heart, and gave to him a condition " "which saints find it difficult to attain. The gods rained " "down a great many flowers, and sang ~~the~~ songs in praise of " "his virtues, saying 'Raghunāth, the friend of the humble " "(dīn bandhu) has given a place in his own heaven to a demon." 42. (23).35.

When Sītā heard the demon calling out the name of Lakshman she thought her husband was appealing for help. She begged her brother-in-law to go to his assistance. But he replied, "By the play of his eyebrows, the world is destroyed. Even " "in a dream he cannot fall into trouble." 42 (23)35. When Lakshman at length did go, it was because his resolution was shaken by the contrivance of Hari (Hari prerit).

The absence of the two brothers gave Rāvaṇ the opportunity he sought. Sītā was carried off to Ceylon. When the prince returned and found the hermitage empty - "he became" "as distressed as an ordinary man." He went searching every where. He appealed to the birds and beasts; to the trees



and flowers to tell him where Sītā was hiding. He cried aloud and begged her to ease him of his pain.

"Rāma, whose desires are all satisfied, who is the dwelling-"  
 "place of joy, the unborn, the everlasting, conducted himself"  
 "like a man." 52, (25) 38.

All through the poem, up till now, the picture presented to us of Rāma's love for Sītā is both beautiful and sincere. It is therefore matter for wonder that at this stage, Rāma should be made to speak in such bitter disparagement of women. Both to his brother and to Nārada, who is brought quite unnecessarily upon the scene, he uses language difficult to reconcile with his normal attitude. In a later chapter more detailed reference will be made to some of these utterances. Here it is enough to record one of them:-

"Lust, anger, greed, pride and other passions form the mighty "  
 "torrent of delusion (moh). But of them all, the most horrible "  
 "and the cause of greatest pain, is illusion (Māyā) in a woman's "  
 "form." 71 (38)56.

Rāma's opinions on this and other matters, however, excited the mingled wonder and admiration of the god Shiva, for he said to his wife, "The lord of creation, devoid of qualities, Rāma "  
 "who knows all hearts (sab antaryāmi) shewed the distress of a "  
 "lover, as well as steadfastness and absence of desire."  
 64 (33) 48.

(187) 187.

The search for Sītā continued, but she was nowhere to be found. It is strange that the god, so often spoken of as antaryāmī, did not know where she was. But he obtained two valuable clues. The vulture, who tried to rescue Sītā from the clutches of Rāvaṇ, was able before he died, to tell who was her captor.

"It is the ten-headed one who did this. He is the wicked  
"one who carried off Sītā. He went carrying her towards the  
"south." 53. (26)39.

And somewhat later, a female hermit with whom they had a long interview, advised Rāma to seek the help of Sugriv. The incident is peculiar. The prince made no mention of what he had heard from the vulture, and it is only at the close of their conversation that he asks her: "Lady, have you any news  
"of Sītā? If you know please tell me." The woman was surprised that he did not know. Rather she was convinced that he did know; "Sugriv will tell you everything, oh god Raghu-  
"bīr. You know already, and yet you ask!" 59 (30)44.

Rāma's encounter with the vulture and the female hermit, who was an outcaste, "the lowest of the low and a woman to  
"boot," deserves very special attention. Not because of the information they gave, but because of their feeling for Rāma and the gracious treatment which they received at his hands, it is manifest that Tulsidās wishes us to realise that these

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incidents are important. It is not by accident that he puts them together. He is determined to make his readers understand his purpose. Nor does he leave us in doubt what conclusion we are to draw. It is that there is no barrier of race or caste or condition which can shut out anyone, however vile, from Rāma's presence and from Rāma's grace. Thus we read that Rāma offered the dying vulture the gift of life. "Rāma said 'continue to live, father.' He answered with a " "smile,' He has appeared before my eyes, the muttering of whose " "name at the hour of death confers salvation on the most con- " "temptible; so the books of revelation declare: Why should " "I continue to live?' Tears filled the eyes of Raghurai, and " "he replied, 'Father, your own deeds (karma) have achieved for " "you this rank. There is nothing in the world difficult to " "secure by those who are eager for the good of others. When " "you surrender your body, <sup>go to</sup> ~~to~~ my heaven. What can I give? " "You have got your desire." 54 (26) 39.

An immediate transformation of the vulture's shape took place. He changed into the very form and fashion of Vishṇu (Hari). His body was dark blue in colour and had four great arms. He wore a yellow garment, and was adorned with jewels. And his hymn of praise was not ~~behind~~ behind those of the greatest sages in its understanding of the mystery of Rāma's person.

"He is Nirgun and Sagun; Brahm, the all pervading, the eternal." But what is specially worthy of remark is the emphasis on that part of the hymn which reminds us of the toil which saints and ascetics endured in their efforts to know God. Knowledge, meditation, penance and abstraction, the subduing of the mind and of the senses, Rāma ~~has~~ provided a better way than they afford. He has revealed himself to give delight to the whole universe, (~~verse~~). And so he says:

"May Rāma who is the husband of Lakshmi, and is ever under " "the control of his servants; he who is the lord of the three, " "worlds, dwell in my heart; whose pure praise brings trans- " "migration to an end." 54.(26)39. With the result that, "The vulture, having asked for the boon of unbroken <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~ (bhakti)" "went to Hari's heaven. Rām with his own hands performed the " "funeral rites according to the rules laid down. The very " "merciful and tender-hearted Raghunāth who is merciful without " "a cause, gave to an unclean, flesh-eating bird, a rank which " "ascetics crave." 55. (27)41.

As for the female hermit; she belonged apparently to one of the jungle tribes. And here again the poet labours to make us realise how base was her origin. Yet when the prince enters her hut, he sits down on a seat which she places for him, and allows her to bathe his feet. More than that, he takes from

her hand and eats the food she brings. And this is what she says: "How can I praise thee. I am a low caste person and " "I am very stupid. I am the lowest of the low caste; I am " "very low, a woman! and besides all that, I am very ignorant." "But Raghunāth replied: 'Listen, Lady, I recognise one re- " "lationship only, that of devotion. Caste, family, religion, " "reputation, wealth, power, connections, good qualities, " "cleverness; if a man has these and has not <sup>devotion,</sup> ~~faith~~, he is like " "a cloud without water in it." (1) 55 (29) 43.

And here again, perhaps with even ~~greater~~ emphasis, the poet is resolved to make his purpose plain. He chooses the most unclean of unclean birds, a creature that lives on carrion, and perhaps even more, <sup>he chooses</sup> a woman reckoned as outside the pale of all decent society, to proclaim his doctrine at its best and highest; that the greatest of all endowments is the love men cherish for God. The woman also attained beatitude. "Gazing on Rāma's face and placing his lotus feet <sup>in</sup> ~~on~~ her heart" "she surrendered her body on the fires of Yoga, and became ab-" "sorbed in Rāma's feet. She went whence there is no return."

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(1) Nothing is more disappointing during the monsoon than clouds which yield no rain. To be touched by an outcaste, still more to take food from his hand, makes a man of caste unclean.

"Oh, men, forsake your various works, which are unrighteous-  
 "ness, and all your sects, which are a source of sorrow,  
 "exercise faith (bishwās) and fall in love with Rāma's feet;  
 "this is Tulsidās' plea. He gave salvation (<sup>mukti</sup>~~mukti~~) to such  
 "a woman, an outcaste and of sinful birth. Foolish indeed,  
 "you are, if you desire peace of mind and forsake such a  
 "Lord." 59, 60 (30,31)44-45.

(1) The twelve chief disciples of Rāmānand included a weaver,  
 a leather-worker and a barber. This list shews, says  
 H.H.Wilson, "that the school of Rāmānand admitted disciples of  
 "every caste; it is in fact, asserted in the Bhakta Māl that  
 "the <sup>distinction</sup>~~destruction~~ of caste is inadmissible according to the  
 "tenets of the Rāmānandīs; there is no difference, they say, be-  
 "tween Bhagwān and the bhakt, or the deity and his worshipper; *but*  
 "Bhagwān appears<sup>ed</sup> in inferior forms, as a fish, a boar, a tor-  
 "toise, etc., so therefore the bhakt may be born as a chamār  
 "a koli, a chhipi or any other degraded caste." Religious  
 "Sects of the Hindus, I. p 56.

(183)a.192.

Rāma's Alliance with the Monkeys.

Rāma's alliance with the monkeys is described in the fourth book of the poem. It is one of the shortest, and is called Kish-Kindhā, from the name of Sugrīv's capital. When the two brothers approached the home of the monkey king, their arrival occasioned much alarm. Sugrīv was afraid they had come at the instigation of his brother Bāli, with whom he was at strife. He therefore asked his friend Hanumān, who was a son of the wind god, to go and interview them. Hanumān, assuming the appearance of a young Brahmin, went forward, and "said. "Are you two of the three gods, or are you Nara and "Narāyaṇ? Or are you the lord of all the spheres who has "taken human form and come down for the sake of the world, to" "be its saviour and to break its burdens?"

Rāma replied that no one could wipe out the writing of the Creator. They were the sons of Dashrath, king of Koshal, who, in obedience to their father's command, had come to the forest. Their names were Rāma and Lakshmaṇ. His wife Sītā was with them. But a demon had carried her off, and they were seeking her in every direction. He ended by saying, "We have told you who we are. Tell us, Brahmin, your story." Hanumān, however, could not be deceived. He fell at Rāma's feet and said:

"I am an ignorant person, that is why I asked. But you, why  
"do you ask, as if you were a man? Under the influence of  
"your illusion (māyā) I wandered in error. <sup>that</sup> ~~this~~ is why I did  
"not recognise the feet of the Lord. I am stupid and ignor-  
"ant in the grasp of error to begin with, and they the mer-  
"iful Lord Bhagwān led me astray. Life is fascinated by your  
"māyā, then it is released by your affection. For this reason  
"I cry to Raghubir. I know no other way of breaking my bonds."  
"As a child has trust in his father and mother, so we abide  
"without anxiety nourished by the Lord."  
Rāma raised his worshipper and took him in his arms, saying  
"Listen, monkey, don't consider yourself less (than others)  
"I love you twice as much as I love Lakshmaṇ. Everyone says  
"that I treat all alike. He who has no other resort (but me)  
"is a servant beloved. And he who has no other resort,  
"Hanumān, is the man who never doubts in his mind that he is  
"the servant of Bhagwān, the lord of all created things, mani-  
"fest in many forms." (~~274~~. (2)4.

In the alliance which was made between the monkey king  
and Rāma, the former promised to send out millions of spies  
to search the world for Sītā's hiding place, while Rāma pro-  
mised to kill Bāli; "though he take refuge with Brahmā and  
"Shiva (Rudra) he will not survive." 9 (6)8. Sugrīv however,  
had not Hanumān's faith, and Rāma had to perform several



miraculous deeds before the monkey king could believe that the prince would be more than a match for his brother.

"Knowledge arose in his mind and he said: By the "  
"lord's mercy my mind is established. I will "  
"surrender pleasure, wealth, and family to serve "  
"you. All these interfere with devotion to Rāma"  
"so say the saints who worship thy feet. Enemy,"  
"friend, pleasure, pain, are the products of Māyā"  
"and not the chief end of life. Bālī is my great-"  
"est friend." Kish 9 (6) 8.

To these observations Rāma replied:-

"What you have said is all true. My words, friend,"  
"are never false."

They then went off to kill Bālī. Shiva's comment on this strange incident is:-

"Rāma causes us all to dance like monkeys, so the "  
"Vedas sing."

Bālī, the prospective victim of Rāma's prowess, had a truer conception of him from the first than his brother. Because when his wife warned him against encountering Rāma in battle, he answered:-

(194a)

"Listen, my timid dear, Raghunāth treats all alike."

"Even though he slay me, he will still be my lord."

11 (7) 9.

While the brothers fought, Rāma watched the duel from behind a tree. But when he saw his ally being worsted, he stepped out and smote Bāli to the ground. It is a conflicting statement on the part of the poet that follows:-

"He sat up and saw the Lord in front of him .....

"again and again he gazed and placed his soul at "

"his feet; he reckoned that his birth had been "

"worth while; he knew his Lord. His heart was "

"full of love, but his words were severe. He "

"spoke, his gaze in Rāma's direction: For the "

"sake of religion you have become incarnate (ava-

"tareu). Why then have you killed me in hunter "

"fashion? Sugrīv is your friend. I am your en-

"emy. For what reason did you take my life?" 12 (8) 10.

Rāma's defence is scarcely conclusive:-

"Fool, you knew that Sugrīv relied on the strength "

"of my arm, and in your pride you sought to slay him! "

But in any case, he offered as he had offered the vulture, to give him back his life. The monkey declined the proffered gift.

"Listen, fountain of mercy. In birth after birth"  
 "the saints try their hardest, and in the end Rāma"  
 "never comes near them. But he, by the power of "  
 "whose name Shankar at Benares gives to all the "  
 "same imperishable state (gati abināshi) has ap- "  
 "peared before my eyes. Shall I ever have such an"  
 "opportunity again? The Lord has told me to retain"  
 "my body; who would be so foolish as to cut down "  
 "the tree of the gods and water instead a babul "  
 "tree. Now, oh lord, look upon me in mercy and "  
 "give to me the boon I crave, that in whatever "  
 "womb I may be born in the grip of Karma, I may be "  
 "a lover of Rāma's feet." 13 (9) 11. (1)

He chose the easier and better part. Rāma sent him to his own heaven. As for the disconsolate widow:-

"Seeing her distress, Hari instructed her and removed"  
 "her Māyā. Earth, water, fire, air and wind, of these"  
 "five elements are our base bodies composed. The "

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(1) The monkey also spoke of the labour involved in the practice of Yoga, "the suppression of the breath, abstraction of soul, control of the senses, and profound contemplation by which saints sometimes attained their object, viz. seeing Rāma." See Growse, p. 467.

(195a)

"corpse which you see before you, is asleep. The "  
"soul is eternal, why do you weep? Knowledge sprang"  
"up. She embraced his feet. She asked and received"  
"the gift of perfect devotion: Oh Umā, the Lord "  
"makes us all dance like dolls."

"There is no well wisher like Rāma in the world,"  
"son, father, mother, kinsman. Everyone else "  
"gods, men and saints, profess affection for "  
"selfish reasons,..... The man who forsakes such"  
"a lord, must fall into the net of affliction. "  
15 (10) 12.

With the end of the rainy season, Sugrīv was slow to  
implement his promise. When finally roused he excused his  
delay by saying:-

"Lord, there is no guilt on my part. Your Māyā"  
"is very powerful. If any one escape from it,"  
"it is because you are merciful. Gods, men "  
"and saints are without control with regard to "  
"the senses. I am a low beast, a "

(187) 196.

"most lascivious monkey." To which Rāma replied, "You are " "as dear to me as my brother Bharat. Now apply yourself, and " "try in what way you can get news of Sītā." 25 (20) 23.

When eventually the monkeys did gather there were so many of them that, as Shiva remarked, only a fool would attempt to count them. Nevertheless there was not one of them after whose welfare Rāma did not enquire. But "this is no great " "matter for the Lord to do. Raghurai is manifest in all " "things and pervades all." 26 (21) 24. Associated with the monkeys there was the king of the bears, and on his lips also are placed words in praise of Rāma, quite equal to anything spoken by others. It was in response to a remark made by one of the monkeys suggesting that Rāma was only a man.

"My son! don't think that Rāma is a man. Reckon him to be " "Nirguṇ Brahm, the unconquerable and the unborn. We his ser- " "vants are all very fortunate, having as a lover the everlast- " "ing Sagun Brahm. Of his own desire, the Lord has come down " "(avatareu) for the sake of gods, Brahmins, cows, and the " "Earth. As Sagun he dwells among his worshippers, surrender- " "ing ~~at~~ beatitude and all its joy." 30 (26) 29.

In conclusion we have to note that the vulture whose remarkable powers of vision enabled him to see Sītā a prisoner in Ceylon, gives us the age in which Rāma was born. This <sup>long before</sup> bird had scorched his wings by flying too near the sun, but he was told by a saint:-

"In the <sup>second</sup> ~~third~~ age of the world (Tretā-yug) Brahm will assume "  
"a human body and the lord of demons will carry off his wife. "  
"The Lord will send out messengers to search for her. When "  
"you meet them you will be made pure." 32 (27)30.

### The Finding of Sītā

The finding of Sītā is described in the fifth book of the poem. (1) When Hanumān after his first interview with Sītā, allowed himself to be seized and carried into Rāvan's presence, he told the demon:- "It is by Rāma's <sup>that</sup> power, Māyā " "creates the multitude of worlds; it is by Rāma's power That " "Brahmā, Vishnu and Shiva create, protect, and destroy them." "It is by his power that the thousand faced serpent bears on " "his head the world-egg's shell, with its mountains and for- 2 "ests. He assumes various bodies for the protection of the " "gods, and to give a lesson to scoundrels like you. .... By " "his power, the very smallest atom of it, the whole creation " "exists..... Death who devours gods, demons and all created " "things, fears him with a great fear. Don't become his " "enemy. Listen to me, and give up Sītā. The jewel of the " "house of Raghu is a protector of the suppliant. The enemy " "of your brother (Kharṣ) is an ocean of compassion. Go to "

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(1) This book is called Sundar or the Beautiful.

"him for shelter; the Lord will protect you and forget your"  
"sins..... If Rāma is hostile to you, there is no saviour "  
"from his wrath. Shiva, Vishṇu and Brahmā cannot protect "  
"you when Rāma is your foe." ~~20(20)20~~. 20(20)20.

The wife of Rāvaṇ, especially after Hanumān burned down the capital, gave her husband similar advice, while a pious brother who was a fervent worshiper of Vishṇu (Hari) pleaded with him to surrender Sītā before it was too late.

"Lust, anger, pride, avarice, all are paths that lead to "  
"hell. Abandon all of them and worship the feet of Raghubir!"  
" Rāma is not a man. Rāma is not a king. He is the god of "  
"the universe. He is Time its very self personified. He is "  
"Brahm, the imperishable, the uncreated Bhagwān; the all per- "  
"vading, the unconquerable; without beginning and without end, "  
"the friend of cows, Brahmins, gods and the earth. The sea "  
"of mercy has assumed a man's body to give gladness to men, to "  
"destroy the companies of the wicked; to protect the Vedas and "  
"religion; to be the saviour of the gods." ~~(37)33~~. 37(37)37.

This book closed<sup>s</sup> with an account of the gathering of the monkey hosts, which Rāma and Sugrīv brought to the southern shores of India, <sup>for the attack on Rāvaṇ's capital.</sup> The problem was how to get them across the intervening ocean to Ceylon. Rāvaṇ's brother, who had taken refuge with Rāma proposed that they should address their prayers to the ocean:-

"And Rāma said; 'Friend, you have made a good suggestion. If"  
 "the god (daiv) will help us, it will be well.' But Lakshman"  
 "did not approve this proposal. When he heard Rāma's words "  
 "he was very grieved. 'Sir,' he said, 'what confidence have"  
 "you in the god (daiv). Shew your anger and dry up the ocean'"  
 "'it is the one idea of a coward and a lazy man to cry, god! "  
 "'god!'" 53 (50)50.

Rāma however was determined to try what prayer would do.  
 "He went down to the shore, reverently \*saluted the ocean, and"  
 "having spread sacred grass, sat down. Three days passed, and"  
 "the stupid ocean paid no heed to his entreaty. Then Rāma in"  
 "wrath said 'There will be no kindness unless he is made afraid.'" 61 (57)60. And so he called on Lakshman to bring his bow and  
 arrows. The arrows soon produced a response. The Ocean ap-  
 peared in the guise of a Brahmin and casting himself at Rāma's  
 feet, asked to be forgiven. "The firmament, the wind, fire,"  
 "water, earth, have all sprung up for the sake of creation at "  
 "the instruction of your Māyā, so the Scriptures sing. They"  
 are what they are, in accordance with the Lord's command, and"  
 "and their happiness depends on their so remaining. The Lord"  
 "has done well in teaching me a lesson. Nevertheless the "  
 "keeping within my proper limits was appointed by you. A "  
 "drum, a villager (ganwār), a low caste, a beast and a woman,



"are entitled to a beating. For the glory of the Lord, I " "shall be dried up. The army will cross over, but it will" "not be to the increase of my fame. The Lord's commands" "cannot be evaded. So the books of revelation declare. " "Do then quickly what you think right." 62 (58)61.

Rāma was pleased with this very modest appeal. Nothing more was said about drying up the Ocean and it was resolved instead to build a bridge.

The Death Of Rāvan and the Rescue of Sītā.<sup>(1)</sup>

The proposal to build a bridge called forth a variety of moralisings on the part of the king of the bears. "Sir, your" "name is the bridge by which men cross life's ocean. What " "obstacle is there in crossing this little sea?" If the builders remembered Rāma's fame, their toil would be as nothing. With Rāma's lotus feet placed on their hearts, it would be a pastime and no more. When the bridge was completed, Rāma, as has already been mentioned, erected a phallus (linga) of Shiva, and worshipped it. But in addition he made the promise,- "The people who ~~will~~ make a pilgrimage to Rāmeshwar when they" "leave their bodies, will go to my heaven. Those who ~~will~~ " "bring Ganges water and offer it will obtain the salvation of" "absorption (sāyujya mukti).<sup>(2)</sup> Those who serve me without an "

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(1) The Lankā book deals with these. It is one of the long books of the poem.

"object, and forsaking guile, Shiva will give to them devotion"  
 "for myself. Those who make a pilgrimage to the bridge that"  
 "I have made, will cross the ocean of existence without any "  
 "difficulty." (3)5.

The bridging of the ocean and Rāma's arrival in Ceylon led to fresh attempts on the part of Rāvaṇ's wife to persuade him to surrender Sītā. The queen said, "Do not fight against" "him in whose hands are Kāl, Karma and gun . . . . Raghurai is " "very merciful to the humble. He is like a tiger, who does" "not devour the man who comes to meet him. What you had to" "do, has all been done already. You have conquered gods, " "demons and the whole creation. It is the correct thing, so" "the Vedas say, for a king, when he reaches the fourth stage" "in life to go to the forest. Do that, my lord, and worship" "Him who is the Creator, preserver and destroyer of the world." "Rāma is gracious to those who reverence Him. Give up your " "selfishness and pride and worship Him for sake of whom holy" "men endure afflictions, and kings surrender their kingdoms " "and become ascetics. The king of Koshal has come to manifest" "his mercy to you. If you will be persuaded by me, you will " "become famous in the three worlds." (7)9.

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(2) See Monier Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, p. 1109. One does not expect Rāma to promise absorption.

She made somewhat later <sup>an other</sup> ~~a second~~ appeal which is remarkable for the fact that Tulsidās borrows freely the terminology of the Sāṅkhya philosophy which, so far, he has scarcely ever used.

" Put away your pride and do not think he is a man. The "

"jewel of the house of Raghu, his form is the universe. The "

"Vedas say that in every limb of his body a world is framed. "

"His feet are hell; his head is the dwellingplace of Brahmā,"

"and in the rest of his limbs there are other worlds. The "

"play of his eyebrows is terrifying Time; his eyes are the "

sun, his hair is the gathering of clouds, his nostrils are "

"the two Ashwins; night and day are the twinkling of his eyes;"

"the ten regions are his ears, as the Veda says; <sup>the</sup> gods of the "

"storm (Marut) are his breath; and <sup>the</sup> words of the Veda are his "

"very voice. His lips are the lower world; his teeth are "

"the fearsome god of death; his smile is Māyā, his arms are "

"the rulers of the different regions, his mouth is fire, his "

"tongue is Varun; creation, preservation and destruction are "

"his acts; the hair across the middle of his body are the "

"leaves of the forest; his bones are the mountains, his veins "

"are the rivers, his belly the sea, his anus is hell. All "

"that the world contains is the fashioning of the Lord. "

"Shiva is his consciousness (ahankār). Brahmā is his intellect

"(buddhi), the moon is his mind, and the great principle "  
 "(mahat) is his soul.<sup>(1)</sup> Consisting of everything that is"  
 "(charāchar may), he dwells in men, a multitude of forms, "  
 "Bhagwān. Oh lord of my life, hear and consider well, "  
 "forsake your enmity for the Lord, and love his feet. Do "  
 "that and my happiness will not depart." 18 (15) 20.

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(1) Mahat (mahān) is usually another name for buddhi, the second of the twenty-four tattva (entities or essences) of the Sāṅkhya system. The individual soul (manas) is the twenty-fifth. Growse suggests that by mahat, Tulsidās here indicates prakriti, the first of the twenty-four, from which the rest evolve. Ahankār, the I-making faculty or egoism, is the third.

In the Bāl Kāṇḍ, 149<sup>(147) 169.</sup>, reference is made to the mother of Kapila;-

"In her womb the eternal Lord God (ādi dev prabhu) in his  
 "mercy and compassion, planted Kapila, the author of the  
 "Sāṅkhya philosophy, the divine exponent of the theory of  
 "entities (tattvā bichār). Growse's translation. p.91.

The many incidents related in this book with reference to the battle between the forces of Rāma and Rāvan call for no detailed comment. Shiva reminds his wife in familiar phrases that the play of Rāma's eyebrows creates and destroys the universe, while it is frequently stated that Brahmā and Shiva both worship Rāma. One more tribute from a demon, however, deserves to be recorded. It will be remembered that in addition to Rāvan's pious brother there was another who in response to his asceticism was told to ask a boon. The boon he desired was that he might sleep for six months at a time. He was sound asleep when Rāma invaded Ceylon, and it was with great difficulty that Rāvan succeeded in waking him. His purpose was to demand his help. But the awakened brother was very angry when he heard what Rāvan had done.

"Fool, you have carried off the mother of the universe, and " "expect to succeed. You have not done well, and now you " "have come and wakened me. Give up your pride. Worship" "Rāma, and you will be happy. You must not set yourself " "against that Lord, whom Shiva, the Creator and the gods all" "worship..... Now take me to your bosom, brother and let me " "depart. For I go to fill my eyes with the sight of him who" "delivers from the three kinds of suffering.<sup>(1)</sup> Calling to "

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(1) They are dehitāp, bodily affliction; daivit tāp, affliction sent by God; bhavtik tāp, affliction arising from existence or contact with the world. See Bates's Hindi Dict. p.293.

"mind Rāma's form and qualities, he was for a moment filled"  
 "with joy. Then he asked for ten million jars of liquor and"  
 "many buffaloes." 74, 75 (59, 60). 4.65.

When these had been consumed he went forth to fight -  
 and to fight against Rāma. On the way, he met the brother  
 who had already gone over to Rāma's side; and told him that  
 he had conferred a great honour on the demon race by having  
 been a real worshipper of Rāma in thought, word, and deed.  
 For himself he was in the grasp of Time. When eventually  
 he died by Rāma's hand, "his glory (tej) entered the Lord's"  
 "mouth,<sup>to</sup> the amazement of gods, saints and everybody else."  
 82 (67)92. The same result took place when Rāvaṇ was killed.  
 119 (99)128. As for the demon rank and file, when they fell,  
 "Rāma sent them to his own heaven. Man-eating demons thus"  
 "obtained a rank which ascetics desire. Rāma is tender-"  
 "hearted and full of mercy to demons who invoke his name, "  
 "even when they are moved to do so by hatred. Who is so "  
 "merciful as he? The man who does not give up his error"  
 "and worship such a lord is foolish and accursed." 56 (43)

The poet's refusal to believe that Rāma could be hamper-  
 ed in any way by human limitations, places him time after  
 time in serious difficulty. We have seen it in the assertion  
 that the real Sītā entered the fire leaving only a shadow to

be carried off by Rāvaṇ<sup>(1)</sup>. And we saw how, when the very human and very attractive Rāma mourned sincerely for his lost wife and searched for her everywhere, those he met are represented as refusing to believe that he could be ignorant as to her whereabouts. Indeed rather than believe that Rāma could be ignorant of anything, Tulsidās declares that he was merely playing a part. And in this book also, he finds it necessary to remind us that that is so. "By the play of his eyebrows " "Everything comes to be, and again everything is destroyed. " "He makes a thunderbolt out of a blade of grass, and a blade of " "grass out of a thunderbolt." 44 (33)<sup>(2)</sup> 52. He is omniscient (sarvagya) and dwells in all hearts. 11. (17) 23. And yet, when Lakshman was wounded Rāma's distress was very great: - "The unconquerable god of the universe, the all-pervading Brahm, the "abode of mercy, asks; Where is Lakshman?" 67 (53) 75. He sends Hanumān to the Himālayas to bring healing herbs, and when the monkey seems long in returning, he sits by his brother's side lamenting "after the fashion of a man."

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(1) Long before the days of Tulsidās it had been difficult to "reconcile the entirely human words and actions of Rāma and Sītā " "in Books II, III, of the Rāmāyana (of Vālmiki) with the belief " "that Rāma is the eternal God." And in consequence the Advātma Rāmāyana was written, telling "the whole story afresh with a " view to meet these difficulties." In that book we find Sītā entering the fire, "leaving only an illusory Sītā to face the demon." See Farquhar's Outlines of Religious Literature of India, p. 250.

(2) In the Bijak of Kabīr, this simile also appears. See Ahmad Shāh's translation, p. 67.

"If I had known that going to the forest would mean the loss"  
 "of my brother, I would not have obeyed my father's command."  
 "Sons, wealth, wives, houses and relatives, these come and go"  
 time after time in this world; but a true brother is not so"  
 "easily found. . . . . If a stupid god (daiv) keep me alive, "  
 "what kind of face can I take back to Avadh, after losing a"  
 "brother beloved for the sake of a woman. Better to endure"  
 "dishonour in the eyes of the world. The loss of a woman is"  
 "no great loss . . . . . Rāma the indivisible, the merciful, thus"  
 "displayed the appearance of a man." 72 (58) 81.

With regard to Rāma's own part in the fight the same  
 idea is maintained that it is only make believe.

"When Rāma plays at being a man, it is like Garuda (the bird"  
 "of Vishnu) playing with the snakes ... How can he acquire "  
 "glory from taking part in such a battle? It is because the"  
 "fame of it when spread abroad purifies the world, and men "  
 "who sing of it will cross the ocean of existence." 77 (62) 87.

We are told at one stage that when fighting with Rāvan's"  
 son the youth shot arrows at him which changed into snakes.  
 "Rāma was in the power of the serpents' coils. The self-con-"  
 "trolled (sva bash), the eternal, the unchangeable one; like "  
 "a dancer he plays many parts, but he is never subject to an-"  
 "other (sva tantr) Rāma the Blessed (Bhagwān). It was to give"  
 "glory to the battle field that he allowed himself to be bound"  
 "in the serpents' coils. But when the gods saw it, they were"



"afraid. The Lord, the repeating of whose name cuts the " "coils of existence, how could he be bound, the all pervad-" "ing, who dwells in all things!. The deeds of Sagun are " "beyond the comprehension of our understanding, strength and" "speech." When they ponder on that fact, the greatest as-" "cetics give up all discussions and simply worship Rām." 84(69)94. 85, (69,70). The bird of Vishṇu, Garuḍ, who was an age long enemy of the snake race, was summoned by the gods and rishis. "He went to Rāma at once, ate up all the snakes in a moment," "and the illusion (Māyā ) departed." 85 (70)95.

We get one glimpse of Sītā during the battle. One of her guards who had become a friend, told her how it was proving impossible to kill Rāvaṇ. As soon as a head or an arm was cut off, it grew on again, "just as sin does even at a " "place of pilgrimage," 113 (94)<sup>(1)</sup>22. To this Sītā replied, "What will happen? Why don't you tell me? When his heads" "are cut off by Raghupati's arrows, he does'nt die! The" "Creator (Vidhi) is making everything contrary. It is my "

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(1) They all sprouted again, like sins committed at a holy place. ( Growse)

"bad luck that keeps him alive and separates me from Hari's " "lotus feet. The god (daiv), who made the false, deceitful," "golden deer, is still angry with me. The Creator (Vidhi), " "who causes me to suffer pain so difficult to endure, made me" "speak cutting words to Lakshman ... it is the Creator (Vidhi)" "who keeps me alive and no other." 114 (95) 123.<sup>(1)</sup>

There is real poetry in the answer with which the demon sought to comfort her.

"If an arrow strike his heart, the enemy of the gods will die." "But the Lord will not strike there, because in his heart Sītā" "dwells."

And this is followed by a chant, placed as it were, on Rāma's own lips:-

"Sītā lives in my heart; I live in Sītā's; and in my stomach " "there are many worlds. If an arrow were to strike there the" "worlds would all be destroyed."

When Rāvan's death was at last secured by the method explained in the preliminary chapter,<sup>(2)</sup> his widow, after reproaching her husband for thinking that the self-existent Hari, whom Shiva, Brahmā and all the gods worship, was a man, said:-

(1) On one occasion when struck by Rāvan's spear, Rāma became unconscious. When the gods saw this play-acting on the part of the Lord, they were dismayed. 109 (99) 118.

(2) "His essence (tej=glory) entered the lord's mouth. The gods" "Shiv and Brahmā were pleased." 119 (99) 128

"From your birth rejoicing in doing injury to others; your"  
 "body is one mass of sin; and Rāma has sent you to his own"  
 "heaven. I worship Brahm free from stain. Is there any-"  
 "one like Raghunāth, the ocean of mercy? He has given you"  
 "the highest state (paramgati) which saints with difficulty"  
 "secure." ~~119, 121 (100, 101)~~ 120(100)129.

Rāma's treatment of Sītā in saying that she must <sup>once more</sup> enter  
 into fire is mentioned very briefly. When she was brought  
 from her prison house, "First of all, Rāma placed her in the"  
 "fire. He wished that the internal witness (antar sākhi) "  
 "might be revealed. It was for this reason that the abode "  
 "of mercy spoke with some severity." When Lakshman was  
 told to assist, he shewed reluctance. But his brother's  
 look silenced all opposition. He ran, brought wood and  
 lighted it. Sītā was not the least afraid. She was glad  
 of the opportunity to testify to her loyalty to Rāma in deed,  
 word and thought. In giving this account of the testing by  
 fire, Tulsidās in one sense has made a great advance on the  
 earlier narrative of Vālmiki. Because there Rāma is re-  
 presented as shewing himself as unworthily suspicious of his  
 wife. He won't take her back till she has been tested by  
 fire. The gods are amazed and protest against such treat-  
 ment. Here there is that element also but in a very slight

degree. There was the stain which the world would attach to her (laukik kalaṅk). But the main purpose was to bring back the real Sītā. Since she had entered the fire in the forest at her husband's command, the real Sītā had been elsewhere. It was only a shadow of herself which Rāvaṇ carried off, and only a shadow which Rāma rescued. But when she emerged from this second fire, it was the divine goddess her very self once more. "The fire became (cold) like sandalwood, as Sītā " entered it remembering the Lord. Her shadow and the stain " which the world would attach to her, were consumed in the " fierce fire. Gods, sages and saints all stood around. They " had never seen such action on the part of the Lord: "The fire " assuming the form of a Brahmin, took by the hand and brought " to Rāma the real Lakshmi whom the books of revelation sing, " and who as Indirā emerged from the Sea of Milk.<sup>(1)</sup> She shines " forth on Rāma's left side, her glory very beautiful and " excellent." 125. (105) 134.

In Sītā's case as in Rāma's, Tulsidas is unwilling to face the consequences of a real incarnation. When Rāma acts like a man he does so in sport. When he is weary, when he

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(1) This refers to the legend that Lakshmi was one of the products secured by churning the Sea of Milk.

swoons, when he finds it difficult to defeat Rāvan, when he asks questions as if he did not know, some explanation must be found. It is said that it was Rāma's pleasure that it should seem so. And to that extent his incarnation is not real. The same has to be said with regard to Sītā. The poet cannot bear the thought that the goddess should be carried away and live in the demon's house. He therefore invents the plot we have described. It is here that he falls below Vālmiki. With the Sanskrit poet, it is the real Sītā who is carried off, and it is the real Sītā who is compelled to face the fire. No wonder the gods entered a protest. Rāma's treatment was very cruel. He told the princess that he would have nothing more to do with her. She could go where she liked. He had come to rescue her that the insult to his name might be removed. But no self-respecting man could take back a wife who had lived so long in another's house.<sup>(1)</sup> If Rāma's reputation suffers at Vālmiki's hands in connection with this incident, Sītā's is correspondingly increased, and it is remarkable that Sītā is the most human and the best portrayed character in the earlier work.

Tulsidās then escapes from these embarrassing situations which caused discredit to his hero, and which seemed to cause

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(1) See my Rāmāyana of Vālmiki. p. 272.

discredit to Sītā, and everybody was pleased. The gods in particular, appeared in person.

"Then came the gods, selfish as they always are, and spoke as " "if they were in search of the highest good. 'Friend of the " "humble, merciful Raghurai, a god yourself, you have had pity" "on the gods... You are omniscient, Brahm the imperishable, " "ever the same, untouched by the world, without parts, without" "qualities (agun), without sin, without defect, unconquerable," "full of compassion. Assuming a body, as the fish, the tortoise " "the boar, the man-lion, the dwarf, as Parashurāma, whenever " "the gods were in trouble, you have been born in bodies of var-" "ious kinds and destroyed what troubled them. As for Rāvan, " "the very root of sin, the oppressor of the gods, addicted to" "lust, anger, pride and desire, you have sent him to your own " "heaven. This is an act which causes us to wonder. We gods " "are possessed of very great authority. But out of desire " "for our own selfish purposes we have neglected devotion to " "you, and have fallen into the ever-flowing flood of existence." "Lord, we come to Thee now for refuge." 128 (104)133.

The Creator also is made to confess his former foolishness. "A curse on the life we gods have lived. Without devotion to" "you we have wandered, and come to grief in the world. Have " "mercy upon me now, oh merciful one, dispel my mind's bewilder-" "ment, by which it will be different from what it was, finding " "pleasure in what was pain, and live happily." 128 (107)137.

Rāma's father, Dashrath, next appeared. His two sons received him with great respect and obtained his blessing. They said that it was by the power of their father's religious merit that they had been able to conquer the unconquerable demon. The very important statement is then added:-

"Raghupati, beholding the greatness of his father's love, "  
 "gave to him firm conviction. He did not obtain release "  
 "from existence (moksh). Dashrath applied his mind to <sup>devotion's</sup> ~~faith's~~ "  
 "secret (bhed bhakti). Those who worship the incarnate God "  
 "(sagun upāsak) do not obtain release from existence (moksh)."  
 "Rāma gives <sup>devotion</sup> ~~to~~ them ~~faith~~ (bhakti) <sup>To</sup> ~~in~~ himself." 129 (108) 138.

Indra, the king of heaven, then presented himself, and in view of what Tulsidās has to say of that god's character, it is interesting to find him seated on the penitent's stool.

"I was very proud. I thought there was no one equal to me."  
 "But now that I have seen the Lord's lotus feet, my grief- "  
 "causing pride has ceased. Let others worship the invisible"  
 "Nirgun Brahm of whom the Vedas sing. But my choice is "  
 "Koshal's king, the divine Rāma endowed with qualities and "  
 "real (sagun svarup) .... receive me as thine own servant and"  
 "give me <sup>devotion.</sup> ~~faith~~." 130 (109) 139.

Indra was thereupon invited to restore to life the bears and monkeys who had been killed in the battle. This request fills the poet with wonder.

"This is a very great mystery which only learned saints can"  
 "understand. The Lord, if he wish, can destroy the three"  
 "Worlds and bring them to life again. He merely wished to"  
 "give glory to Indra. He rained down amrit on the monkeys"  
 "and bears, and they lived. Delighted, they all got up and"  
 "went to the Lord. The amrit fell on both armies. It rais-"  
 "ed the bears and monkeys, not the demons. The likeness of "  
 "Rāma was imprinted on the souls of the demons, and, abandon-"  
 "ing their bodies, they went to the place of Brahm.<sup>(1)</sup> The "  
 "monkeys and bears were ~~all~~ partial incarnations of the gods.<sup>(2)</sup>"  
 "They all came to life again by the will of Raghupati. Who "  
 "is so <sup>kind</sup> to the distressed as Rāma, who gave salvation to the "  
 "demons; and that abode of filth, the lascivious wretch, Rāvan,"  
 "obtained a rank which <sup>only</sup> saints secure." 131 (110)140.

Shiva was the last of the gods to speak. His eyes were full of tears. He spoke with difficulty, because of the greatness of his emotion. He said that Rāma was both Agun and Sagun, that he was the remover of doubt, and the joy of the gods. He besought him to dwell in his heart for ever, and convey him to the other side of life's ocean, so difficult to cross.

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(1) Brahm pad is the place of Brahm, the Supreme Spirit,

Growse translates it as "they became absorbed in the divinity."

(2) Partial incarnations of the gods, is Growse's translation of sur<sup>ā</sup>nshik



Rāma was now impatient to return to Avadh. They were to travel in the aeroplane which had formerly belonged to Kuver the god of wealth, but had afterwards been stolen by Rāvan. The demon's brother, who had gone over to Rāma's side, filled the car with garments and jewels. But Rāma told him to rise up into the air and then cast these down. The demon did so. This at once produced a great scramble among the monkeys: "Whatever they fancied they seized. " "They crammed jewels into their mouths, then threw them on" "the ground. Rāma, Sītā and Lakshman laughed. The abode" "of mercy is very playful. He whom saints cannot find by " "contemplation, whom the Vedas say is Neti, Neti, he, the " "ocean of compassion, sports and plays with the monkeys. " "Oh, Umā (says Shiva), profound meditation, the repetition " "of prayers, the giving of gifts, the practice of asceticism," "the various kinds of <sup>abstinence</sup> ~~fasting~~, sacrifice, and vows, do not " "secure Rāma's compassion as love <sup>(prem)</sup> alone can do." 138 (114) 148 (1).

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(1) Yog, jap, dān, tap, nānāvrat, makhnem, are the Hindi terms which are contrasted in this beautiful passage with prem.

Rāma's Return to Avadh.

(1)

Rāma's return to Avadh was eagerly awaited. And when he appeared the joy of Bharat and the citizens was very great. It was increased, if that were possible, by a specially gracious act.

"Seeing the great love of the people, the merciful Rāma" "created a diversion. He revealed himself in countless forms" and in appropriate fashion met them all. As he looked at the" "people with eyes of kindness, he made every man and woman " "happy. In a moment, Bhagwān met each of them. Umā, this" "is a mystery which no one can understand." 13 (6)14.

The ceremonies connected with the coronation were attended by Brahmā and Shiva, who, along with other gods and sages, mounted their cars and came to gaze at Rāma. Before returning to heaven, they severally sang his praise. On this occasion we are not told what they said. The poet contents himself with recording the hymn uttered by the Vedas, who appeared in the guise of bards.

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(1) The story of Rāma's return is told in the first half of the Uttar Kānd. The second half gives an account of the inspired crow.

"The omniscient Lord, the ocean of mercy, received them with"  
 "great respect. Nobody knew their secret as they began to "  
 "sing his virtues; Hail to Sagun, Nirgun embodied, Rāma with-"  
 "out compare, the jewel of kings. By the strength of your arm"  
 "you destroyed the ten-headed and other terrible and powerful "  
 "demons; descending as a man, you broke the world's burden and"  
 "consumed its terrifying pain. Hail, merciful Lord, protector "  
 "of your worshippers, we worship you along with your Shakti.<sup>(1)</sup>"  
 "Gods, demons, serpents, men and every living thing (ag-jag)"  
 "are all in the grip of your fearful māyā. Night and day "  
 "they wander exhausted in the path of existence, sated with "  
 "Kāl, karm and gun (Time, the fruit of their past deeds, and "  
 "the three qualities). Those on whom you look with compassion"  
 "are freed from the three kinds of suffering (trividh)<sup>(2)</sup>. Oh, Rāma  
 "able to destroy fear and sorrow, protect us we pray. Those "  
 "who intoxicated with pride of knowledge (gyān) treat with dis-"  
 "honour your world-conquering <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~ (bhakti), may obtain a rank"

(1) Sītā is Shakti, the power or energy of the god personi-  
 fied. See the chapter on Vishnu, where Sītā is called param  
shakti, or the god's supreme energy.

(2) The three kinds of suffering are referred to in the  
 previous section.

"greater than that which the gods find it difficult to secure,"  
 "nevertheless we have seen them fail. (1) On the other hand, "  
 "those who repeat your name, cross the ocean of existence with-"  
 "out difficulty. It is Rāma we worship. Shiva and Brahmā "  
 "adore his feet . . . . . We worship the eternal Tree, whose root"  
 "is the unmanifest (avyakta), whose bark is fourfold, as the"  
 "religious books declare (nigam-āgam), whose boughs are six "  
 "in number, and whose branches are twenty-five, with many "  
 "leaves and many flowers. Its fruit is of two sorts, bitter"  
 "and sweet. One creeper clings to it. A tree full of "  
 "fruit and flowers, the everlasting tree of the world. (2) Those"  
 "who meditate on Brahm, the unborn, the one without a second,"  
 "(advaita) accessible only **By** inference, beyond understanding,"

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(1) Growse translates this "have seen them fall from it again;" the idea being that they lose their heavenly rank and have to resume the weary round of transmigration and rebirth from which Rāma alone can guarantee release. This is a specially interesting contrast of gyān and bhakti.

(2) Avyakta is the primordial element from which all the phenomena of the material world have developed. It is another name for Prakṛiti, the first of the twenty-five principles here referred to. Tulsidās is back to the terminology of the Sāṅkhya school. The bark is the four Vedas. The two fruits are pleasure and pain. The creeper is Māyā. The six branches

"let them talk of what they know, oh Lord; but we shall always"  
 "sing the glory of your <sup>attributes,</sup> ~~incarnation~~ (sagun yash). Oh Seat "  
 "of mercy, lord, oh, mine of all that is good, oh god, this "  
 "boon we ask, that in thought, word and deed, we may be un- "  
 "changeably devoted to your feet. When the Vedas had utter-"  
 "ed this eloquent prayer in the sight of all, they became in-"  
 "visible and went to Brahmā's heaven. 28,29 (13, 14) 27.28.

This is a passage of the very greatest importance. It is the poet's most impressive utterance, as to the truth he holds on the comparative value of <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~ and knowledge. He admits that the way of knowledge (gyān mārḡ) has its uses. He knows that the wise men of his country have often spoken of it as the method by which the soul is able to achieve union with God, and cross the ocean of existence. He admits that sometimes it has been successful. But it is at best, a long and laborious process, attended by precarious results. The man who seeks absorption in Brahm may find that all his efforts have been in vain. They have not carried him over the sea of life. He will have to come back again and resume the weary round of birth and death. He has not escaped the nightmare of transmigration. And so he says the world by wisdom

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say Growse, are either the six stages of existence, conception, birth, childhood, manhood, old age and death: or the six natural impulses, hunger, thirst, sleep, etc. *see a similar passage in Kabir's Bġck. p. 64.*

knows not God. There is a better and a surer way. The way of faith or devotion (bhakti mārg). It achieves definite results, and it is foolish to treat it with contempt. The man who puts his trust in Rāma will be able to cross life's ocean and there will be no coming back. But when he proclaimed this earnest belief the poet had another reason for doing so. And that reason was to be found in the cravings of his own heart. The worship of Nirguṇ Brahm could not satisfy his needs. He wanted a God whom he could see and love. The God of the philosophers, the monism of the schools, might be enough for others, but he desired something more. He wanted a God who would dwell in his heart, overcome life's delusions and strengthen his soul.

And it is not without a reason that Tulsidās makes the Vedas themselves the vehicle of these convictions. The Vedas, as we have seen, are constantly referred to as the authoritative books of revelation. Neither Tulsidās nor his hearers may have known much about them. But they were recognised to be the inspired word. They are not tradition (smṛiti) the name applied to lesser books, like the Epics and Purāṇas. They are shruti, what has been heard, or, as Christians would say, the Word of God. It is therefore a skillful and to his hearers a very effective plea, when the poet makes the Vedas themselves claim Rāma for their own. No wonder he calls their hymn a binti udār, an eloquent prayer, or the best of

prayers. What stronger argument could he use in favour of the worship of a personal God who understands all the needs of men, and who is able and willing to help them when they call?

The poet's task is now nearly over. And he tells us what great blessing<sup>s</sup> will accrue if we read or listen to the story of Rāma's deeds. But his narrative would be incomplete if he did not describe the happiness and virtue which filled the world when, as he says, God Himself ruled over it. The days of the Golden age returned when Rāma was king. The trees bore every kind of fruit. The air was always pleasant. The cows yielded as much milk as heart could desire. Abundant harvests were always sure. The rivers were full of water. The clouds gave rain when they were asked. And if the lion and the lamb did not lie down together, as Jewish prophets pictured, the elephant and the lion did so. As for the inhabitants of the world, they walked in the paths of the Vedas, devoted to the rules laid down, each person acting in accordance with the regulations of his own caste and stage in life (varnāshram) They found continual joy in doing so, and suffered from no kind of fear, sorrow or sickness. The three ills that afflict mankind, those that come from the body, those that come from God, and those that

come from existence itself, never afflicted anyone in Rāma's kingdom. No one died young, no one was ever sick, everyone was beautiful, everyone was healthy, There was no poverty, there was no sorrow. No one was ignorant, no one was unfortunate. All were free from pride. Men and women alike were clever and doers of good deeds. No one ever dreamed of doing wrong. They all appreciated one another's merits. They were grateful for what others did for them. Indeed they already enjoyed the ~~gratitude~~<sup>beatitude</sup> of Heaven (paramgati). "When Rāma reigned, throughout all creation there was no pain" "caused to any one as the result of Time or as the fruit of " (1) "past deeds, or flowing from natural disposition and qualities." "The earth with its girdle of the seven seas, had only one " "king, Raghupati of Koshal. But that was no great lordship" "for him, in every hair of whose body there is a multitude of " "worlds. Those who know the glory of the lord will think " "this account of mine very deficient ..... The king of the " "serpents and the wife of Brahmā even, could not describe the" "happiness and prosperity of Rāma's kingdom. Every one was " "Very good, desirous of the welfare of others, and served " "Brahmins. Each man was faithful and loving to his single " "wife. Each woman sought her husband's good in thought, word " "and deed. 42, 43 (21, 22) 43-44.

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(1) That is <sup>as the</sup> a result of Kāl, Karm, svabhāv and gun. See chapter iv.



Another aspect of the teaching of Tulsidās now presents itself. And as it appears at the very close of Shiva's account of Rāma's earthly life, it may be reckoned as of more than ordinary importance. It will be recognised that in some respects it is difficult to reconcile it with opinions expressed in other parts of the poem, especially with reference to a man's responsibility for what he has done. Attention has already been called to this contradiction, and a portion of the text has been quoted. The attitude also is at times peculiar. Rāma seems to stand aside and speak of God as someone other than himself. It is therefore necessary to give it in full. Rāma was addressing a meeting in Avadh. It consisted of religious teachers, Brahmins, and citizens, whom he himself had summoned. When all were seated:

"the dispeller of the fears of the devout, spoke and said:"

"Listen to my words, men of the city. There is no self- "

"seeking in what I say. There is no injustice. There is "

"no attempt to assert my own authority. Listen, and do "

"what you think right. The servant I love best is the ser- "

"vant who obeys me. If I say anything that is improper "

"brothers, do not be afraid to interrupt. The sacred books "

"say it is great good fortune to be born in the form of a "

"man. That is a condition which the gods find it difficult "

"to reach. It is in that condition that one can realise " "oneself. It is the gateway of salvation (moksh). And" "yet when men do not secure salvation and go to the other" "world and there suffer torment, beating their heads they" "falsely lay the blame on Time, Karma and God (Íshwar)<sup>(1)</sup> A" "human body is not obtained in order that we may enjoy the " "fruits of sense. These fruits yield heaven for a very " "little while. But the result in the end is pain. The " "receiver of a human body who gives his mind to the things " "of sense is like the man who takes poison in exchange for" "amrit. No one ever speaks well of such a person. He " "gathers peppercorns and loses the best of all precious stones." "His life, which cannot be destroyed, continues to wander " "in the womb of the 8,400,000 births, revolving for ever at " "the will of Māyā, surrounded by Time, Karma, his natural dis-" "position (svabhāv) and the three qualities (gun). But some-" "time or other God (ish) takes mercy on him and without any " "reason except affection, gives him a man's body. And this " "human body is the boat by which he may cross the ocean of " "existence. With my grace as the favouring wind, true reli-" "gious teachers as the helm and steadfastness as his vessel he" "finds easily the means of transport which otherwise would be" "difficult to obtain. The man then, who finds the means of "

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(1) The use of Íshwar for God is unusual, and therefore the more interesting. It is the name Shankarāchārya gives to Brahm when he is associated with Māyā. It is his lower Brahm or personal God. Rāmanuġa also employed it for God.

"transport in this fashion and fails to cross life's ocean is"  
 "an ungrateful fool. He is a destroyer of his own life. "  
 "Those then who wish happiness in the other world and in this"  
 "should listen to my words and fix them in their minds. It "  
 "is an easy and pleasant path, brothers, the path of devotion"  
 "to me. The Purāṇas and the Vedas sing its praise. The "  
 "path of knowledge is very difficult to traverse (agam). The "  
 "obstacles are numerous. The means of accomplishment are "  
 "severe. It has no support for the soul. And when a man "  
 "has endured many afflictions what does he obtain? The man "  
 "who is without devotion (bhakti) is not loved by me. The "  
 "path of devotion is free. It is a mine of every happiness."  
 "But no one can find it unless he associates with good men. "  
 "And good men are not to be found unless you have acquired "  
 "merit (punya). Association with good men brings transmigra-"  
 "tion to an end." 64,66 (43,45) 65-66.

At this point there is a curious anticlimax. One won-  
 ders why it was introduced:

"There is one act of merit (punya) in the world and not a "  
 "second. Worship the feet of Brahmins in thought, word and "  
 "deed. All the gods are favourable to the man who serves "  
 "Brahmins in sincerity. There is one other mysterious thing"  
 "I say to you all with joined hands. Unless a man worship "

"Shiva, he will not secure devotion to me."

Having made this announcement with regard to Brahmins and reasserted his own affection for Shiva, Rāma resumes:

"Tell me what are the hardships that are connected with the  
 "way of devotion. Profound meditation, sacrifices, the re-  
 "petition of prayers, asceticism, fasting, none of them are "  
 necessary. What is required is a sincere disposition, a "  
 "mind devoid of guile, always content with whatever happens."  
 "..... But why should I continue to lengthen my remarks fur-"  
 "ther. Here is the manner of life which brings me under con-"  
 "trol. The man who is influenced by neither hatred nor strife"  
 "neither hope nor fear, his condition is always full of tran-"  
 "quility. He begins nothing. He has no home. He is with-"  
 "out pride, without sin, without anger. He is clever and "  
 "wise. He always loves the society of good men. He reck- "  
 "ons the things of sense, heaven and emancipation from rebirth,"  
 "(apvarga) as of equal value to a blade of grass. He is an "  
 "advocate of Bhakti. He lives remote from perfidy and every "  
 "kind of wickedness. In love with my name, which is a home "  
 "of all the virtues, free from selfishness, arrogance and in- "  
 "fatuation, the happiness of such a man as I have described is"  
 "the sum of supreme felicity." 68, 68 (46 47).68.69.

## X.

The Crow's Philosophy.

The second half of the Uttar kāṇḍ may be reckoned as a summary of the poet's own religious attitude. It is placed in a very strange setting. When Shiva began to tell the story of the deeds of Rām, he said that he was merely repeating what had been related by an inspired crow. And when his narrative was finished, he repeated that assertion.<sup>(1)</sup> This not unnaturally afforded Umā the opportunity of expressing her surprise that a crow should be possessed of such unparalleled devotion. 76 (54)77. Her experience had been that among a thousand persons you might find one or two practising religion (dharm vrat dhāri); among the many millions who practiced religion, you might find one or two who were ascetics; among the many millions who were ascetics you might find one or two who had complete knowledge (gyān); among the many millions thus endowed with knowledge, there might be one or two who had achieved release

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(1) In the Bāl kāṇḍ 129 (127)<sup>144.</sup> we read. "Listen, Bhavāni, while "  
 " I describe the beautiful story, <sup>of the</sup> ~~of the~~ spotless Rāmcharit[mānas] "  
 " (lake of Rāma's deeds) which Bhusundi told to Garud the king "  
 " of birds! The crow's name was Bhusundi.

from transmigration; and among these , to be counted by the thousands (not millions) it would be difficult to find one possessed of perfect knowledge and absorbed in Brahm. But it was still more difficult to find a true and steadfast devotee of Rāma. 76 (54)77.

In view of the poet's frequent assertion that the path of devotion is a pleasant and an easy road, that seems a very pessimistic utterance. But it may be due to the fact that Tulsidās is about to address himself to the task of dealing with the doctrines of Māyā and Bhakti, more fully and more exclusively than he has previously attempted. He has often set them side by side. Now his special purpose is to shew how faith in Rāma robs Māyā of its power, and makes his worshippers free. And he does not achieve his purpose by minimising the strength of that mysterious influence which plays such havoc among gods and men. Indeed at times he seems to take pleasure in emphasizing it. On the other hand, one feels that he detracts from its power by ceasing to personify it in Sītā, and associating it with sin and evil. In particular he does more than suggest that it is a species of blindness for which we are ourselves responsible, when we yield to its power. This section of the poem, because of its association with the crow, may seem fantastic to Western minds, But it is the poet's own method for bringing Māyā and Bhakti together. We

cannot therefore cavil ~~with~~<sup>at</sup> it. It is enough for us to know that when he thus seeks to contrast them he is dealing with his central theme. He is presenting his message from another angle. He has found that a belief in Māyā is woven into the very texture of Indian thought. It is present in his own. But he is persuaded nevertheless, that faith in Rāma will give men the victory and satisfy their needs.

When Shiva was asked to explain what he knew about the crow, he took his wife back to the time in her previous existence when she had performed Sati at the sacrifice of Daksh. Distressed at the loss of his wife, Shiva had journeyed to the northern mountains where he lived the life of an ascetic. Among these mountains he saw a crow who did not die even at the end of a Kalpa.<sup>(1)</sup> 79 (57) 80. This crow was engaged day and night in worshipping Rāma, and telling the story of his deeds to large gatherings of birds who flocked from every quarter.

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(1) According to Hindu calculations, there are four ages whose combined length is equal to 4,320,000 years. The first is the Golden Age, the fourth is the Iron Age. When the Iron Age comes to an end, a Golden age begins. A Kalpa is a period of time equal to 1000 of such four ages, and is therefore 4,320,000,000 years in length. At the end of a Kalpa the existing world is destroyed. But in due course another comes into being.

Shiva himself assumed the form of a swan and spent some time in their society that he might share in the privilege. How Garud, the king of birds, came to follow Shiva's example is, however, another story. In the account given in a previous chapter of the battle with Rāvan, it will be remembered that Rāma allowed himself to be bound in the serpent's coils. On that occasion, Garud, who is the vehicle of Vishṇu, had to come to his relief. He did so by swallowing the snakes,<sup>(1)</sup> But the fact that he had to do so filled him with amazement.

"I have heard that the all-pervading, passionless "  
 "Brahm, the lord of speech, the supreme God, (paramīsha)"  
 "beyond the influence of Māyā, and delusion (moh), has"  
 "descended to the earth, but I see nothing of his glory."  
 "By the repeating of his name, men escape from the "  
 "bonds of existence. Can this Rāma be he, when a "  
 "base-born demon binds him in serpent coils?" 80 (58) 81.

In his perplexity Garud went to Nārada, who said:-

"Rāma's Māyā is very powerful,.... That which time "

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(1) Readers of the Mahābhārata will recall that Garud was the great enemy of the snake race. See my Summary of the Mahābhārata. p. 27.



"after time has made me dance, has spread itself over"  
"you. The great delusion (moh) has sprung up in your"  
"mind. It won't be erased quickly by any words of "  
"mine. Go to Brahmā, oh king of birds. Do what he "  
"advises you to do." 81 (59) 82.<sup>(1)</sup>

Garud, in accordance with this advice, went to the Creator,  
who bowed his head at the mention of Rāma's name. As he  
meditated on his glory, love filled his heart, and he said:-

"Poets and learned pandits come under Māyā's power."  
"The power of Hari's Māyā cannot be measured. It "  
"has often made me dance. Although everything "  
"that moves and does not move was created by me, it "  
"is no matter for wonder that it should be so. Then"  
"the Creator spoke in a sweet voice: Shiva knows "  
"Rāma's power. Go to Shankar. Do not enquire "  
"from anyone else. There your doubts will be "  
"dispelled." 82 (60) 83.

When he went to Shiva, that god, as he himself reports, said:-

"I told him, Bhavāni..... until you have spent some"  
"time in the society of good men, this delusion and"

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(1)" Having said this, the rishi of the gods departed, pro- "  
" claiming the virtues of Rāma: time after time he, who is sup-"  
" remely wise, declared the power of Hari's Māyā." Uttar, 82 (60) 83.

"error (moh-bhram) will not be destroyed. There "

"listen to the sweet story of Hari, which the seers"

"sing in diverse ways. The theme in its beginning,"

"middle and end, is the Lord Rāma Bhagwān.....!"

"Except in the society of good men, you do not hear"

"the story of Hari, and without the story of Hari "

"delusion (moh) cannot be dispelled. Unless delus-"

"ion disappears, there is no steadfast love<sup>(anurāg)</sup> for Rāma's"

"feet. Without love there is no meeting with Rāma,"

"even though you engage in profound meditation, re-"

"peat prayers, possess knowledge and subdue the "

"senses." (yog jap gyān virāga). 83 (61) 84.

Shiva accordingly sent him to interview the crow, very old, and very wise, who spent all his time in singing the praises of Rāma.

In commenting on this part of the story in which he was so personally involved, Shiva observes;-

"The Lord's Māyā is powerful. Who is so full of "

"knowledge that delusion (moh) does not touch him."

"The vehicle of the lord of the three worlds, the "

"jewel of the wise and the devout,<sup>Māyā</sup> deluded him. "

"No wonder sinners are perplexed. It deludes "

"Shiva and the Creator: what then are others? "

"helpless and weak? Know that this is so. Seers "

"worship Bhagwān, who is the Lord of Māyā." 85,(62)85.

As soon as he arrived at the crow's dwelling place,<sup>(1)</sup> Garud experienced an immediate change. The power of Māyā disappeared, and he felt happy. Bathing in the lake and drinking some of the water added to his joy. His arrival was happily timed. The crow was about to begin a recital at that moment. And the poet gives a brief summary of Rāma's deeds. When it was completed, Garud told the reason why he had come. The crow refused to believe that the king of birds could have been the victim of Māyā:-

"You had no doubts, delusion, Māyā. In sending "  
 "you under the pretence of being deluded, Raghupati"  
 "did me a kindness." Uttar, 96 (69) 98.

Nevertheless, he proceeded to declare:-

"And yet it is no wonder, because there is no one, "  
 "including Nārād, Shiv, Brahmā, Sanatkumār and others"  
 "the great sages, who speak about the soul, whom de- "  
 "lusion has not blinded, whom Love (kām) has not "  
 "made to dance, whom desire has not made mad, whose "  
 "heart anger has not set on fire. Among wise men, "

---

(1) "The virtues and vices in their various forms, fashioned"  
 "by Māyā, along with delusion(moh) love and the other "  
 "errors of judgment which envelop the whole world, never"  
 "go near that mountain." Uttar, 79 (57) 80.

"ascetics, brave men, poets. pandits, people endowed "  
 "with good qualities, who is there in this world whom"  
 "greed has not deceived, whom the intoxication of "  
 "success has not made crooked, whom the possession of "  
 "authority has not made deaf, whom the arrows of "  
 "beauty have not pierced, whom achievement has not be."  
 "numbed, whom pride and vanity have not overshadowed,"  
 "whom the fever of youth has not made crazy, whose "  
 "glory selfishness has not ruined, in whom envy has "  
 "not found some blemish, whom the winds of sorrow "  
 "have not shaken, whom the serpent tooth of care has "  
 "not bitten; who is there in the world, whom Māyā has "  
 "not pervaded? There is no one so strong but desire"  
 "lays hold of him, even as the weevil worm does with "  
 "wood. The desire for a son, for wealth, for a "  
 "woman; whose understanding have not these three soil-"  
 "ed? These are all Māyā's appointed followers. Her "  
 "power is unmeasured. Who can describe it? When "  
 "Shiva and Brahmā see it they are afraid. What need "  
 "to take account of others. The mighty army of Māyā "  
 "pervades the world. Her generals are lust and other "  
 "kindred evils; her warriors are pride, hypocrisy and "  
 "heresy. She is the servant of Rāghubir, and though "  
 "we recognise her to be false, yet there is no escape "  
 "without the mercy of Rāma. I say this, sir, and "

"and defend it with a wager. The Māyā who causes"  
"all the world to dance, and whose doings none can"  
"comprehend, it is by the play of the Lord's eye- "  
"brows that she dances like an actress with all "  
"her company. Rāma is existence, thought, joy, "  
"(sachchidānand), entire, the unborn, knowledge "  
"personified, the abode of the qualities. He is "  
"the pervader. He is that which is pervaded, "  
"the indivisible, the eternal Bhagwān, of univers-"  
"al, unerring power, free from the qualities, free"  
"from deceit, beyond the reach of speech or of the"  
"senses, all-seeing, unconquerable, faultless, "  
"formless, free from delusion, everlasting, void "  
"of passion, the accumulation of joy, the Lord "  
"who transcends Prakṛiti, and who dwells in all "  
"hearts, Brahm devoid of effort, free from desire,"  
"the indestructable. He is not the cause of de- "  
"lusion (moh)<sup>(1)</sup>. Darkness can never oppose the "  
"sun. For the sake of those devoted to him, the "

---

(1) And yet the crow says later:-

"In the golden age, religion (dharm) was in the"  
"heart of all by the contrivance of Hari's Māyā."

Uttar 150 (100) 164.

"Good and evil which are created by Hari's Māyā,"

"blessed Lord Rāma has assumed the body of a king,"  
 "and like a common man, has done highly purifying "  
 "deeds. Like an actor assuming various disguises"  
 "and playing different parts, he also acts a panto-"  
 "mime, but in himself it is not so. Such then is"  
 "the pastime of the Lord, a cause of bewilderment "  
 "to demons, a cause of joy to men. Those whose "  
 "minds are unclean, lascivious, who are in the "  
 "grip of the senses, attribute such delusion to "  
 "the Lord, just as a man whose eyes are sick, says "  
 "that the moon is yellow, or, when confused about "  
 "direction, declares that the sun rises in the "  
 "West, or as one who has gone on board a ship, the"  
 "victim of delusion sees the world moving and "  
 "thinks that he himself is stationary. Children "  
 "at play go spinning round. It is not houses and"  
 "other things that revolve, though they say so false-"  
 "ly among themselves. Such is delusion, so far as"  
 "it relates to Hari; not even in a dream can he be "

Note contd)

"will not disappear without prayer to Hari."

Uttar 151 (101) 166.

"associated with ignorance. Stupid and unlucky"  
"persons, in the power of Māyā and with a curtain"  
"over their minds in their foolish obstinacy, "  
"raise doubts and attribute their own ignorance "  
"to Rāma. How can fools addicted to lust, anger"  
"pride, greed, involved in household cares, them-"  
"selves personifications of misery, fallen into "  
"the well of darkness, how can they understand "  
"Raghupati?" 96 (69) 98.

To this long quotation there immediately succeeds what everyone must recognise as a very penetrating observation. It is a thought to which the poet returns. If we are content to believe in a God who can be described in the language of negation and is remote from human affairs, it is easy to believe in Him. But think of Him as one who is near at hand, and questions at once arise.

"It is easy to understand the conception of God "  
"devoid of all attributes (nirguṇ), but no one "  
"can comprehend God endowed with qualities (saguṇ)."  
"When saints hear of his many actions "

"ordinary and extraordinary, their minds are bewildered." 106<sup>106</sup>(43)

The crow next proceeds to describe his personal experience with Rāma, and he gives expression to an opinion already referred to by Shiva that Rāma had appeared as Rāma times without number. "Rāma is infinite, his virtues are infinite."

"His birth, his actions, his names, cannot be numbered," 73(52)44

When Shiva spoke in this way, he may have been thinking of Rāma as the god who, in many and distinct incarnations has appeared in the world. But with the crow it is otherwise. He speaks of Rāma being born in Avadh, over and over again, and says,

"Whenever Rāma assumes a human form and for the sake of those"

"devoted to him (bhakt) plays many sports, on these occasions"

"I go to Avadh..... and stay for about five years. The child"

"Rāma is my own special god (isht dev)". 106 (74) 109. The

crow found it easy to be often very near to Rāma.

One day the divine child tried to catch the crow. The bird flew away, but it was tempted back with a piece of cake. When the bird flew away a second time, Rāma began to cry.

"I came near and the Lord laughed. I flew away, and he cried."

"I went near to lay hold upon his feet. He ran off, but "

"turned round time after time to look." This very human and

natural conduct on the part of the child bewildered (moh) the

crow. "Does the Lord who is the sum of thought and joy, act"



"in this fashion? Such thoughts came into my mind."  
 "Māyā enveloped me by the contrivance of Rāma. But "  
 "the Māyā caused me no pain. Existence was not as "  
 "it is to other souls (jīv). There was a reason for "  
 "this to which I wish you to listen with attention. "  
 "The bridegroom of Sītā is knowledge, one and indiv- "  
 "isible. Souls, that which moves and that which does "  
 "not move, are in the power of Māyā. If all were of "  
 "the same degree of knowledge, what would be the diff- "  
 "erence between God (ishwar) and the soul. The soul in "  
 "his pride is in the grip of Māyā. Māyā, which is "  
 "the mine of all the qualities, is in the grip of God."  
 "The soul is in the grip of another (parvash). Bhag- "  
 "~~is~~<sup>wān</sup> is free (svavash). The soul is manifold. The "  
 "husband of Lakshmi is one. Though the distinctions "  
 "made by Māyā are unreal, they will not disappear with- "  
 "out the help of Hari, even if you make a million "~~at~~ "  
 "attempts. The man who desires salvation (nirvāna) "  
 "apart from prayer to Hari, wise man though he be, is "  
 "like a beast without tail and horns..... The troubles "  
 "that afflict the soul cannot be wiped out. Ignorance "  
 "does not envelop the worshipper of Hari. Knowledge "  
 "that is caused by Hari pervades him. There is no "  
 "destruction for a servant of his. 110 (77) 113.

With these and other comments the crow went on to relate how he flew into the air, but Rāma was close behind. He had seen that the bird was perplexed and smiled, stretching out his arms. He flew so high and so far that he reached Brahmā's heaven and other worlds beyond. But every time he looked, Rāma was there, with outstretched arms, no further away than the breadth of two fingers. He closed his eyes from fear. When he ventured to open them, he was back in Avadh.

"Rāma looked at me and smiled. He laughed and at "  
 "once I jumped into his mouth. In his belly I saw"  
 "a great multitude of universes (brahmāṇḍ) and in "  
 "them a variety of very wonderful worlds, the fashion-"  
 "ing of each more strange than the other, with a hun- "  
 "dred million Brahmās and Shivas, with innumerable "  
 "stars, suns and moons, with innumerable guardians of"  
 "the spheres, gods of death, and Time personified, with"  
 "innumerable mountains and widespread plains, seas, "  
 "rivers and forests without limit, the expanse of "  
 "creation in many forms. Gods, sages, saints, ser- "  
 "pents, men, kinnars, the four kinds of life,<sup>(1)</sup> what "  
 "moves and what does not move; what no one ever saw or"  
 "heard, what never entered the mind, such were the "

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(1) The four kinds of life are, (1) those born from vapour (worms). (2) Those born from an egg. (3) Those born from the womb (4) Those born by sprouting (plants).

" marvels that I saw there. How can I describe them?"

" In each universe I lived an hundred years, and in "

" this manner, moving about from one to the other, I "

" saw them all." 117 (80) 120.

In each of these multitudinous worlds, he found a separate Creator, a separate Vishnu, and a separate Shiva. In each of them he saw a city of Avadh with men and women, with Dashraths and Kaushalyās and others. In each of them there was a Rāma who had become incarnate (avatāra), whose child-like sports he was privileged to see.

" I visited in my wanderings countless worlds, but it "

" was Rāma and no other whom I saw." 118 (81) 122.

It seemed as if he had spent an hundred Kalpas travelling from universe to universe, and what he saw cannot be described. Yet everywhere he saw Rāma, the merciful Bhagwān, the lord of Māyā. It seemed as if he had spent an hundred Kalpas in this amazing task, nevertheless it all happened in the space of two hours. Because it was at the end of that short time that he jumped out of Rāma's mouth when he laughed, and found him engaged as he had been before, at some children's game. The divine child, however, saw the perplexity of his devotee; he restrained the power of his Māyā, and, placing his hand on the crow's head, told him to ask a boon. He could have anything he liked; miraculous

powers, untold wealth, salvation from rebirth. But naturally the crow asked for devotion to Rāma.

devotion ॐ (bhakti)

"A pure unbroken ~~faith~~<sup>devotion</sup> in thee, of which the Vedas "  
 "and purānas sing, and which the greatest of ascetics "  
 "and sages seek after, and only a few, by the favour "  
 "of the lord, find." 124 (84) 128.

In granting this request, Rāma told the crow that every other blessing would be added. He had shewn his wisdom by making such a petition, because devotion was the mine that contained every sort of happiness.

"Sages cannot secure it, though they make a million "  
 "attempts, repeating prayers, practising asceticism, "  
 "and giving their bodies to be burned. Every good "  
 "quality will dwell in your heart, devotion, know- "  
 "ledge, wisdom, self-control. You will know every "  
 "secret, and in the accomplishment of it, by my grace, "  
 "there will be no pain. The errors produced by Māyā "  
 "will not pervade you. You know me to be Brahm, with- "  
 "out beginning, the unborn, without qualities, with "  
 "qualities."

Rāma thereupon began to instruct the crow. What he said was in accordance with the teaching of the Vedas and other religious books, though he also speaks of it as his own doctrine (siddhānt).

"Apply your mind to it and listen; leave all others"  
 "and worship me. My Māyā is the cause of the world"  
 "living creatures of every kind, both what moves and"  
 "what does not move. They are all dear to me; they "  
 "are all created by me. But of them all, man is the "  
 "one I like best; of men, Brahmins; of Brahmins, those"  
 "who uphold the books of revelation (shruti); of these"  
 "those who walk in accordance with their teaching; of "  
 "these I love learned sages, who are ascetics; and of "  
 "those who are learned, those who know Brahm are espec-"  
 "ially dear. But more than all these, my own servant "  
 "is dear to me. He comes to me and has no other hope."  
 "I tell it to you again. It is the truth. No one is "  
 "so dear to me as my own servants. If the Creator were"  
 "lacking in devotion of all creatures he would be un-"  
 "loved by me; whereas the very lowest soul if he have "  
 "devotion  
 "~~faith~~ (bhakti) is very much beloved indeed." 127 (85) 130

When Rāma had spoken in this fashion for some time  
 longer, <sup>(1)</sup> he resumed his play. Then with tears in his eyes and  
 twisted mouth, he looked at his mother as if he were hungry.  
 His mother rose and took him to her breast. "She placed him in "  
 "her lap and gave him suck."

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(1) "My mercy is over all. But of them all, if any one "  
 "abandon intoxication and Māyā, and worship me in thought, word,"  
 "and deed, be he man or eunuch, male or female, animate or in-"  
 "animate . . . . . he shall be most loved by me." 128 (86) 131.

In bringing this amazing narrative to an end,<sup>(1)</sup> the crow declared that from the time he obtained Rāma's boon, Māyā had never troubled him, and he warned the king of birds that his troubles would never cease until he worshipped Hari. He would not destroy the fear of life.

"Without faith (bishwās) there is no devotion (bhakti),"  
 "without devotion Rāma does not exercise mercy (literally  
 "does not melt), without the mercy of Rāma, not even in a"  
 "dream can one think of peace. Reflect on these things,"  
 "and abandon all false doctrines and doubts." 130 (88) 138.

To this exhortation the king of birds replied that he was completely satisfied. He repented his former delusion (moh) when he had supposed that the eternal Brahm was a man. He added the opinion, to which the crow had already given expression, that;-

"No one can cross the ocean of existence without a "  
 "teacher, though he were the equal of the Creator and "  
 "Shiva." 133 (90) 142.

The king of birds had another question to ask. He had heard from the god Shiva that at the dissolution of the universe, the crow continued to live when all other creatures

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(1) "I have sung to you the whole mysterious story, how Hari's "  
 "Māyā caused me to dance." Uttar, 129 (87) 132.

perished. Shiva did not tell lies, nevertheless such a statement caused great perplexity. Serpents, gods and men, indeed the whole creation, perished. Time had swallowed up innumerable worlds. How was it that when others died, he did not die.

"Tell me, was it through the power of knowledge or by the"  
"strength of abstract meditation (yog), and why was it"  
"that when I came to your hermitage my delusion and "  
"error disappeared?"

The crow's reply is very interesting. It confirms what has already been suggested that in this section we have the summing up of the poet's outlook on religion and life, and here in particular, and in a very real sense, we have the record of the conclusions he arrived at, moulded and coloured by the beliefs and the philosophies of his own time and country.

"As I listen to your loving and gracious questions, said"  
"the crow, I remember my many former births. I will "  
"tell you all my history..... The repetition of prayers,"  
"asceticism, sacrifices, quietude (sham) self-restraint,"  
"acts of religious merit (vrat), gifts, detachment from "  
"the world, discrimination, abstract meditation, know- "  
"ledge, the fruit of all these is love for Rāma's feet~~h~~ "  
"without it none can find comfort. It was in this "  
"body I found devotion to Rāma. That is the reason "

"why I have a special liking for it. I do not surrender"  
 "this body, though I can do so when I wish, because with-"  
 "out a body worship is not possible, as the Vedas declare."  
 "At first delusion (moh) submerged me often. With Rāma"  
 "opposed to me, I had no pleasure even when asleep. My "  
 "births were many. My acts (karm) and works of merit"  
 "were many, I engaged in profound meditation: I repeat-"  
 "ed prayers. I practised asceticism. I made sacrifices."  
 "I gave gifts. In what womb have I not been born in my"  
 "constant roaming through the world? I have seen every-"  
 "thing in the accomplishing of my karma, but I was never"  
 "so happy as I am now. I can remember many of my for- "  
 "mer lives. By the grace of Shiva, delusion (moh) has "  
 "not enveloped my mind." 136 (92) 149.

One of these previous lives the crow described in detail. It was in a former Kalpa, which means in an earlier creation, and in one of the fourth ages. <sup>(1)</sup> the age when religion is always at a low ebb.

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(1) The fourth age is called Kali. It is convenient to follow the example of Growse and others, and call the four ages, Gold, Silver, Brass, Iron. Religion and life are at their best in the Golden Age; they are at their worst in the age of Iron. The four ages make a cycle of 4,320,000 years. There are 1000 cycles in a Kalpa. In the chapter dealing with the poet's moral teaching his vigorous account of the Iron age will be dealt with.



"In a former Kalpa, there was an age of Iron. It was the " "root and essence of wickedness. Men and women were in " "love with unrighteousness and opposed to the Vedas. In " "that Iron age I went to Koshal and was born in the body " "of a low caste Shudra. <sup>(1)</sup> I was a worshipper of Shiva in " "thought, word and deed, and in my pride a blasphemer of " "other gods. I was intoxicated with the haughtiness that " "comes from wealth, very boastful, of a fierce disposition " "and great arrogance. Although I lived in Rāma's own cap- " "ital, I knew nothing of his glory." 136 (93) 151.

After dwelling at great length on the evils that ~~affect~~ <sup>abblit</sup> the world when the revolution of Time brings the fourth age once more, the crow said:-

"The Iron age is the very dwelling-place of iniquity of all" "kinds. But it has also many excellencies. In the Iron " "age salvation (nistār) can be got without any difficulty. " "In the ages of Gold, Silver and Brass, <sup>(2)</sup> worship, sacrifice,"

(1) The Shudras are the fourth of the four castes. It is their duty to serve the other three.

(2) The four ages are called Krit, Tretā, Dwāpar and Kali. The Vishnu Purāna compares the merits of the four ages in quite the same fashion, and tells us in practically the same words, that while in the former ages, worship, sacrifice and meditation were needed, in the Iron age all that one had to do was to repeat Krishna's name. See my Vishnu Purāna, p. 225.

"and profound meditation (pujā, makh, yog), are the "

"means of attaining it, but in the Iron Age people "

"secure salvation by the repetition of Hari's name. "

"In the Golden age all men engage in profound medit-"

"ation and are endowed with knowledge; by meditating"

"on Hari they cross the sea of existence.<sup>(1)</sup> In the "

"Silver age men offer a variety of sacrifices; by means"

"of these acts, they cross the sea of existence. In the"

"age of Brass they worship Rāma's feet; by no other ex-"

"pedient do they cross the sea of existence. In the "

"age of Iron they have only to sing the praise of Hari;"

"by singing it men fathom the depths of existence. In "

"the Iron age profound meditation, sacrifices, know-"

"ledge are not necessary. To sing Rāma's praise is "

"the one prop. Those who abandon every other hope "

"and worship Rāma, singing his praise with love, cross"

"the sea of existence; of that there is no doubt. The"

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(1) In the Golden age, religion (dharm) is in the hearts  
of all by the contrivance of Hari's Māyā.

"glory of his name is manifest in the Iron age. It "  
 "is its one purifying glory." 149 (99) 163.

After living for many years in Avadh, but still ignorant of Rāma's fame, this low caste Shudra was driven by famine to seek refuge in another country. He settled in Ujjain. In that city he acquired wealth, and as before, continued to worship Shiva. He also became the friend of a learned Brahmin who, though a devotee of Shiva, never spoke disrespectfully of Hari. Thanks to the kindness of this holy man, who treated him like a son, he learned the sacred formula (mantra-)employed in the worship of Shiva, and when he went to the temple of the god, repeated the phrase he had acquired. But his heart was full of pride and arrogance, so much so that when he saw any one worshipping Hari, he would become very angry and pour insults on Vishnu. The kindhearted Brahmin rebuked him for his foolishness and said:-

"My son, the reward for serving Shiva is a sincere "  
 "love for Rāma's feet. Shiva and the Creator "  
 "worship Rāma..... not to speak of sinful men."  
 "How can you expect happiness if you insult him "  
 "whose feet Shiva and Brahmā adore?" 154 (102) 169.

The Shudra's heart, however, did not change. And one day he was so rude as to remain seated when the man who had been so kind to him entered the temple of Shiva. The Brāhmin said nothing and shewed no signs of anger. But such an insult roused the indignation of the god. A voice was heard, it was the voice of Shiva, declaring that the unhappy wretch who had dared to sit in the presence of his religious teacher would have to crawl as a snake for the rest of his life. The Brāhmin was horrified at such an awful ~~penance~~<sup>penalty</sup> and begged the god to be merciful. In the appeal which he addressed to Shiva he employed a great many of the epithets which belong to the Supreme Spirit, and said he was Nirguṇ Brahm. "These" "who do not worship the feet of Umā's lord can find neither" "in this world nor in the next, happiness or peace." Moved by this appeal, Shiva said though he could not recall the curse it would be changed into a blessing.

"My curse cannot be rendered false. He will have a thousand" "lives. But the terrible pain which attends birth and death" "will not attach to him in the least. In no birth will his" "knowledge fail. Listen Shudra, You were born in Rāma's" "city..... Devotion to Rāma will spring up in your heart."

162 (105) 174.

And so it came to pass. In whatever body he was born he was an earnest devotee of Rāma. Beginning as a snake among the Vindhya hills, he at long last was born a Brahmin

"a rank which it is difficult for a god to acquire." When in that rank he gave all his mind to the worship of Rāma, visiting holy men in their hermitages and asking them to tell him all they knew about Rāma. His one thought was, when I see Rāma's lotus feet I shall consider that my life has reaped its reward. But when he spoke to those various sages about Rāma, they always said to him. "God<sup>(Ishwar)</sup> is in everything that exists." This response however gave him no satisfaction or as it is expressed in the text, "The religion of Nirgun was not agreeable to me." "Love for Sagun Brahm had a greater hold on my heart." 156 (106)<sup>181</sup>

In the course of his travels, he came to the hermitage of the rishi Lomas and said to him as he had said to others, "Tell me how to praise Sagun Brahm." The rishi's attitude and response deserve very careful attention.

He was a philosopher devoted to Brahm gyān, and he began to instruct his questioner on the knowledge of Brahm. Many of the terms he employed have been quoted already. He is the unborn, devoid of qualities (agun), without form, without a name, without desire, without change, and so on. He is also called advait, one without a second, which is peculiarly the word applied to Brahm by the monistic school, and to make it all the plainer in expounding Brahm, the rishi says, "Between Him and you there is no difference, like water and "the wave." 170 (107)<sup>185</sup>. But the religion of the Absolute (nirgun mat) made no appeal to this earnest seeker after truth.

"It did not satisfy my heart." (mam <sup>nirgun mat</sup> hriday na āwā). And he said once more, "Tell me how to worship the God endowed with "attributes; devotion to Rāma is the water, my heart is the "fish. How can they be separate? Take mercy on me and "shew me how I may see Rāma with my own eyes. When I have "seen my fill of the king of Avadh, then I shall listen to "your discourse on the Absolute (nirgun)."

The result was that both grew angry. The rishi denounc-  
(1)  
ed the religion of Sagun, declaring that God was Nirgun. Rāma's devotee asserted the opposite, giving an answer to everything that was put forward. Among his very pertinent questions he asked how various things were possible if the monistic theory were true. "How can there be anger without "duality; or how can there be ignorance without duality. How" "can a soul (jīv) in the grip of Māyā, cut off from others "and stupid, be the same as God <sup>(Jah)</sup>?" 172 (108) 186.

At last the rishi could contain himself no longer and he cursed the pertinacious Brahmin to be changed into a crow. The rishi however was not to blame. It was Rāma who had led him to speak as he had done, confusing his mind as a means of testing the other's devotion. Indeed, he proved to be an earnest worshipper himself of Rāma, and inviting the crow

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(1) Growse translates it, "demolishing the dogma of the incar-  
"nation, he expounded Him as passionless."

to come near, he gave him the Rāma mantra, taught him how to meditate on Rāma in the form of a child, and told him the whole story of the Rām-charit-mānas. It was by the grace of Shiva he had acquired it, and he promised that the crow in whatever form he wore, would never cease to be an unflinching devotee of Rāma.

It was <sup>first</sup> the curse of Shiva, and next the rishi's curse which had ~~acquired~~ <sup>secured</sup> for the crow so many privileges. His hermitage for a distance of seven miles round had been made free from the power of Māyā. He could change his shape at any time, but he preferred the form in which he then was. He could die when he liked, but he chose to live on. Twentyseven kalpas had passed since he began to dwell among the mountains singing Rāma's praise. He never lived anywhere else, except when Rāma took the form of a man and was born at Avadh. On these great occasions he hastened to that city and gladdened his soul by witnessing the child at his play, and renewing his image in his heart.

"The great rishi cursed me for the obstinacy with which I "clung to my belief in Bhakti. But I obtained the boon which "saints find it difficult to secure." 137 (111)192.

XIThe Moral Teaching of the Poem.

The sacred books of India contain moral teaching of a high order. And many passages could be quoted, especially from the Mahābhārata and the Laws of Manu, to shew with what earnestness men have pondered over the conduct of life. In few countries have wiser words been spoken on the need of practising self-control, on the dangers of pride and anger and greed, on the attractiveness of kindness, purity and truth. And when we turn to the pages of Tulsidās, we realise how deeply he has drunk at those ancient springs. He also has the gift, which his predecessors had, of uttering his thoughts in pregnant phrases, which linger in the memory.

"To a good man happiness envelops the earth. Just as rivers"  
 "flow into the sea, although it has no craving for them, so do"  
 "peace and prosperity come without asking for them to the vir-"  
 "tuous." Bal. 295 (301)326.

"If you are good, the world is good. If you are bad, the world"  
 "is bad." Ayodh, (208)217.

"There is nothing in the world difficult to secure for those "  
 "who from their hearts desire the good of others." Aranya, 54, (26)<sup>39.</sup>

"The touchstone tries gold and there is a test for precious"  
 "stones. But it is opportunity which discovers a man's real"  
 "nature." Ayodh, (271)283.





"An animal can dance, and a parrot is clever at talking, but"  
"their quality and acting depend on the person who taught "  
"them." Ayodh, (287)299.

"The parrot and the maina when they live with good people "  
"learn to say, 'Rām, Rām'. When they live with bad people"  
"they learn to give abuse. In the company of the wind dust"  
"flies up to heaven. When it associates with water, it be-"  
"comes mud and sinks." Bal.(7)12.

"Good men and bad men both cause pain, but there is a differ-"  
"ence between them. The one robs you of life by separation "  
"from his presence. The other when he meets you causes grief."  
"The lotus and the leech both grow in water. But their natures"  
"are different." Bal.(5)10.

"The virtuous acquire virtue; the vicious acquire vice. Nectar"  
"confers immortality; poison causes death." Bal.(6)11.

"The man who is selfish and unclean can never reach the joy of"  
"Brahm." Ayodh, (217)226.

"In this world there are three kinds of men, similar to the "  
"trumpet-flower‡, the mango and the bread-fruit tree. One"  
"yields flowers, one has both flowers and fruit, one has only"  
"fruit. One man talks and does nothing; one both talks and"  
"acts; the third acts and says nothing." Lanka, 105 (86)114.

"Can you get rid of filth by washing it with filth?"

"Can you get butter by churning water?" Uttar. 70 (49)71.

"When a vile person humbles himself it is that he may do harm."

"The loving speeches of the wicked inspire fear." Aranya, 37, (19)31.

"A man without devotion (bhakti) is like a cloud without water" "in it." Aranya 57, (29)43.

"Knowledge without love<sup>(prem)</sup> for Rāma is like a boat without a " "boatman." Ayodh, (265)276.

Phrases such as we have quoted are to be found throughout the poem, sometimes standing alone, sometimes as parts of a long discourse on the attractiveness of goodness or the ugliness of evil. In the course of our study many such passages have already been quoted. They shew how the poet strove to reach the heart of morality, and to discover the motives which underlay men's actions. It is true that like other preachers he is sometimes more eloquent when he is denouncing wickedness than when he is commending virtue. But the inwardness of his <sup>ex</sup>position seldom fails to be apparent. For example, he speaks of good men (sant) endowed with calm and equal minds who make no distinction between friend and foe. Like the flower which when held in the hollow of the two hands imparts its sweetness to both. Such men he calls the world's well wishers (jagat hit) They have sincere natures and loving dispositions. And he contrasts them with evil men who reckon another's prosperity a misfortune and are glad when they hear that a house has been

made desolate. They have a thousand eyes to see another's faults and a thousand ears to hear of them. They would be glad to die if by doing so they could cause injury to another. Bal, (3) 8.

In the Forest-book, Rāma himself is asked how good men (sant) may be recognised. It is manifest from the answer which he gives that the good men referred to are ascetics who have left the world and are free from its sorrows, because they care neither for their bodies nor their homes. But the fact that Rāma is the speaker makes his reply of more than ordinary value as an estimate of what constitutes virtue.

"When they hear themselves praised they are ashamed. When " "they hear others praised, they rejoice. Calm and cold in" "disposition, they never abandon the practice of morality. "

"Gentle in their natures, they have love for all. They prac-" "tise prayers, penance, fasting, self-control, continence and" "vows. They love the feet of their religious teachers, of "

"Govind<sup>(1)</sup> and Brahmins. They exercise faith (shraddhā), forgive-" "ness, friendship and compassion. These things afford them "

"joy and a sincere love for my feet. They are free from Māyā" "and worldly desire. They possess discrimination, humility and" "knowledge. Their opinions are in accordance with the Vedas and" "the Purāns. They are never guilty of boastfulness, arrogance "

"and pride, nor do they set their feet even by accident in the path

of

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(1) This reference to Govind, another name for Krishna, a later incarnation of Vishnu is surprising.

"evil. They are always singing or hearing of my exploits. "  
 "And without any selfish motive they seek the good of others."  
 Aranya, 73 (40)58.

In the very striking description of the wickedness which <sup>dicts</sup> affects the world, when the Iron age comes round, the poet's exposure of wrong-doing shews by contrast what he had hoped for, but never saw. The passage occurs in the crow's account of the time when he lived in Avadh, as a member of the Shudra caste.

"It was a very evil age. Men and women were wholly occupied "  
 "With sin. It's filth had swallowed up all piety. The sacred "  
 "books were obsolete. Heretics fashioned religions of their "  
 "own, and started many sects. Every one was in the power of "  
 "delusion (moh). Greed had devoured good deeds ..... No "  
 "attention was paid to the rules of caste and the four stages "  
 "of life. All men and women were intensely hostile to the "  
 "Vedas (shruti). The Brahmins sold the<sup>se</sup> sacred books, and "  
 "kings devoured their subjects. No one gave heed to the com- "  
 "mands of the Vedas. Every one went his own way, as it pleased "  
 "his fancy. A pandit was the one who talked most. The de- "  
 "ceiver and the boaster were said to be saints. The wise man "  
 "was he who stole his neighbour's goods. The man who showed "  
 "off was the man who was most religious. The man who could "  
 "raise a laugh by his falsehoods however feeble was reckoned "  
 "a fine fellow in the age of iron. (Kaliyug). The man who ob- "  
 "served none of the rules of life, and abandoned the path of "

"Revelation (shruti) was <sup>u</sup> supposed to be endowed with knowledge "  
 "(gyāni) and to have subdued all worldly passions (vairāgi). "  
 "If a man's nails were long and he <sup>had</sup> ~~was~~ wide spreading, matted "  
 "hair, he was ~~assumed~~ to be an eminent ascetic. He who wore "  
 "filthy clothes and other finery, who ate both lawful and un- "  
 "lawful food, was a yogi; he ~~was~~ a saint, he was worthy of wor- "  
 "ship. Evil doers were treated with respect and honour. Those "  
 "who were false in thought, word and deed, were the preachers "  
 "in that evil time. Men were all in subjection to their wives "  
 "who made them dance as the juggler does with a monkey. Shudras "  
 "gave instruction in knowledge to the twice-born. They wore "  
 "the Brahminical cord (janeu) and received their base rewards." "  
 "All were in the power of sensuality, greed and anger; hostile "  
 "to the gods, Brahmins and saints. Wives forsook handsome "  
 "and virtuous husbands to follow after other and worthless men." "  
 "Women whose husbands were still alive, ceased to wear ornaments." "  
 "Widows adorned themselves with newly purchased jewels. Teach- "  
 "ers and pupils were deaf and blind. The one did not listen, "  
 "the other did not read. A teacher who ~~takes the~~ money from "  
 "his pupil and does not remove his difficulties, falls into a "  
 "deep hell. Fathers and mothers summoned their children and "  
 "taught them that the object of their lives was to fill their "  
 "bellies. People who are destitute of the knowledge of Brahm "  
 "<sup>Brahm</sup> (B, gyān) can say nothing else. In the power of <sup>greed</sup> ~~illusion~~ as "

"they are, they would kill a Brahmin or a religious teacher "  
 "for the sake of a farthing. Shudras argued with the twice-"  
 "born and said 'Are we any lower than you?' The man who knows"  
 "Brahm is the best of Brahmins.<sup>(1)</sup> It is thus they brow-beat "  
 "and threaten. Libertines, in pursuit of other men's wives,"  
 "wise only in deceit, in the grasp of ~~illusion~~ <sup>delusion (moh)</sup>, violence and"  
 "selfishness, these are the men who are learned talkers <sup>o</sup> on the"  
 "doctrine of monism (abhed). I have seen the manner of life"  
 "that prevails in the age of iron. Ruined themselves and "  
 "seeking to ruin others who keep to the path of revelation, "  
 "those who reject the Vedas (shruti) and speak evil of them "  
 "will have to live in each separate hell for the period of "  
 "a Kalpa. Low caste people like oil men, potters, dog-feed-"  
 "ers, Kirāts, Kols and manufacturers of strong drink, who on "  
 "the death of their wives, or when they lose their household "  
 "goods, shave their heads and become sannyāsis (religious "  
 "mendicants), and cause Brāhmins to worship their feet, des- "

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(1) Tulsidās also teaches this by implication when he asserts that the very lowest obtain <sup>salvation</sup> ~~revelation~~ by means of devotion to Rāma. The Mahābhārata (iii. 180) has a fine passage where it is said that the Brāhmin in whom truthfulness, good conduct and mercy are not found, is not a Brāhmin but a Shudra, and that the Shudra who has these virtues is a Brāhmin.

"troy themselves with their own hands, both in this and in the"  
 "other world. A Brahmin is unlettered, covetous, lustful, and"  
 "pays no attention to the rules of conduct, is wicked and mar-"  
 "ries a Shudra. A Shudra on the other hand repeats prayers, "  
 "practises penance, fasts and receives gifts, sits on a lofty "  
 "seat and reads the Purāṇas. Everyone fashions his own way "  
 "of life. The immoralities that prevail are beyond counting "  
 "and cannot be described." Uttar, 139 (94) 152.

The poet goes on to declare that such disregard for the laws of religion and morality bore its natural fruit. The sins of which men were guilty resulted in suffering, sorrow, sickness, fear and death. Life was very short. No one lived longer than fifteen years. And yet in their pride, men hoped to live to the end of a Kalpa. Ascetics grew rich. Beggars built for themselves fine houses. Kings engulfed in sin and paying no heed to their religious duties, punished their subjects, regardless of justice. The powers of darkness were worshipped by prayer, penance, sacrifice, vows and gifts, the rites that had been employed in connection with a purer faith. Deceit, violence, arrogance, heresy, lust,

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(1) There are numerous references to the duties of kings and the happiness of the people when they were wisely and justly governed.

(2) Jap tap makh vrat dān.

anger, covetousness, and every kind of evil desire enveloped the world. All thought of paying respect to caste, the four modes of life, religion and moral conduct disappeared.<sup>(1)</sup> And as a natural consequence the gods (dev) rained no rain on the earth. Seed was sown, but it never sprouted.

The moral teaching of the poem at its best is not expressed, however, in words or maxims, but in the portrayal of men and women. Rāma and Sītā, Bharat and Lakshman, by their unflinching obedience to what they believed to be their duty, by their love of truth, purity and righteousness, by their thoughtfulness for others, have set before India a very high ideal.

It is true that in his delineation of the hero, with his wife and brothers, Tulsiidās was, to some extent, a copyist. He is drawing over again the picture drawn by his predecessor, Vālmiki. And it must be confessed that in certain respects, his copy is less effective than the original. Tulsiidās, as we have seen, was often unwilling to acknowledge the reality of Rāma's incarnation. He could not endure the thought that the object of his worship should be exposed to any limitations, should suffer weariness, should manifest ignorance, should even seem to run the risk of defeat in battle. The result is that except in the Ayodhyā book, we feel that we are often face to face with a phantom and not a man. The same is true of Sītā. We would love and honour her more whole-heartedly

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[1) varnāshram dharm achār



if we were allowed to believe that she is a real woman. But he refuses to forget that she is the mother of the world and he will not entertain the idea that such as she could be carried off by Rāvaṇ. He therefore uses the conceit that it was not the real Sītā, but only an image of her who lay a prisoner in Lankā. Vālmiki knew none of these evasions. Both Rāma and Sītā are so human in his eyes, their humiliation is so complete, that <sup>the</sup> Rāma <sup>of the earlier poem</sup> has to be told by the Creator that he is God and not a man.

And yet in spite of himself and his philosophisings, Tulsiḍās has succeeded for the most part in making his characters live. And this is specially striking in the Ayodhyā Kāṇḍ, the finest book in the poem, and the one that is most read. When speaking of Rāma's life in Avadh, the poet only very seldom stops to tell us that he is merely acting a part. He is suffering a real sorrow; he is undergoing real acts of self renunciation. He has no thought for himself. He is thinking of his father's honour. He is concerned about his wife's comfort. He is rejoicing in one brother's generosity. He is planning for another's advancement. He shews compassion, sympathy, forgiveness, kindness, when they are required. In the description of Rāma, which Tulsiḍās gives us there, and not in the battling with demons, or in the amazing manifestations of his divine form, or in the exercise of his Māyā, do we see a real incarnation at its highest and best. And the same is

true of Bharat and Lakshman and Sītā. It is in their treatment of others, their unselfishness, the purity of their affections, their attitude to the citizens and to the outcaste tribes of the forest, that they are most attractive. It is when they reveal the human side of their natures that they are most divine.

There is this also to be said and it cannot be said with too much emphasis, that it is not only in this visible embodying of the virtues that the poet excels. There is something even more valuable than that; the way, namely in which he links religion and morality together. He has made religious enthusiasm the inspiration of right living. Faith without works is dead. Religion, if it is real, must work a change of heart. A change of heart can only come through faith in God. Devotion to Rāma must produce good men. This is set forth with peculiar beauty in the passage which has been given in full at page 168. When the exiles asked a rishi to tell them where they were to live, he answered:-

"Dwell in their hearts, oh Raghurāyā, where there is no lust."  
 "anger, passion, pride, delusion (moh), covetousness, excitement, envy, violence, deceit, arrogance, Māyā. They who look  
 "on another man's wife as their mother and on another man's  
 "wealth as more poisonous than poison, who are glad at another's  
 "prosperity and sad at another's misfortune, may their hearts  
 "be your auspicious abode."

In his enthusiasm for the power of Rāma's name, it is true that the poet sometimes forgets this high ideal, and speaks as if the mere repetition of the name could cleanse the soul. But the prevailing conviction is that the inspiration to all goodness is devotion to Rāma's feet. That does not mean that he is blind to the value of religious instruction. He recognises the need of education and training, or, as he expresses it, the society of good men. He magnifies the office of the religious guide or guru. Living with such persons, he says, is like going on a pilgrimage to a holy place. Wonderful results ensue. The crow becomes a parrot, and the goose becomes a swan. But it is made clear that such beneficial intercourse is only possible through the mercy of Rāma. Bal, (2) 7.

And what he proclaims on the first pages of his poem, he proclaims as the work draws to a close. Rāma himself is made to say, "What is required is a good disposition, a mind devoid of guile, always content with whatever happens. In love with my name which is a home of all the virtues, free from selfishness, arrogance and delusion (moh), the happiness of such a man as I have described, is the sum of all felicity." Uttar, 68 (47) 69.

It is not suggested that Tulsidās surpasses the more ancient scriptures in the inwardness of his moral teaching. We could quote passages from the Great Epic and the Laws of Manu which dwell on the need for repentance with more intensity

and directness than Tulsidās does. But when all has been said, it has to be realised that the moral teaching of these <sup>ancient</sup> ~~other~~ Scriptures has been like that of other scriptures. It is given by way of precept and exhortation, expressed in pithy proverbs and sententious aphorisms, conveyed by means of parable and allegory. Such teaching is very valuable wherever it may be found. It is a confirmation of the eternal verity of the moral law. It is another proof that God has not left Himself without a witness in the heart and conscience of mankind. Good men everywhere have been marvellously at one in the views they hold as to the principles which should govern human conduct. But the precept does not always express itself in practice. The exhortation is too often disobeyed. They are only too apt to remain cold and barren unless there is some fructifying heat.

It was only when the Hindu found in Rāma one who embodied his own best thoughts and ideals that religion and moral conduct could be linked together in a satisfactory fashion. How convinced the poet was of the close connection that must subsist between religion and morality, is well illustrated by what he says in the beginning of his poem. The story of Rāma which he has to tell deserves our study, he says, because it gives rest to the intellect, it delivers the mind from doubt, delusion and error; it carries the soul across the sea

of existence, it removes sorrow, it is the true teacher (sat guru) of knowledge, asceticism and profound meditation; it heals the diseases of life, it wipes out sin, pain and sorrow; it destroys lust, anger and uncleanness; it burns up deceit, hypocrisy and unbelief; it is the seed from which grow all religious rites, fastings and vows. (1)

It is true that the same close connection between religion and morality is asserted in the Vishṇu Pūrāna, a book devoted to the worship of Krishna. "He who lives pure in " "thought, free from malice, contented, leading a holy life," "feeling tenderness for all creatures, speaking wisely and " (2) "kindly, humble and sincere, has Vāsudeva ever in his heart."

It is difficult however to concede to Krishna such a home. The god's own life on earth was such that his worshippers had felt they must find some excuse for it. It is different with Rāma. He towers above his devotees in every virtue. He offers no unworthy ideal, and so to the Hindu who believes in him and loves him, there comes a spiritual impulse and a moral strength. Faith in Rāma contributed what

(1) These are selections merely from a long passage in Bāl Kāṇḍ, 40, ~~4~~(38)50.

(2) Vishṇu Purāṇa, iii.7, Wilson's translation.

was required to change precept into practice, a theory into life. Religion and morality are the two sides of the same shield. This is reckoned a commonplace in the Christian religion. "If ye love me," said Jesus, "ye will keep my "Commandments." And Paul declared, "If any man be in Christ" "he is a new creature." It is one of the glories of Tulsidās that with certain aspects of his mind he strove to bring a similar truth home to the heart of India.

If we are to form a balanced estimate of the poet's teaching, however, we must take into consideration those other elements where it cannot be said that religion and morality go hand in hand. The most influential of these is Karma. A detailed examination has already been made of the strong hold which that doctrine had upon the people of Avadh. They were constantly abusing Karma, and Rāma repeatedly followed their example.<sup>(1)</sup> It is a theory which seems to offer an attractive explanation for the inequalities of life, but in practice it proves an only too easy refuge for those who would apologise for their own or other people's sin. The poet's belated awakening to his blunder in the last book of the poem is very interesting, but it does not atone for the harm he has done by his earlier teaching. It is well that he should have made Rāma his mouthpiece:-

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(1) See MSS. p. 158, Rāma said: "The guilt rests on the heads of Time, Karma and the Creator." To Bharat he said: "The people who blame your mother are fools who have never studied in the schools of the learned or of the saints."

"And yet when men do not secure salvation and go to the "  
"other world and there suffer torment, beating their heads"  
"they falsely lay the blame on Time, Karma, and God."  
Uttar, 64 (43) 65.

The enthusiasm again which Tulsidās shews for sacred places is very wonderful. The Ganges, especially at Tribeni, Prayāg and Benares, is particularly holy. It is true that the river is sometimes addressed in the definite language of prayer and that it gives an answer which its worshippers can hear and understand.<sup>①</sup> But in the majority of cases a place or stream is in itself reckoned holy. It is not thought of as being alive as a god is alive, nevertheless the very sight of it confers beatitude.

"I reverence the holy city of Avadh and the river "

"Saraju which destroys the sins of the Iron age. "

Bal, 21 (23) 31.

"By the power of his name I make happy those whom I see"

"dying at Kāshi (Benares)." Bal, 127 (125) 142.

"How is it possible not to render service to Kāshi, "

"knowing that it is the birthplace of salvation. (moksh)

"the mine of knowledge, the destroyer of sin." Kish, invoc-  
ation.

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(1) Sītā prayed to the Ganges both before and after her exile. On both occasions she got an answer. Ayodh (99) 103. Uttar 190 (117) 208. Bharat also had a similar experience. Ayodh (195) 204.

"The four classes of souls (jiv) which are in the world, by "dying at Kāshi obtain the highest state (p<sup>ā</sup>rampad). "

Bal, 58 (56) 67.

"The river Mandākini is a branch of the Ganges. It destroys" sin as readily as a witch destroys a child." Ayodh (126) 132!"

"Thus Rāma came to the Tribeni, the remembrance of which "

"gives every kind of good fortune. With joy he bathed in"

"its water and worshipped Shiva. With appropriate rites "

"he worshipped the god of the place (tirath dev). Ayodh,(102)

106.

"Who can describe the power of Prayāg, the lion that destroys"

"the elephant mass of sin." Ayodh (102) 106.

When Rāma was returning from exile in his aeroplane, he told Sītā that the Jumna removed the impurities of the Iron age, and continued as follows:-

Again behold Prayāg, the lord of tīraths, the sight of which"

"puts away the sins committed in an hundred million births. "

"See again the most holy Tribeni that dispels sorrow, the "

"ladder to Hari's heaven, and look! look! the very holy city"

"of Avadh, the destroyer of the three kinds of pain and the "

"disease of existence." Lankā, 144 (116) 154.

There is only one passage which suggests that the worshipper himself should be in a correct mental attitude. It is when

Atri describes to Bharat the discovery of a forgotten tīrath:-



"This has been a holy place from all eternity (anādi), but"  
"Time concealed it and no one knew of its existence. Then "  
"my servants saw that it was an auspicious spot and made a "  
"well for the sake of the excellent water. Under the con-"  
"trol of Vidhi, the whole universe has benefitted, and a reli-"  
"gious purpose very difficult to secure has become very easy. "  
"From henceforth people will call it Bharat's well; a very "  
"purifying tirath, because of the union of the waters. Those"  
"who with love and religious observances bathe in it will be-"  
"come pure in thought, word and deed." Ayodh (297) 310.

The magic influence belonging to sacred places is surpassed by the power attached to Rāma's name. In the Bāl kāṇḍ particularly, the poet dwells on the sweet and gracious name easy to remember which satisfies every wish, affords profit in this world and procures salvation in the next. (23 )35. He tells us indeed:-

"The glory of the name is boundless. It is greater even "  
"than Nirgun, Yes, in my opinion, the name is greater than"  
"Rāma himself .... By repeating his name with love, those de-"  
"voted to him become dwellers in the abode of happiness and "  
"bliss. Rāma himself saved only one person, the ascetic's "  
"wife. His name has reformed the evil deeds of millions of "  
"wicked men." Bal, 29 (27) 39.

Much of this is merely the language of exaggerated devotion, and it would not be impossible to find somewhat similar expressions in Christian literature with reference to the name of Jesus. But the poet is not content with expressions such as we have quoted. He finds it necessary to declare that the demons slain by Rāma obtained salvation because they happened to utter his name at the hour of death:-

"Rāma sent them to his own heaven. Demons who devour human"  
"flesh obtained a rank for which ascetics crave. Rāma is "  
"tender-hearted and full of mercy to demons who invoke his "  
"name, even when they are moved to do so by feelings of hate."  
"Who is so merciful as he? The man who does not give up his"  
"error and worship such a lord is foolish and accursed."

Lanka, 56 (43) 64.

The poet's mind, as we have seen, had many points of view. The ancient wells at which he drank afforded water of various qualities and he did not always discriminate as we should have liked. It is not unnatural that the sacred literature of any country should contain a great deal of diverse teaching, that passages which carry the soul up to God should stand beside teaching that repels. This is true, for example, with regard to the Old Testament. The moral teaching of the Prophets is very different from what we find in some of the historical books. The Psalter contains not only hymns which dwell on the beauty of holiness. It has others which call down calamity and punishment on the heads of the writer's enemies.

The God who was supposed to sanction some of the deeds recorded in Exodus and Samuel was not the God of whom Jesus tells us in His Gospel. The Ten Commandments were rewritten in the Sermon on the Mount. The explanation of such glaring contrasts in the sacred books of any nation is that they are a compilation. The writings they contain represent a long development. And though we may wonder how any compiler could put them in the same book and attribute them to the same divine source or to the same human author, we remember that they have been sanctified by the reverence of centuries, and that a multitude of different minds have shared in their composition.

Tulsidās, however, was his own compiler. And it might have been expected that he would have used more discrimination in the choice of his materials. But it must not be forgotten that with all his spiritual insight and healthy moral fervour, he remained an orthodox Hindu. The feelings he had for what he called the Vedas were similar to those entertained by the average Christian for the Bible. These Scriptures were Shruti or what had been heard. They were more than a tradition to him. They were the Word of God. That he did discriminate in the choice of his materials, is, however, quite evident. Attention has been called to

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(1) Tulsidās often confirms his statements by saying, "So the Vedas sing," or, "so says Shruti." Shruti includes the hymns of the Vedas, the Brāhmanas and Upanishads. Tradition includes the Laws of Manu, the two great Epics and the Purānas. Smṛiti is what is remembered, in contrast to what is heard (Shruti).

attitude with reference to the lesser gods. He continued to believe in their existence, but he had little or no respect for some of them. And as we have seen, he did not hesitate to express his opinions. When Tulsidās did that he rendered a service to religion and morality. The pity is that he had not the strength to do more. He speaks without restraint of the character and conduct of the lesser gods. And yet when he tells us what Vishṇu and Shiva did on certain occasions, it would appear as if he had no feelings of disapproval, at least as regards Vishṇu. With reference to Shiva, it is manifest that he was seized with some qualms of conscience and he offers the old apology, in words which have passed into a proverb, coupled to a warning:-

"The powerful can do no wrong. They are like the sun, like "fire and the Ganges. But the fool who in his pride wishes" "to copy them, saying that a man is like a god, will fall into" "hell for the period of a Kalpa." Bāl, 80 (78) 92.

When we read the account of Shiva's wedding, or the methods which the other gods adopted to persuade that deity to marry; when we read the description of what Vishṇu did to cure the pride of Nārada and rob him of his phantom bride, we ask how was it possible that the man who wrote so beautifully in praise of purity and truth and the love of God, could, in other parts of his poem, put together such <sup>conceptions so unworthy,</sup> ~~fantastic nonsense~~. It is no excuse to say that these narratives belong to the

mythological stage in the history of religion. That is merely to repeat a platitude. The wonder is that a man who had travelled so far and risen so high, did not realise that such stories were undesirable. And this also has to be noted that the poet is not merely repeating old stories in which he has no real interest. Shiva is one of the great gods. He is an object of the poet's own worship; and as for Vishṇu, when he describes that god's treatment of Nārada, he repeatedly identifies him with Rāma. The name of Rāma is used time after time interchangeably with that of Vishṇu. Not only so, but when Rāma was in the forest and there met with Nārada, the rishi reverting to his old disappointment, asked the incarnate god why he had treated him as he did. (1)

With regard to semi-divine beings also, the poet had apparently a different standard than he demanded of ordinary humanity. In Sanskrit literature Nārada is represented as an inquisitive, unattractive, old man, a gossip and a fomenter of quarrels, constantly moving between earth and heaven. And yet he seems to have a strange attraction for Tulsidās. He plays a prominent part in the poem.

Vishṇu receives him with the greatest respect when he appears in heaven, rising from his seat and enquiring after his

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(1) It was this practice of attributing to the gods conduct which their purer-hearted worshippers felt it necessary to disown, that made the Latin author say,

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

welfare. It was he who helped to arrange for Pārvati's second marriage. And despite his earnest devotion to Rāma, it was the strength of his curse that brought about Vishnu's incarnation. The seven rishis are also made to indulge in language which the poet would not sanction in common life. It will be remembered that they were sent by Shiva to make trial of Pārvati's love. They approached and asked her why she was engaged in such arduous penance. She replied that she was trusting to the truth of Nārād's promise and hoped to secure Shiva for a husband.

"When they heard her words, the rishis smiled and said; "Tell us, who has ever listened to Nārād's advice and continued "to have a home?... The man or woman who listens to Nārād will " assuredly abandon his home and become a beggar. Deceitful in "mind, though in appearance a good man, he wishes to make every- "one like himself. You are putting faith in his word, and wish " to marry as your husband a worthless, shameless, ragged mendicant; "a wearer of skulls and snakes." Bal. 90 (88) 102.

It is impossible to refrain from passing an adverse criticism on an attitude which the poet, in common with others of his countrymen, has chosen to adopt. Despite the moral and spiritual heights to which Tulsidās often rises, we have to recognise that the poem is a strange medley. Defects such as have been mentioned are present everywhere throughout his work, defects which leave the Hindu disarmed and enfeebled when he would fight for

righteousness. The Bhakti movement will never come to its own until India passes beyond the mythological stage and learns to believe in one God, a God who is worthy of her large-hearted devotion.

Two other matters of great importance call for consideration in this chapter; the poet's attitude with regard to

caste, and his views on women. On both questions his opinions vary. We have seen the extraordinary kindness with which both Rāma and Bharat treated the jungle tribes. Neither of them believed in the doctrine of untouchability. They ate the food these low-caste people brought and both of them embraced Guha, the forest chieftain. As has been already remarked in an earlier chapter, there is no doubt that Tulsidās wished to make it perfectly clear that he rejoiced in such brotherly treatment. Nevertheless he recognises that it is unusual. He therefore brings the gods on the scene. They rain down flowers and express their wondering approval. "According to the world's ideas and the teaching of the Vedas" "this man is an outcaste in everyway. If his shadow touches" "anyone it is necessary to bathe. And yet Rāma's young brother" "has embraced him and thrilled all over with joy at meeting" "him." Ayodh. (186) 194.

We have similar generosity expounded in the account of Rāma's interviews with the dying vulture and the female hermit who was an outcaste.<sup>(1)</sup> No doubt the poet's purpose here is partly theological. He wishes to make it plain that ~~faith~~<sup>devotion</sup> can overleap all barriers. But coupled as these two other incidents are with the treatment of Guha, India has cause to be grateful for such emphatic and healthy counsel.

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(1) See pp. 187-190 for Rāma's interviews with the Vulture and female hermit.



And yet here also we have to confess that the poet is not by any means consistent in his teaching. Because throughout the poem he exalts Brāhmins in the most extravagant fashion. And no more striking proof of that is to be found than in the fact that between his account of Rāma's interviews with the dying vulture and the female outcaste, he places on the lips of Rāma what seems a quite gratuitous observation.

" "I do not like those who oppress Brāhmins. Those who " "abandoning hypocrisy in thought deed and word serve these " "gods of the earth (bhu sur) bring under their control; Brahmā" "and Shiva with me, and all the gods. A Brahmin, though he " "curse you and beat you, ought to be worshipped, so say the " "saints. A Brāhmin should be worshipped though destitute of " "character and virtue, but not a Shūdra though possessed of " "every virtue and distinguished for his knowledge." Aranya, 56(28)  
42'

It is recognised as essential that the rules of caste should be adhered to, and among the many objectionable practices which prevailed in the Iron age, the crow tells us that the laws of caste were ignored. Shūdras dared to teach the twice-born, and maintained that they were as good as Brāhmins. Nor does the poet recognise any other attitude. However liberal minded he may be, confident as he is that God loves all, he believes that it will be a very disorderly world if men do not observe the rules of caste and adhere to the rank in which they

were born. The Brahmins stand at the head of the social structure. They rank higher than kings. They are repeatedly spoken of as the gods of earth in contrast to the gods of heaven, and as such they ought to be treated. Only a few illustrations can be quoted. Not only kings but celestials bow before them. When Vishvāmitra came to Dashrath's court the king prostrated himself before the holy man and then caused him to sit on his own throne. Bal, 212 (218) 238. Rāma and Lakshman humbled themselves in the presence of their religious teacher;†

"The two brothers pressed the guru's feet, they for love of " "whose lotus feet ascetics repeat many prayers and indulge in " "profound meditation." Bal, 231(237) 258. Bharat, when he spoke to Brahmins, did so with joined hands and humble entreaty. He tells them to give their orders to everybody whatever their rank and with reference to everything. He then went to the house of his guru and prostrating himself in his presence, asked permission to live the life of an ascetic. Ayodh, (310) 336 The god Shiva bowed his head in the presence of the Brahmins who came to his wedding, Bal, 109 (107) 123. ~~While Vishnu, when Nārada visited him in heaven, "got up with joy and went to" "receive him; he caused him to sit beside him. The lord of all" "that moves and does not move, said with a smile, 'It is a long" "time since you came to see me, oh muni!" Bal, 136 (134) 155.~~

The honour they received is otherwise expressed when we read

that Rāma

meditated on the feet of Shiva, his guru and Brahmins. (Bal, 357 (363) 391) and the hero's interest in them is equally manifest in the statements that Rāma is "the well wisher of gods, Brahmins and cows," (Bal, 286 (292) 317) and "became incarnate for the sake of gods, Brahmins (dvij) cows and the earth." Kish, 31 (26) 29.

Extraordinary power is also attributed to them and we are warned not to offend them.

"The fool who is envious of his religious teacher will "fall into the raurav hell for an hundred Kalpas." Uttar, 156, (103) 170.

"The man who despises Hari and his guru will become a frog" and will have that body for a thousand births. The man who "despises a Brahmin, after enduring many hells will be born into" the world as a crow." Uttar 189 (117) 207.

"Listen to my true words," (says Shiva) "Vows and the service of Brahmins are pleasing to Hari. Never insult Brahmins." Reckon them as the equals of eternal Brahm. The bolt of Indra, my own great trident, the rod of Death and the terrible discus "of Hari, those struck by them may not die. But the anger of a "Brahmin is a fire that consumes." Utter 162 (105) 177.

"A Brahmin, by means of penance, is always powerful. No "one is able to protect you from his anger. If you can get "Brahmins into your power, then you have the Creator, Vishṇu "and Shiva in your power. I tell you true, with both hands "upraised. In the presence of a Brahmin your greatness will "avail you nothing." Bal 170 (168) 194.

"If you reveal this, or if a Brahmin curse you, you will" "be destroyed .... A guru can save you from the anger of the " "Creator. But if the guru himself is hostile, there is no- " "body on earth who can save you." Bal 171 (169) 195.

In view of such beliefs it was natural that one of the signs that the Golden Age had come with Rāma's return to Avadh, was the rendering of service to Brahmins by all men and women, Uttar 43 (22) 44, while the prince himself gave them gifts innumerable. Uttar 45 (24) 46. It was not until the Brahmins gave the order that Rāma sat down on his father's throne. Uttar 20 (10) 21. No wonder Rāma should say to Parashurām, "Such is" "the might of a Brahmin's descent that he who fears you is other2" "wise without fear," Bal 284 (291) 316, or that the crow, speaking of his various transmigrations, should observe:-

"At last I obtained the form of a Brahmin, a rank diffi-" "cult for a god to attain." Uttar 166 (106) 181.

Very little is said as to what constitutes a Brahmin's duty. The poet is too anxious to insist on his privileges. But in the Uttar kānd, 162 (105) 177, we read that Brahmins, who are of a forgiving disposition and desire to do good to others, are as dear to Shiva as Rāma is, while Parashurām is told that a Brahmin's heart should be full of mercy Bal 283 (289) 314, a quality in which he was very deficient. By way of contrast, however, we discover what Brahmins ought to be, by reading what

{they were really

in the Age of Iron; unlettered, covetous, lustful, neglecting the rules of conduct and marrying women from the Shūdra caste.

It would be easy to find support for everything Tulsidās has claimed for his own caste in the earlier literature. But we shall search his pages in vain for teaching so broadminded as the Mahābhārata and the Laws of Manu sometimes venture to assert.

"Even in Shūdras, truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, benevolence, mercy, kindness and knowledge of the Vedas .... are to be found. The Shūdra in whom these characteristics are present is no Shūdra, and the Brahmin in whom they are wanting, is not a Brahmin but a Shūdra." (Mahā. iii. 180)

"Brahmins learned in the Vedas, regard a (virtuous) Shudra as equal to Brahm himself." (Mahā. xii. 297)

"Let not a Brahmin, even though in pain, speak words cutting others to the quick; let him not injure others in thought, nor deed; let him not utter speeches which make others afraid of him, since that will prevent him from gaining heaven. A Brahmin should always fear homage as if it were poison, and constantly desire to suffer scorn as he would long for nectar. For he who is scorned may sleep with an easy mind, and with an easy mind walk here among men, but the scorner utterly perishes." Manu. ii. 161, 163. (1)

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(1) See M. N. Dutt's translation of Mahābhārata, Calcutta, 3 vols and Buhler's translation of The Laws of Manu. Oxford.

Vālmīki's Rāmāyana also insists on the pre-eminence of Brahmins. It declares that obedience to them is man's highest duty. When Rāma returned from exile, he worshipped the gods, the spirits of his ancestors, and Brahmins. He gave them hundreds of thousands of cows and many thousand vessels of wine. Dashrath was still more generous. When celebrating a horse sacrifice he asked the officiating priests to accept his whole empire. They declined the offer and received instead, ten million cows and one hundred million pieces of gold. The power of Brahmins was greater than that of kings. To threaten a Brahmin was a very great sin. To take a Brahmin's life was the very acme of wickedness. On the other hand, no Brahmin could be put to death. It was from Vālmīki that Tulsidās borrowed the account of Rāma's kind treatment of Guha and the vulture Jatāyūs. But it is not suggested *there* that the bird was unclean, because he could trace his descent in the eighth generation from Kashyap, the brother-in-law of Shiva, and one of the Prajāpatis. The earlier Rāmāyana, like the Mahābhārata, while insisting on the rules of caste, recognises mixed marriages. Members of the higher castes could marry wives from those beneath them. To Tulsidās such conduct was abhorrent. One of the sins that prevailed in the Iron Age,

according to the crow, was the marrying of Brahmins with Shudra women. (1)

The passages which deal with women are particularly interesting. They help to give a clear picture of social conditions. When the kings came to Janak's capital to try and bend Shiva's bow, the arena was surrounded by tiers of seats, from which the people watched the contest with comfort. (2)

(1) That the hardening process had already begun, even in Vālmīki's Rāmāyana is manifest when we compare two stories it tells. Rāma's father, when hunting in the forest, happened to wound an ascetic who was the child of a mixed marriage. The monarch was heart-broken, and begged the holy man's forgiveness. But the point of the narrative is this, that a celestial car came for, and carried off, the holy man to heaven. In strange contrast to this story we have another, manifestly of later date, that tells how, when it was discovered that a Shudra was practising asceticism, Rāma went to his hermitage and cut off the presumptuous man's head. See my Myths and Legends of India. p.xix.

(2) When they heard the two brothers had come, the whole population left their work and their houses, children, young and old, men and women. When Janak saw the great crowd he told his servants to go at once and cause them all to be properly seated. With sweet words of entreaty, they caused them to

"Alongside, there was erected an extensive and handsome building, glistening in many colours, where the women of the city were seated, in accordance with their rank, and witnessed the affair in seemly fashion." Bal 229 (235)256. As Rāma entered the town, the young women from the latticed windows of their houses saw his beauty and at once fell in love with him. Bal 225 (231)252. When Shiva and Brahmā, with the other gods, came to witness Rāma's wedding, they were surprised at the number of handsome men and women whom they saw. Bal 313 (319)<sup>346.</sup> We read of lovely married women (suāsini) singing songs, while Brahmins recited texts from the Vedas. Bal. 312. (318)345. And it was the same in Avadh. When Rāma and Sītā arrived there, we read that "crowds and crowds of beautiful women came to meet them.... supplied with water pots and lamps, and singing songs as if they were embodied goddesses of speech." Bal. 343 (349)377.

As for Sītā, though we have to remember that, according at least to some accounts, she was not more than a child,<sup>(1)</sup> we read that she first saw her future husband in the royal garden

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be seated, both men and women, the high classes, the middle class, and the insignificant low, each according to his place. Bal. 245 (251)273.

(1) On her arrival at Avadh, she was so treated.



She had gone to worship at the shrine of Pārvati and to ask the goddess for a handsome husband. She bathed in a pool near at hand, with her female companions. One of these attendante, who had gone to another part of the garden, came back with the news that she had seen two beautiful youths. Urged by her companions, Sītā went to the place, and there she saw Rāma. It was love at first sight. Seeing the beauty of Sītā, he was filled with gladness. He was so over-whelmed that he could not speak. Sītā was equally enthralled. She was ~~so~~ possessed with longing. She was as glad as a man who recognises the treasure he has lost. Her eyes grew tired of looking at Rāma and her eyelids forgot to wink. <sup>(1)</sup> Bal. 236 (241)<sup>262.</sup>^

Throughout the poem there is no suggestion of anything impure in the character of the poet's heroes. He is justified in his boast "here are no prurient and seductive stories." (2) And in that section which speaks of Rāma and Sītā as children it is clear that their marriage was a marriage only in name.

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(1) Rāma afterwards said to Lakshman, "Vidhātā knows the " "cause of everything." My lucky side is throbbing. It is a " "characteristic of the house of Raghu. None of them ever set " "their mind on an evil path.... I have never looked on the wife " "of another man even in a dream... Those men are few who have " "never looked with longing at another's wife." Bal 236 (242) 263.

(2) Growse's translation. Bal. 48 (46)58.

When Sītā went to the forest with her husband and brother-in-law, we get a pretty picture of her gracious treatment of the women in the villages through which they passed, and when they asked her who her two companions were, she told them how the younger was her brother-in-law, while the other was,- here she paused, and, covering her face with the edge of her veil, remained silent. But with a coquettish glance she let them understand that the other was her husband. Ayodh, (112:117). Rāma's treatment of Sītā in Avadh and in the forest is uniformly kind and loving. The ordeal of the fire has, as we have seen, been so altered for theological reasons, that it is robbed of its original cruelty. And once she was rescued from Lankā, the same loving thoughtfulness prevails. <sup>(1)</sup> In

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(1) This is on the assumption that we ignore the Lav Kush Kāṇḍ, often added to the poem in popular editions, which tells of Sītā being repudiated by Rāma in obedience to the complaints of the citizens, that he should not keep in his zenana a woman who had been in Rāvaṇ's arms. There is reason for thinking that the corresponding book is a later addition to Vālmiki's Rāmāyana. Let us hope that Tulsidās was not responsible for such a production either. The Lav Kush Kāṇḍ is a hopeless anti-climax. In the Bāl Kāṇḍ <sup>47</sup>(45) <sup>57</sup>, the poet himself speaks of his poem as containing seven books. The Kāshī Nāgarā Prachārīṇī Sabhā has published an edition of the text purged of all interpolations, and without the eighth book, which it reckons as the crowning offence.

this respect, Tulsidās' picture is more generous than that of Vālmiki's. And yet as a whole it is inferior to that of the earlier poet. Whether he realised it or not, Sītā is the best drawn character in the Sanskrit Rāmāyana. She expresses herself with fearless frankness and manifests all through her troubles, particularly when exposed to the ordeal of the burning fire, a strong and noble nature, that scorns her husband's unworthy subterfuges.

Whatever a woman's life in practice may often happily have been, we are not allowed to forget what the theory was. A woman should always worship her husband's feet. "A woman's religion is to recognise her husband as her only god." Bal, 111 (109)<sup>125</sup> It was Umā's mother who told her daughter that such should be her rule of life. But she added, "Why has " "the Creator made woman to be in subjection to others and not " "see happiness even in a dream?" Sītā herself addresses Pārvati as the chief of women faithful to their husbands and reckoning them as gods. Bal 241 (247)<sup>268</sup>. While a rishi's wife, talking at length on what constitutes a woman's religion says, "Mother, father, brothers and well-wishers, are the source of " "moderate happiness, but a husband is a gift without limit. " "She is a vile woman who does not serve her husband," Aranya(2.) 6 and she goes on to say that even when he is old, ill, stupid, poverty-stricken, blind, deaf, passionate, if she treat him (1.) with dishonour, a woman will have to suffer many things in hell"

"Her one religious duty; her one fast and vow, is to love her " husband's feet in deed, word and thought; not even in a dream must she think of another man. To deceive him, to love another means that she will fall into hell for an hundred Kalpas, spending thus an hundred lives for the sake of a moment's pleasure. " A woman can attain the highest state (paramgati) " without any trouble by abandoning guile and by faithfulness " to her lord. Even a wicked woman, who serves her husband, " obtains a blessed state, so say the four Vedas, and so too " says to-day, Tulsi, the beloved of Hari. " Aranya, (2)6. <sup>(1)</sup>

When Sītā insisted on going to the forest with her husband, she said that life without him would make heaven a hell. "Without you, oh lord of my life, there is in the whole world " nothing that can give me any kind of joy. Life without a " body, a river without water, so is a woman without her lord." Ayodh (63)65.

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(1) This is an echo of the Laws of Manu, V 154, and of the Padma Purāna (see Dubois, Manners and Customs, p. 344.) The Epics both insist that a woman's husband is her only god. The Vishnu Purāna says if women honour and obey their husbands in thought, word and deed, they will acquire the same position in heaven as they hold, and obedience ought to be an easy task!

Woman when she is submissive and obedient, is happy. But she possesses a dangerous and destructive power. In particular a woman's guile is dealt with at length in the story of Mantharā, the hunchback, and Kaikeyi.

"A woman's character is like the sea, without a bottom."  
Ayodh, (26) 27.

"The poets have spoken truly of the disposition of women" "in every respect, incomprehensible, unfathomable, secretive." "You may catch your shadow in a glass, but you cannot comprehend" "the ways of a woman .... What can fire not burn? What can " "the sea not contain? What is a weak woman not strong enough" "to do? " Ayodh, (46) 47.

Illustration has already been given of the calamities that befel the Iron Age when husbands were in subjection to their wives. And that may be the reason why the poet says:-

"The man who can give up women has to be destitute of " "affection, an ascetic (virakht) free from passion and strong-" "minded." Uttar 179 (112) 194.

Tulsidās' own personal experience may have coloured his testimony. But it is to say the least of it, unfortunate that he should have placed on the lips of Rāma the excuses which his hero gives to Nārād for preventing that holy man's marriage, and carrying off his phantom bride. It is recorded in the Forest Book that Nārād met Rāma and said, "Oh, Rāma, when you"

"put forth your Māyā and infatuated me, I was eager to arrange my marriage. Why did you not allow it?" Aranya 69 (37) 55. Rāma explained that he was like a mother who would save her child from a snake or from fire, and then went on to declare:-

"Lust, anger, greed, pride and other passions form the "mighty torrent of delusion (moh), but the most terrible of "these, and the cause of greatest pain is woman. She is "the embodiment of illusion (Māyā) .... Woman is the very "root of wickedness, the cause of bitter pain, a mine of all "suffering." Aranya 71 (38) 56.

A little earlier he says to Lakshman:-

"There are three very powerful evils. Lust, anger "and greed. In a moment they will distress the minds of the "wisest saints. The power of greed is in desire and pride, "of lust nothing but a woman. The power of anger is in "bitter words." Aranya, 64 (33) 48.

It has to be remembered that when he spoke in this fashion, Rāma was searching anxiously for the lost Sītā. He was not himself, and as if in excuse for his own extravagant speech, observes to his brother,

"The god of love, finding me in a maze due to separation" "(from Sītā), devoid of strength and alone, has come near me..." "Seeing me with my brother only, he has surrounded me with his "army. Oh Lakshman, they who can see Love's army and remain "stedfast, are worthy of remark. His one great strength is "

"woman. The man who can escape from her is a very great "warrior." Aranya 64 (32) 46.

The word Kām, which we have translated by sexual desire or lust, and which is also applied to Kāndev, the god of love, means just what we have rendered it. There is a higher and better word for love, preṃ. But here the poet is giving life as he himself had seen it, and yet with a mind devoid of prudence. Why he should have chosen this occasion for doing so, it is difficult to say. For the time being he was obsessed with the subject. And he closes the Aranya Kāṇḍ with the warning:-

"A young woman is like the flame of a candle. Do not "let your soul be like the moth. Abandon sexual desire and "intoxication. Worship Rāma and always associate with good "men." 75 (41) 60.

In concluding our study of these very inconsistent passages concerning women, reference must be made to Rāma's peculiar conduct when he feared his brother was going to die. In the greatness of his apprehension, he said,<sup>†</sup>

"If a stupid god (daiv) keep me alive, how can I go to "Avadh and shew my face after losing a beloved brother for the "sake of a woman. It would have been better to endure disgrace" "in the eyes of the world. The loss of a wife is no great loss." Lanka, 73 (58) 82.

Here again we find an echo of Vālmiki's Rāmāyana. When Sītā was rescued from Lankā, Rāma, according to Vālmiki, refused to touch her. He told her it was not out of love for her that he had effected her rescue, but to avenge the disgrace Rāvan had attached to their name. She could go where she liked, but not with him. Sītā's reply is one of the finest utterances in Sanskrit literature. <sup>(1)</sup> Happily the later post had not this difficulty to deal with. We have seen that it was not the real Sītā who had lain in Rāvan's arms and so, when the Sītā rescued from the prison of Lankā had to pass through the fire it was not <sup>primarily</sup> to establish the purity of Rāma's spouse, but to restore her to her original form.

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(1) See Griffith's metrical translation of Vālmiki's Rāmāyan, p. 496.



The Poem's Contribution to the Religious  
Thought and Life of India.

Reference has been made to the fact that Rāmanuja did not stand alone when he attacked the doctrine of monism as expounded by Shankarāchārya. There were others also who sought to confute the doctrine of Māyā and establish the doctrine of bhakti or <sup>love and devotion</sup> ~~love and faith~~, on a secure basis. (1)

There was <sup>Madhva</sup> Madhava whose system was frankly dualistic (dvaita) as he taught that there are five eternal distinctions between (a) God and the individual soul; (b) God and inanimate matter; (c) the individual soul and inanimate matter; (d) one individual soul and another; (e) one particle of matter and another;- and there was Nimbārka, whose system was a dualistic monism (dvaitādvaita); for he held that the inanimate world and the individual soul, while distinct from God, are as much one with Him as its coils are with a snake, or as waves are with water. (2) As has been said, these doctrines

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(1) Bhandarkar. Vaishnavism, Saivism. p 57.

(2) Bhandarkar, p 57, and p. 62, on <sup>Madhva</sup> ~~Madhava~~ and Nimbārka.

See also Grierson's Article Bhakti-mārga. E.R.E.

There was a fourth system (shuddh-ādvaita) taught by Vishṇuswāmi, whose views were developed by Vallabha on unhealthy lines, devotion being concentrated on Rādhā, the concubine of Krishna.

spread to Northern India, and by the time of the middle ages there were in existence, to use the arresting phrase of Sir George Grierson, four churches of the Reformation, all of them more or less proclaiming the doctrine of bhakti and their belief in a personal God. Of these four churches, far and away the most influential was that which inherited the teaching and traditions of Rāmanuja. The inspirer of the movement has indeed become a somewhat legendary figure, for he has been declared to be an incarnation of the great serpent Shesh, and his image stands in many of the temples dedicated to Vishnu. To-day this sect, if it can be called a sect, bears the name of Shri Sampradāya, or the system taught by Shri, the assumption being that the goddess Lakshmi communicated its tenets to the world. This system however, looks to Rāmānand and not to Rāmanuja as its founder, and it is from the Rāmāvats or the Rāmānandis, as they are more usually spoken of, that the most permeating and reforming influences have flowed, while their vigour has been revealed in the variety of other schools which have broken away from the parent stem and established themselves in various parts of the country.

Very little is known of the life and peculiar teaching of Rāmānand. According to tradition, on one occasion when he returned to the headquarters of the Rāmanuja sect from his

(1) Sampradāya means tradition, something that has been given.

wanderings somewhere in India, he was disciplined by his brethren on the ground that during his travels he could not have eaten his food with the privacy which their views demanded. Rāmanand protested against such narrow opinions, and founded a sect of his own. He gave to his followers the name of Avadhuta, or the liberated ones, and liberated they must indeed have been, because his twelve disciples included a weaver, a leatherworker, a barber, a woman and the revolutionary preacher Kabīr.<sup>(1)</sup> Grierson quotes a saying of Rāmanand's;†

"Let no one ask a man's caste, or with whom he eats,"  
 "If a man shew love to Hari, he is Hari's own."

But probably Rāmanand's greatest service to India was his insistence on the worship of Rāma and Sītā. The other three churches of the Reformation had a preference for Rādhā and Krishṇa, a preference which was destined to have an evil effect on the character of their worshippers. Tulsidās is usually spoken of as a Rāmanandi, and certainly his sympathies were with them rather than with any other. But his quarrel with the Vishṇava Vairāgis at Ayodhyā, and his transference to Benares, may have influenced his outlook. And it is with real passion that he writes in the Aranya kāṇḍ

59 (30) 44.

"Oh men, abandon all your various rites which are "

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(1) See Wilson's Religious Sects of the Hindus, <sup>Vol. I.</sup> p. 46.

"unrighteousness, and your many sects which create sor-"  
 "row, and put your faith (bishwās), says Tulsidās, and "  
 "love on Rāma's feet."

Because whatever else Tulsidās may have been, he remains an orthodox Hindu. It is said that the early reformers were persecuted in Southern India by the followers of Shiva, while it is true that some of the Rāmanandis at least have spoken disapprovingly of the worship of Shiva. But orthodox Hinduism cannot find fault with Tulsidās. He may proclaim more than some of his co-religionists relish, the need for repentance and faith in God. But he produces chapter and verse for everything he puts forward. He seeks to buttress all his doctrines by the very frequent assertion "thus do Ved and Purāṇ declare". And as for everything else, he believes as his countrymen believe, in all the gods, as well as in Brahmā, Vishṇu and Shiva. Vishṇu, no doubt, is his ishta devtā, the god who is the object of his special worship, but he refused adoration to none of the others, even when he is unable to refrain from saying what he thinks of some of them. It is true that he identifies Vishṇu with the Supreme Soul of the universe, but when he does that, he does what others had been doing for centuries. In the sectarian Purāṇas it depended on the personal views of the writer, whether Vishṇu or Shiva would receive that honour. But in a compilation like the Mahābhārata, both gods are recognised in turn,

and for each of them supremacy is claimed. It is no exaggeration to say that Tulsidās accepts the whole mythology of Hinduism. He has no quarrel with any of its religious beliefs and practices. He believes in the myths and legends as to the creation of the world, the sea of milk, the churning of the ocean, and the mind-born sons of Brahmā. He writes with glee about the famous sacrifice of Dakshā, the marriage of Shiva and the discomfiture of Parashurām, while a hundred other references made sometimes in the briefest way, shew that his memory was stored with the facts and fancies of his ancestral faith. He believes in the miraculous powers attached to certain holy places, such as Benares, and the benefits that accrue from bathing in the Ganges and other sacred rivers. He believes in Transmigration and in Karma. He believes in the wonderful results that can be achieved by the practice of penance, and he does his best to inspire in his readers a fearful reverence for Brahmins by dwelling over and over again on the amazing potency of a Brahmin's curse.

Tulsidās himself belonged to the Brahmin caste. But it has to be noted that he was a Smārta as well. All the authorities are at one in making that statement with regard to the poet. And whatever the name may have meant originally it came to be applied to those who recognised and gave

a combined worship to five particular gods. These are Vishnu, Shiva, Durgā, Ganesh and the Sun.<sup>(1)</sup> The fact that special worship is directed to these five does not exclude the worship of the others. Should a man find any of them useful he is entitled to invoke their assistance. And there is no reason why any of them should be excluded. Brahm may be the one Supreme Reality. He may be the only real, while all else is a dream. But gods, demons and men have, even in the system of Shaṅkar, a provisional existence and the followers of Shaṅkar worship the gods as well as those who do not profess to be philosophers.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) It will be remembered that Durgā and Ganesh are the wife and son of Shiva.

(2) It is interesting to note what Farquhar tells us in this connection. He says that many Smārtas believe that Shaṅkar himself was the organising genius who imposed the rule, and he adds that many Smārtas are followers of Shaṅkar.

Outlines of Religious Literature of India. p 179.

As there are so many references to four of these five gods throughout the poem, and Shiva with his wife and son are so constantly worshipped at the present day by followers of Vishnu, it is desirable to enquire what led to these five being chosen to represent the whole pantheon. (1) A Brahmin pundit of the writer's acquaintance standing before the little alcove in which they stood, (2) offered this explanation which may be accepted as correct. Vishnu and Shiva represent the Triad, from which Brahmā is excluded either because his reputation or his popularity suffered. Durgā, the wife of Shiva is chosen, because she represents Māyā or, it may be, the param shakti of the gods. Ganesh has found a place because he has been associated pre-eminently with the granting of boons, and it is for boons that men pray; while the Sun conveys the thought of the diffusiveness of deity and that God may be worshipped in any form.

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(1) We read only once of prayer being addressed jointly to Vishnu, Shiva, Gauri, Ganesh and the Sun. Ayodh. 262 (262) 273

(2) The five gods are usually represented by small idols placed on a tray in a recess in a Smārta's own house. Vishnu is represented by one or more sālāgrām stones; Shiva by one or more linga; Durgā, Ganesh and the Sun by images. Sometimes the Sun is not represented. Once I called attention to the Sun's absence. The worshipper took me out to the courtyard and pointing upward said, "It is not necessary. He is there."

With the object of enrolling Tulsidās in the ranks of monotheism, it is sometimes suggested that the worship which Tulsidās accords to Brahmā, Shiva, and the lesser gods, may be looked upon as akin to the adoration which is given to the saints of the Roman Catholic calendar. It is difficult to accept that interpretation, and even with regard to the lesser gods there is no reason why we should. In the Hindu scheme of things, it is quite easy to define their position. They as well as beasts and men, are ever revolving on the wheel of existence, waiting for release; the soul that has inhabited a man may in another transmigration be either a beast or a god. As for Brahmā, Vishṇu and Shiva, it is somewhat different. Their origin was otherwise; it is through them that the Supreme Spirit creates, preserves and destroys the world. But here also the explanation which the Hindu offers is not lacking in plausibility - at least so long as no one attempts to identify any of them with the Supreme God. That Tulsidās claims that rank for Vishṇu is plain on every page of his poem. He goes, however, further than that, and in his affection for Shiva and for his wife, allows himself or some of his characters, to use language in describing them which can belong to God alone.

"Oh god of all things, my lord Purāri, the three worlds"  
 "are full of thy glory. What moves and what does not move,"  
 "serpents, men, gods, all worship thy lotus feet." Bal 116,  
 (114) 130.



"You, who are Māyā and Shiva the blessed; are"  
the father and mother of the whole universe."

Bal. 93 (91) 105.

"Pārvati is the mother of the world, the unborn,"  
"without beginning, the indestructable Shakti, the "  
"eternal half of Shiva, she is the creator, the pre-"  
"server and the destroyer of the world." Bal 121 (105) 137.

" I worship Him who is endowed with superhuman "  
"qualities, the embodiment of nirvāṇa, the omnipresent,"  
"all-pervading Brahm, the manifestation of the Veda,"  
"the unborn (a) Nirguṇ." Uttar. 157 (104) 172.

"He who does not love Shiva's lotus feet will not"  
"see Rāma even in a dream. The mark by which to re-"  
"cognise a devotee of Rāma is love unfeigned for the "  
"feet of the lord of all things." Bal. 113 (111) 127.

But the language which Rāma himself uses with reference  
to Shiva, is overwhelmingly convincing. It shews better  
than any other part of the poem what were the poet's own feel-  
ings. Rāma is represented time after time as addressing his  
prayers to Shiva but nowhere or with so much devotion as when  
he stood looking across to Laṅkā.

"When the All-merciful saw the very beautifully"  
"constructed Bridge he smiled and said, This is a "

"very fine and charming place. Its immeasurable "  
 "glory no one can describe. Here I shall set up "  
 "a Shiva. My heart desires it greatly. Hearing "  
 "this, the monkey king sent many messengers to sum-"  
 "mon and bring the great saints. Having set up "  
 "the Linga (the phallic emblem) according to the "  
 "proper rites, he worshipped it, saying, There is "  
 "no one I love like Shiva. If anyone be called "  
 "my servant and do violence to Shiva, that man even"  
 "in a dream cannot be loved by me. If any one "  
 "hostile to Shiva desires to be my devotee, he is a"  
 "fool, with little intelligence, and hell is his por-"  
 "tion."

"Lovers of Shiva who are enemies of mine "

"Servants of mine who are enemies of Shiva,"

"these men will dwell in a fearful hell "

"for the period of a Kalpa. " Lanka, 2 (2) 4.

It is almost impossible for the Western mind to comprehend such an attitude. Tulsidās, explain it how we will, has room for all the gods in his scheme of the universe. But, what is much more wonderful, he does not find it impossible to place Shiva and his wife side by side with Rāma and Sītā in his worship and in his thoughts. We have here no real theism as the Western mind thinks of theism, and it is worth our while recalling the words of Bhandarkar who is acquainted with the outlook of his own people:-

"In the monotheistic religions of other countries"  
"the same god is feared and loved; in India the god"  
"that is loved is Vishnu.... while the god that is "  
"feared is Shiva."

Tulsidās then holds firmly to the whole system of Hinduism. He will not part even with Shiva in the interests of monotheism. If he was a reformer, he was a reformer from within. He enters no protest against idolatry, as Nāṁdev and Kabīr did. And he can have had no sympathy with the latter in his often quoted utterance:-

"The rosary is wood, the gods are stone:  
"The Ganges and Jumna are water:  
"Rāma and Krishṇa are dead:  
"The four Vedas are made-up stories."

Nor will it be denied that it was because Tulsidās remained within the fold of Hinduism and did not even seek to form a sect, that he exercises so great an influence and remains so popular. He says nothing which can offend any of his hearers. He provokes no opposition. He calls forth no criticism, except from the apostles of monism, and they are so satisfied with the superiority of the path of knowledge by which they travel, that they can afford to ignore the advocates of Bhakti. In any case, if bhakti is for the million, knowledge is for the choice, and the choice are always few.

While succeeding so wonderfully in conciliating opposition, and it is not suggested that Tulsidās at any time said what he did not believe, the poet has achieved his one great purpose. He has captured, in large measure, the common mind of Northern India and made it listen to his plea, that love for God is the chief end of man.

Another illustration of the way in which Tulsidās accommodates himself to the common mind of India, is his attitude to the doctrine of Māyā. It would be incorrect to say that either the poet or the average Hindu is an adherent of the school of monism. But the language of monism is often employed by both the poet and the ordinary man when they are impressed by the mystery of life and seek to solve its problems. The situation could not be better expressed than in the words of Farquhar, already quoted with regard to Rāmānand:-

"One of the characteristics of the whole movement"

"that springs from him, is a constant use of ad-"

"vaita phrases, a clinging to advaita concepts, "

"while holding fast to the personality of Rāma."

This statement can be applied with truth to Tulsidās; an opinion in which we are confirmed by Bhandarkar, who says that the poet's teaching is "based upon a dualistic philosophy, with "a leaning towards the monism of the advaita system."

~~On the other hand it has to be noted that Sir George Grierson who has given a very careful study to the writings of Tulsidās.~~

As the poet's teaching with regard to Māyā is of the very greatest importance and colours his whole outlook, it will be necessary to examine afresh the references he makes to it throughout the poem. <sup>(1)</sup> This procedure will involve a considerable amount of repetition. But no other course is possible, if we are to arrive at an impartial judgment.

And first let us take those which speak of Māyā as employed by the demons, a māyā which is akin to magic; though it must be noted that in all such cases māyā produces an illusory form which those who witness it imagine to be real. Of Rāvan's son Megnad, we read that he entered his chariot made of māyā, and rose up into the air. Lankā.84(69)94. The rocks and trees which the monkeys hurled at him were by the power of his māyā changed into wire cages. <sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Sir George Grierson thinks that the references to Māyā which hide Brahm from the soul are no part of the poet's real teaching. He holds that they are similes only, a use born of his association with the worship of Shiva. Elsewhere Māyā is merely magic used by the demons against Rāma, or it represents a combination of the Gnostic demiurge and the Christian Tempter. See his article in E.R.E. in Tulsidās.

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(2) See also Bal. 187(185)211. Bal. 190(196)213, where the demons assumed many forms and knew all kinds of Māyā; and Lanka. 69(55)77, where a demon erected a temple, garden and reservoir for himself by means of Māyā.

Eventually he engaged in battle with Rāma himself. On this occasion the arrows which the demon discharged at the hero, changed into snakes, which wound themselves round the body of Rāma, and brought him under their control. When they saw what had happened, the gods were filled with terror, but they need not have been alarmed.

"He who is self-controlled, the eternal, the one "  
 "the unchangeable, who, like an actor, performs many "  
 "kinds of deceit (kapat), it was to add glory to the "  
 "field of battle that the Lord caused himself to be "  
 "bound."

It is in connection with this mysterious incident that the poet indulges in one of his finest outbursts.

"Can he, by the repetition of whose name holy men "  
 "cut the bonds of existence, come into bondage to "  
 "anyone, the all pervading Lord, the dwelling place "  
 "of all things."

"Human intelligence, strength and speech, cannot ex-"  
 "pound the actions of Sagun-Rām. Realising this, "  
 "those ascetics who are wise abandon all explanations"  
 "and worship Rāma."

The situation created, however, was so serious that it was necessary to send for Garuḍ, the vehicle of Vishnu and the great enemy of the snake race. Garuḍ seized and ate up the serpents which had been fashioned by Māyā (māyā-nāg) with the

result that the Māyā disappeared. It will be remembered that Garuḍ was so perplexed by this apparent defeat of Rāma that he sought for advice and comfort from both Brahmā and Shiva. His doubts were only removed by the inspired crow.

Somewhat earlier in the battle, also we read that Ravan's son exercised his Māyā in the presence of him, whose powerful māyā controls Shiv and Brahmā, great and small. Lanka, 64, (50) 72.

On this occasion the demon was able to pour down stones, ashes, filth, blood, bones and hair, while the air was filled with awful cries. The monkeys were terrified and said, Every one of us will perish. But Rāma was not deceived. He recognised that it was a play (kautuk) and nothing more, and "with one arrow he destroyed all the māyā." Lanka, 64, (50) 72.

As for Rāvan himself, when all his followers had been destroyed, he said,

"I am alone, the monkeys and bears are many, I must exert unlimited Māyā." Lanka, 104 (85) 113.

It was shewn chiefly by the production of large numbers of Rāmas and Lakshmans whose presence in every part of the field perplexed and confused the monkeys. Rāma of course saw through the Māyā, but every one else thought that it was real.

"The lord of Kosal smiled to see his army in amazement."

"He fitted an arrow to his bow and in a moment he des—"

"stroyed the Māyā, and all the monkeys were glad."

The next deception in which Rāvan indulged was to multiply, not them but himself. And we are told that he made use of magic (pākhand).

"In a moment he made himself invisible; <sup>again</sup> the wretch " "revealed himself in countless forms. For every " "bear and monkey in Rāma's army there was a Rāvan " "manifested. Seeing these innumerable Rāvans, the " "monkeys and bears fled in terror."

The gods also took refuge in flight, saying:-

"We may now abandon all hope of victory, brothers. " "A single Rāvan conquered all the gods; now there " "are many. Seek for caves in the mountains. Only" "Brahmā, Shiva and learned saints who know something" "of the Lord's glory remained." Lankā, 111 (92) 120.

Once more we are told that Rāma smiled when he saw the gods in a panic.

"In a moment the Lord destroyed all the Māyā, even " "as darkness is dispelled at the rising of the sun."

In the long drawn out description of the battle with the demons, we read that Rāvan a second time found it necessary to make himself invisible and then exert his māyā:-

"Seeing the great power of the monkeys, Rāvan, after" "reflection, disappeared from view, and in a moment " "displayed Māyā." Lanka 116 (97) 125.

In the description which follows we are told that by means of



this magic (pākhand) Rāvan produced a great variety of evil spirits, goblins and witches, with bows and arrows, ~~and~~ swords and skulls, the last filled with blood which the horrid creatures drank. Not content with these alarming portents which put the monkeys to flight, Rāvan produced another form of magic, this time described as Kapat or deceit, in which Hanumān was multiplied many times. These reduplicated Hanumāns, with tails upraised, surrounded Rāma, shouting, "Kill" "him, seize him, do not let him go." Once more we are told that Rāma "destroyed the Māyā with a single arrow."

In all these passages, whether we call the power which the demons exercised, Māyā or magic, it produces the same result. Something that is unreal is called into temporary existence, and assumes an appearance of reality. Is this not what the Vedāntists say has happened on the grand scale, when Brahm and Māyā, in association, are jointly responsible for the world around us. (1)

There are a few illustrations of Māyā being employed by men. Thus we read of a hermit, who had in former days been a king, using his māyā to bring destruction on an ancient enemy. Bal, 174 (172) 168. By means of his māyā he deprives

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(1) In Aranya, 41 (22) 35, the demon changes himself into the form of a deer which is called Māyā-mrig, the "mimic deer." This was the deer that attracted Sītā. In Uttar Kāṇḍ (66)91, the Sītā carried off by Rāvan is called Māyā Sītā, because she was only a shadow of the real Sītā.

his enemy's family priest of his intelligence; and finally prepares a death-dealing dish that is Māyā-may, or formed of illusion.

The lesser gods, also, were able to exercise Māyā. We are told that Kaikeyi, being in the grip of the Māyā of the gods, believed an enemy to be a friend, ( Ayodh,17) and that the people of Ayodhyā, tired out with sorrow and labour, fell asleep, the Māyā of the gods deluding them somewhat. Ayodh,82. **Indra**, as we should expect, uses this power in the most malignant fashion:-

"The king of the gods is the limit in deceitfulness"  
 "and evil conduct. He loves to see another suffer"  
 "and himself to prosper. His methods are like the"  
 "methods of a crow. He is cunning and vile and be-"  
 "lieves in nobody. First he planned an evil thought"  
 "and gathered deceptions (kapaṭ) which he placed a "  
 "sorrowful heap on the heads of all. Everyone was "  
 "deluded by the Māyā of the god.... with the except-"  
 "ion of Bharat, Janak, the saints, the ministers, "  
 "and those who were circumspect and wise. The Māyā "  
 "of the god affected all." Ayodh, 290 (290) 303.

It was at the instigation of Indra, jealous and afraid of Nārada's ascetic power, that the god of Love tried to lead that holy man astray. While Nārada was tempted by the voluptuous dances and songs of the heavenly nymphs, Love by means of his own Māyā produced an unseasonable spring, with birds

singing, bees humming, and flowers in bloom. Bal, 134 (132)153.

Nārād's pride at being able to resist the efforts of Love, led to his ultimate downfall. Because when he went to the Sea of Milk and boasted of what he had done, in the presence of Vishṇu, that greater deity resolved to exercise his own much greater Māyā, and tame his votary's pride.

"The Māyā of Raghupati is very powerful. Who is there"

"alive whom it has not deluded (moh)." Bal, 136 (134) 155.

Vishṇu gave orders to his own Māyā with the result that there came into temporary existence a huge city, 700 miles in circumference, more beautiful than Vishṇu's own capital, inhabited by very handsome men and women, with a king whose splendour exceeded that of an hundred Indras, and endowed with great power, glory and wisdom. Best of all, the king had a daughter of incomparable beauty, for whose hand Nārād ventured to be a candidate. Of this princess it is said that she was a treasure house of every good quality - thanks to the Māyā of Hari. When Nārād saw the princess he asked Vishṇu to make him beautiful so that he might have some hope of winning her. As we know the god gave him an ambiguous answer, and the face of a monkey.

"When the god who is compassionate to the humble, saw"

"the wide-spreading power of his Māyā, he smiled and"

"said; Listen, Nārād, I shall so act that your highest"

"good will result." Bal, 138 (140) 158.

The saint had become so stupid, being in the power of Māyā, that he did not understand the hidden meaning of Vishṇu's words. When Nārada found himself cruelly deceived, he was met by Vishṇu, along with Lakshmi and the fictitious princess. And being in the power of Māyā, he cursed the deity to be born as a man, to have monkeys for his companions and to lose his wife.

"The Sea of Mercy then drew back the power of his"  
"Māyā. When Hari removed his Māyā neither Lakshmi "  
"nor the princess was there."

When Shiva had finished his account of this amazing incident which scarcely reflects credit on Vishṇu, he said to Umā:-

"I have told you this story to show how Hari's Māyā"  
"can delude men both holy and wise.... The Lord is "  
"playful, a well-wisher to those devoted to him; "  
"easily reached by his servants; the remover of all"  
"sorrow. There is not a god, or man or saint whom"  
"his powerful Māyā has not deluded. Consider this"  
"in your mind and worship the mighty lord of Māyā."

Bal, 148 (146) 167.

When Vishṇu became incarnate and was searching everywhere for Sītā, Nārada met him. Remembering how it was his curse that had really robbed the divine Rāma of his wife, he ventured to ask:-

"When you gave commands to your Māyā, and caused "  
 "it to delude me, then I wished to arrange my "  
 "marriage; what was the reason why you did not "  
 "let me do it?"

To this question the prince replied,-

"Lust, anger, greed, pride, and other passions, "  
 "form the mighty torrent of delusion (moh). Of "  
 "these the most terrifying and painful is woman, "  
 "the embodiment of Māyā." Aranya, 71 (38) 56.

The poet often used the word, moh, delusion, in this connection.

Time after time he tells us how Māyā has deluded some one

(mohehu) <sup>(1)</sup> Nor is there any doubt that Māyā sometimes should  
 be translated by infatuation, trickery or deceit, the purpose  
 of the context being manifestly ethical, as in the following  
 extracts:-

"Oh Raghurāyā, dwell in the hearts of those in whom "  
 "there is no lust, anger, pride, arrogance, delusion"  
 "(moh) greed, agitation, desire, violence, deceit, "  
 "heresy, illusion (māyā)." Ayodh, (124) 30.

"Anger lust, greed, pride, māyā, they all disappear "  
 "by the mercy of Rāma." Aranya, 64 (33) 48.

"Abandon Māyā and think of the other world." Kish. 27(22)25.

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(1) Moh = loss of consciousness, bewilderment, delusion, in-  
 fatuation, folly, error, delusion of mind preventing discern-  
 ment of the truth and making men believe in the reality of the  
 world. (pñil). Macdonell's Sanskrit Dictionary.

"The glamour of delusion (moh) is very powerful"

"The poets truly describe a woman's disposition."

"In their hearts there are always eight defects;"

"Lack of foresight, falsehood, fickleness, Māyā,"

"fear, want of judgment, impurity, and mercilessness."

Lanka, 2D (16) 21.

When Tulsidās uses the word in this connection, he is thinking of the delusions, errors, blunders and follies, to which men and women are subject, when, like people of other lands, they allow themselves to be blinded by the power of sin in any of its forms.

But though Tulsidās very often dwells on the infatuation of evil thoughts and desires, it is very remarkable that it is only in these four passages that he uses the word, Māyā with this signification in the first six books of the poem.<sup>(1)</sup> In the last book (Uttar Kāṇḍ) we shall see how it is allied more closely with the poet's own special interpretation of life.

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(1) There are two other passages, however, which should not be forgotten: It is said of Nārada that he had neither moh nor māyā (Bal, 106 (104) 120) a statement difficult to accept in view of what happened when he was anxious to secure the hand of the princess. When Rāma was asked to give an account of the virtues that marked a saint, he spoke of prayer, penance, religious observances, self control, devotion to one's guru, Govind and Brahm, faith, forgiveness, friendship, mercy, a love for my feet and an absence of māyā. Aranya, 73 (40) 58.

Before we deal with the many references to Māyā in its relation to Rāma, as the incarnation of the Supreme Spirit, reference must be made to the few occasions when Māyā is associated with Brahmā, Shiva and the Triad. Attention has already been called at page 295, to the statement that the wife of Shiva is identified with Māyā and Shakti, in language similar to what is used regarding Sītā. As for Shiva we read in the language of one of his worshippers:-

"In the grasp of thy Māyā, foolish people continue to "  
 "wander foolishly. Oh Lord Bhagwān, oh sea of mercy, "  
 "be not angry with them." Uttar. 159 (105) 174.

There is ~~also~~ one reference only to the Triad being associated with Māyā.

"The Māyā of Vidhi, Hari and Hara is very powerful, "  
 "but it cannot comprehend the mind of Bharat."  
 Ayodhya, 283 (283) 295.

The statement about Brahmā is quite incomprehensible, and cannot be reconciled with the rest of the Poet's teaching:-

"Vidhi has created all things, both good and bad, "  
 "pain and pleasure, sin and merit, day and night. "  
 "demons and gods, high and low, amrit and life, "  
 "poison and death, Māyā and Brahm, the individual "  
 "soul and the god of the world." Bal. 6.(6) 11.

Returning to Māyā in its relation to Rāma, the most exalted position it receives is when it is identified with Sītā

and the param Shakti of the god. This is done on no less than three occasions. When the Supreme Spirit appeared to Manu and gave him the boon he craved, he said;-

"Assuming a form of my own accord, I shall be manifest"  
"in your house, ... and this my Māyā, the primal energy"  
"by which the world is created, will also descend."

Bal. 157 (155) 179.

Vālmīki, when he met Rāma and Sītā in the forest, said:-

"Rāma, you are the guardian of the bridge of revelation"  
"you are the lord of the world. And Sītā is Māyā who "  
"in accordance with your will, creates, preserves and "  
"and destroys the world .... Life is a play and you "  
"are its beholder. You make Brahmā, Vishṇu, and Shiva"  
"to dance, even they do not know your secret."

Ayodh 121 (121) 126.

Again we are told that when attending to the wants of her mothers-in-law, Sītā assumed as many forms as she had mothers-in-law, and it is added:-

"Nobody noticed the mystery except Rāma. All Māyā is "  
"in Sītā, who is Māyā." Ayodh 241 (241) 252.

These three statements use the very language of monism, and it is difficult to see how any one of them can be compared to a simile, though such similes do sometimes occur. Thus we read



that as the three exiles walked along the forest paths, Rāma went in front, Sītā was in the middle, and Lakshman brought up the rear:-

"Sītā shone between the two, like Māyā, linking Brahm"  
"and the individual soul." Ayodh, 118 (118) 123.

This comparison is repeated in practically the same words in the Aranyakāṇḍ. (1) (3) 10.

That Māyā and, by implication, Sītā, is the Creator of all things is frequently asserted:-

"In obedience to his command, Māyā creates a multitude"  
"of worlds in the twinkling of an eye." Bal.230 (236) 257.

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(1) An illustration of the use of Māyā as a simile and nothing more, will be found in Aranya, 65 (34) 50, where we read that the water of a lake could not be seen because it was covered so completely with lotuses; just as no one can see Brahm because he is overspread by Māyā.

Another simile occurs at Kish, 17 (13) 15:-

"The water falling on the earth becomes dirty, like the"  
"soul when involved in Māyā."

Note also the interesting passage where the body of Rāma is described in the terminology of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. "His smile is Māyā." <sup>Lanka.17(15)20.</sup> See too the statement about the creeper at p. 219. "The creeper is Māyā."

"Air, wind, fire, water and earth, Māyā has brought"  
"them into existence in obedience to thy command for"  
"the purposes of creation." Sundar, 62 (58) 61.

"Life in all its varied forms, both what moves and"  
"what does not move (says Rāma) is all created by my"  
"Māyā." Uttar. 127 (85) 126.

"By his power, Māyā creates the multitude of worlds;"  
"by his power Brahmā, Vishṇu and Shiva preserve, "  
"create and destroy them." Sundar 20.

"In every hair of Rāma's body, there is a multitude"  
"of worlds, fashioned by Māyā." Bal. 197 (203) 223.

"Māyā has brought all life, both what moves and what"  
"does not move, under its control." Bal. 205 (122) 231.

The poet, however, finds it necessary to insist that this Māyā  
which is so powerful and brings everything under its control,  
is subordinate to Rāma, and afraid of him:-

"Māyā is afraid of the Lord. He causes her to dance "  
"by the play of his eye-brows." Bal. 205 (211) 231.

"Brahmā, Vishṇu, Shiva, the moon, the sun, the guardians "  
"of the spheres, Māyā, life, karma and this evil age, the"  
"great serpent, the kings of the earth, and what lordships"  
"there may be .... consider it in your mind and reflect "

(314a)

"well upon it. The will of Rāma is on the heads of all."  
Ayodh (243) 254.

"The all-pervading Brahm, the supreme God, is beyond "  
"the influence of Moh and Māyā." Uttar 80 (58) 81.

"I worship under his name Rāma, the god Hari, in the "  
"power of whose Māyā is the whole creation, Brahmā, "  
"gods and demons." Bal. invocation.

It was necessary to insist on this because in his incarnation Rāma seemed so often to act like an ordinary man. He is therefore declared to be beyond the influence of Māyā, untouched, unmoved by it, as all others are; he is Māyārahit, Māyāātīt. while he is repeatedly addressed as Māyā pati or Māyā nāth, the lord of Māyā.

"Hail! Hail to him who cannot be destroyed, who dwells"  
"in all hearts, the all-pervading highest joy, exempt "  
"from Māyā ..... who created the three worlds, without"  
"the assistance of any other." Bal 191 (197) 217.

"With joined hands Rāma's mother said: How shall I "  
"sing thy praise, eternal one. Vedas, Purāṇas declare"  
"thee to be incomprehensible, beyond Māyā, the three. "  
"qualities and knowledge. (Māyā guṇ gyān ātīt) "

Bal 197 (203) 223.

(314b)

"For the sake of Brahmins, cows, gods and saints,"  
"You descended in human form (manuj avatār) in a "  
"body fashioned according to your own pleasure "  
"beyond the influence of Māyā, the qualities and "  
"the perception of the senses." Bal 198 (204) 224.

"I worship Rāma, the storehouse of the qualities, "  
"the unconquered, Nirgun, the unchangeable, free "  
"from Māyā (<sup>Māyātit</sup> ~~Māyātit~~), the god of gods(suresh). "

Lanka invocation.

"He who is Sachchidānand, beyond knowledge, speech"  
"and perception, the unborn (aj), beyond the in- "  
"fluence (par) of Māyā, the mind and the qualities,"  
"manifested his unrivalled deeds." Uttar, 47 (26) 48.

"Hari's Māyā has deluded (mohahi) saints and sages."  
"The lord is playful, helpful to his devotees, easy"  
"of access to his servants, the remover of all sor-"  
"row. Gods, men, saints, there is not one of them"  
"whom powerful Māyā has not deluded. Reflect upon"  
"this in your mind and worship the great lord of Māyā."  
Bal, 148 (146) 167.

"If you practise Māyā on a servant of the lord of "  
"Māyā, it will recoil upon yourself." Ayodh 209 (209) 218.

"Seeing that gods and saints were afraid, He who is"  
"the lord of Māyā performed a mighty diversion."

Aranya, 31 (15) 25.

"So saying, the demon went and by means of Māyā made"  
"by the way side a temple, a lake and a garden. When"  
"he saw the beautiful place, the Wind god's son thought:"  
"I shall ask the sage's permission, drink of the water,"  
"and take rest: because the demon had assumed a false "  
"dress. He wished to delude the servant of the Lord "  
"of Māyā." Lanka, 69 (55) 77.

"There again I saw Rāma, the wise, the merciful Bhagwān,"  
"the lord of Māyā. I reflected on the matter time "  
"after time. My mind was enveloped with delusion "  
"(moh) and confusion." Uttar, 119 (81) 122.

Illustrations have already been given of how Rāma exer-  
cised his Māyā against the demons, and of his intervention in  
the case of Nārada, prior to his incarnation. There are several  
examples of how he treated Umā, his own mother and others,  
which cannot be ignored. It will be remembered how Shiva and  
Umā met Rāma searching for his lost wife. Shiva at once be-  
gan a hymn of praise, in which he spoke of Rāma as the Supreme  
God. This, Umā could not understand. If He was the Supreme  
God, how could he have lost his wife?

"Recognising the strength of Hari's Māyā, Shiva said,"  
"Since there is so much doubt in your mind, go and put"  
"him to the test." Bal. 63 (61) 74.

The test she applied was to assume the form of Sītā and stand before him. But it was not possible to deceive Rāma.

"The master of the gods saw through the deceit, he "  
"who sees all things and knows the heart, the remem-"  
"brance of whom dispels ignorance, the all-knowing Rāma "  
"Bhagwān, even him Umā sought to deceive - thus you "  
"can judge the pertinacity of a woman's nature. But"  
"recognising the power of his Māyā, Rāma smiled and "  
"said; Where is Mahādev? " Bal. 64 (62) 75.

Rāma graciously revealed his divine form and removed Umā's doubts. But when she went back to her husband, she had not the courage to confess that she had assumed Sītā's form. Indeed she told a lie and said she had applied no test at all.

"Then Shaṅkar saw by means of profound contemplation"  
"what Umā had done. He bowed his head to Hari's Māyā"  
"which had been sent to make Umā tell a lie."

Bal, 67 (65) 78.

The same idea of being misled by Rāma is repeated by Shiva a few stanzas further on, when, speaking of heretics, "who are "  
"enemies of Hari, and know neither falsehood nor truth," he says

"They cannot distinguish between Agun<sup>Sagun</sup> and Brah<sup>n</sup>m."  
"they babble a variety of meaningless words, and"  
"in the grip of Hari's Māyā, go astray in the world."  
Bal. 124 (122) 138.

This Māyā may also be playfully and lovingly exerted. And of this we have a most interesting illustration in the way Rāma as a little child bewildered his mother. A full account of that incident has been given in the relevant chapter at page 146. Here it is enough to note that when Rāma had shewn to his mother his entire marvellous form, with hundreds of millions of worlds in every single hair,-

"As she looked at this Māyā, very incomprehensible in"  
"every way, she stood with joined hands and very afraid."  
"She saw that which causes life to dance, she saw the "  
"devotion  
~~faith~~ (bhakti) which sets it free." Ayodh, (212) 221.

Rāma told his mother not to mention what he had done to any one. But she replied:-

"And do you, oh Lord, never again pervade me with your "  
"Māyā."

On the first occasion that Hanumān met Rāma, he thought he was a man like other men, and apologised for his blunder by saying:-

"In the grip of your Māyā, I wandered astray, and for "  
"that reason did not recognise the Lord." Kish (1) 3.

and then he added:-

"the soul (jīv) is deluded by your Māyā, but after"  
 "wards by your affection it obtains freedom." (1)

(1) A similar thought is to be found somewhat later in the same book, where ~~Bali after he was treacherously wounded by Rāma, said:-~~ *Sugrīv says to Rāma:*

"Your Māyā is very powerful. It is only by your "  
 "mercy that any one escapes from it." Kish (20) 23.

As an illustration of how people expected to be exposed to Māyā, observe Sītā's cry when a ring with Rāma's name engraved on it was dropped at her feet in the prison house of Lankā.

"Who can conquer the unconquerable Raḡhurai? Such a"  
 "ring as this cannot be fashioned by Māyā." Sundar, 12.

For other references to Māyā, see Kish, 10 (6) 8, and 14 (10) 12

"The enemies and friends, the pains and sorrows of the"  
 "world are the work of Māyā, they are not reality (paramārth).

"Raḡhurāyā, seeing Tārā, (the widow of Bali), distressed"  
 "gave her instruction (gyān) and dispelled the Māyā. The "  
 "body, which is composed of the five elements-earth, water, "  
 "fire, air and ether, is worthless. The body which is be-"  
 "fore you sleeps. The Soul is everlasting. Why then do"

"you weep? Knowledge sprang up. She embraced his feet."  
 "She obtained the boon she asked for, - perfect <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~ (param  
 "bhakti). Oh Umā, Rāma makes us all dance like puppets."



The passages which have been already quoted shew how strong a hold the doctrine of Māyā had secured over the poet's mind. Numerous and convincing as they are they must however, yield in importance to those which have yet to be examined. Because one feels that Tulsidās from time to time realises, and with varying degrees of intensity that a belief in Māyā endangers not only the personality of Rāma, but the whole doctrine of Bhakti. Indeed, it is apparent as the poem approaches a close, that he realises that fact increasingly, and in the last book gives a direction and an emphasis to his teaching, difficult to reconcile with what he has often elsewhere said. Yet even there he makes no attempt to confute the doctrine of Māyā. He can only tell us how to evade its power. Māyā exists, He does not attempt to deny its existence. But Rāma also exists, and he is more powerful than Māyā. The world may be a dream, but Rāma is real. There is no illusion so far as he is concerned. The poet even dares to speak scoffingly sometimes of Māyā's power. The man who puts his faith in Rāma will find the ocean of existence no broader than a cow's step. Māyā is a dancing girl, but Bhakti is Rāma's bride. There were some however, who had failed to appreciate Rāma's greatness, "enemies of Hari, who did not know the difference between truth and falsehood." Of this we have an early and vigorous warning in the Bāl kāṇḍ. When his wife wondered how Rāma could possibly be God, Shiva replied:-

"Ignorant people do not recognise their own error: "  
 "stupid souls attribute delusion (moh) to the Lord;"  
 "just as persons of no discernment, when they see "  
 "clouds in the sky, say that the sun has become dim:"  
 "or who look at the moon through their fingers, and "  
 "and two moons shew themselves. Delusion (moh) "  
 "affects Rāma in the same degree that smoke and dust"  
 "darken the sky. The objects of sense; the organs "  
 "of sense, the gods, the individual soul; all more or "  
 "less are possessed of intelligence. But the supreme "  
 "enlightener of all is the eternal Rāma, the Lord of "  
 "Avadh. Whatever in the world is capable of being en-  
 "lightened, Rāma enlightens it. He is the lord of Māyā"  
 "the dwelling place of knowledge and virtue; by his "  
 "truth and with the help of delusion (moh) stupid Māyā "  
 "(jaṛ Māyā) appears as true. Just as in a shell, there"  
 "is a false appearance of silver, and through the raya "  
 "of the sun a mirage appears, although these manifest- "  
 "ations are false for all time, nevertheless no one can"  
 "get free from the delusion (bhram). In the same way "  
 "the world is associated with Hari. The world is false"  
 "(unreal); nevertheless it can cause pain, like a man "  
 "whose head is cut off in a dream; until he awakes, the"  
 "pain is there." Bal, 125 (123) 140.

Such an utterance does not take us very far, and it may be that the poet himself felt so. He is still dallying with the doctrine of Māya and the unreality of the world. So he takes refuge in the language of faith where he is more at home, and thus proceeds without a break, Shiva being still his mouthpiece:-

"He by whose mercy such error is wiped out, is the " "merciful Raghurai, whose beginning and end no one " "can fathom, though the Vedas have hymned it to the " "best of their ability. Without feet he walks; he " 'hears without ears; without hands he works in many " 'ways. Without a mouth he can enjoy all tastes; " "without a voice he speaks with great power; with- " 'out a body he touches; without eyes he sees; without " "a nose he smells. Thus his doings of every descrip-" "tion are not of this world. His glory cannot be " "tolâ. He, whom the Vedas and the enlightened sing," "and on whom the saints meditate, is the son of " "Dashrath, the well-wisher of those devoted to him, t" "the lord of Kosal, Bhagwân. By the power of his " "name I deliver from sorrow those whom I see dying at" "Kâshi. He is my Lord; the master of all that moves" "and that does not move; Raghubar, who dwells within " "all hearts. By repeating his name a helpless man " "burns up the sins he committed in his various births"

"while those who repeat it with honour, cross the sea"  
 "of existence as if it were a cow's step. Rāma is "  
 "the Supreme Spirit (Paramātmā). Your errors and the"  
 "words you employed, Bhavāni, were very improper. When"  
 "such doubts come into the heart, knowledge, self-control,"  
 "and virtue depart. Listening to Shiva's error-destroy-"  
 "ing address, the whole fabric of her evil heresy dis- "  
 "appeared; love and belief (prīti pratīti) in Rama's feet"  
 "arose; her grievous want of faith <sup>(asambhāvnā)</sup> passed away."

In the Aranya Kāṇḍ we have a still more interesting passage, all the more interesting because it is manifestly intended as a specially serious attempt to show how bhakti rises superior to the practise of religious rites, asceticism and knowledge. Nevertheless it begins more than any of the utterances we have examined, with the language of monism, and asserts the identity of the individual soul with God. Its value is still further enhanced by the fact that Rāma himself is the speaker. It was the perplexity of Lakshman which afforded his brother the opportunity. One day when they were in the forest, Lakshman said:-

"Explain to me knowledge (gyān), asceticism (vairāgya),"  
 "and Māyā. Shew me what is that bhakti (devotion) to "  
 "which you manifest your mercy. Tell me Lord, and ex-"  
 "plain it all, the difference between God and the soul,"  
 "by means of which arises love for your feet, and grief"  
 "and error vanish." Aranya, 20 (10) 18.

This appeal may have been prompted by the declaration made a short time before by the rishi, Agastya;†

"Listen, Bhagwān. Your Māyā is a widespreading figtree."

"The many multitudes of worlds are its fruit, while all "

"things that have life are like the insects that dwell "

"within the fruit." Aranya, 19 (9) 17.

In response to his brother's request, Rāma made a long reply which is given in full at page 180. Here it is sufficient to repeat the references to Māyā:-

"I and mine, thou and thine, are the products of Māyā."

"Māyā has brought the multiplicity of souls under its "

"control. The senses and the objects of sense, as far"

"as the mind can travel, are all Māyā; understand that, "

"brother."

"Soul is that which because of Māyā does not know itself"

"to be God, the giver of bondage and liberation, who is "

"over all, the sender forth of Māyā, the goal."

Aranya, 21 (11) 19.

Having spoken in this fashion, Rāma without any warning turns his back on what he has said about knowledge, ignorance and Māyā, and making a scale of values, religious practices, ascetism, knowledge and <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~, awards the palm to <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~.

"From the practice of religious rites, asceticism springs,"

"from meditation (yog), knowledge; and knowledge, so the " "Vedas say, is the giver of salvation. But that by which" "I am quickly moved is devotion to me. It yields happi- " "ness to my devotees.... Both knowledge and ignorance " "are subordinate to it. Devotion, brother, there is " "nothing to be compared to it, as a source of happiness."

In the last book of the poem, which, as has been suggest- ed, presents us with new features of the doctrine of Māyā, Rāma once more speaks at length. And the passage is peculi- arly important because, though he continues to recognise the influence of Māyā, he so tilts the balance, not only against Māyā, but against knowledge, religious observances, fasts, vows, prayers and penance, that the path of devotion, bhakti mārg, is seen to be by far the easiest and most pleasant road. Shortly before, when in converse with his brothers, he had spoken of Māyā in the conventional way:-

"Men in the grip of delusion (moh), commit many " "kinds of sin. In their selfishness they destroy" "(their chances in) the next world. In the form" "of Time I give to them the fruit of their deeds," "good and bad." "Those who are very wise, thus reflecting, worship" "me, recognising the pain of mundane existence (san-" "sriti dukh). They abandon action (karma) which " "yields results, good and bad, and worship me, the"

"lord of gods, men and saints. I have described the"  
 "qualities of the good and the wicked. Those who "  
 "remember will not fall into the ocean of existence. "  
 "Listen, brothers, virtue and vice in their various "  
 "forms are fashioned by Māyā. The right thing to do"  
 "is not to pay attention to either of them. To pay a"  
 "attention shews want of discernment." Uttar, 62 (41) 63

But when addressing a meeting of Brahmins, religious teachers and the people of Avadh soon after, Rāma makes a lengthy speech<sup>(1)</sup> in which the new attitude we have referred to is still more emphatically apparent, and men are justified by faith and sanctified by grace:-

"The sacred booke say it is great good fortune to be "  
 "born in the form of a man. That is a condition which"  
 "the gods find it difficult to reach. It is in that "  
 "condition that one can realise oneself. It is the "  
 "gateway of salvation..... A human body is not obtained"  
 "in order that we may enjoy the fruits of sense. These"  
 "fruits yield heaven for a very little while. But the "  
 "result in the end is pain. No one ever speaks well of "  
 "such a person. He gathers peppercorns and loses the "  
 "best of precious stones. His life which cannot be "

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(1) See pages 224-227, of MSS. where the speech is given in full. Here we give quotations only.

"destroyed, continues to wander in the womb of the "  
 "8,400,000 births, revolving for ever at the will of "  
 "Māyā, surrounded by Time, Karma, his natural dispos-"  
 "ition, and the three qualities. But some time <sup>or</sup> ~~of~~ "  
 "other, God (ish) takes mercy on him and without any "  
 "reason except affection, gives him a man's body. "  
 "And this human body is the boat by which he may cross"  
 "the ocean of existence. With my grace as the favour-"  
 "ing wind..... he finds easily the means of transport"  
 "which otherwise would be difficult to obtain. The "  
 "man then, who finds the means of transport in this fash-"  
 "ion, and fails to cross life's ocean is an ungrateful "  
 "fool..... it is an easy and pleasant path, the path "  
 "of devotion to me..... The path of knowledge is very "  
 "difficult to traverse. The obstacles are numerous. "  
 "The means of accomplishment are severe. And when a "  
 "man has endured many afflictions what does he obtain?"  
 "The man who is without devotion (bhakti) is not loved"  
 "by me. The path of devotion is free. It is a mine"  
 "of every happiness.... Tell me what are the hardships"  
 "that are connected with the way of devotion! Profound"  
 "meditation, sacrifices, the repetition of prayers,  
 "asceticism, fasting, none of them are necessary. What"  
 "is required is a sincere disposition, a mind devoid of"  
 "guile, always content with whatever happens. In love"



"with my name which is a home of all the virtues, "  
"free from selfishness, arrogance and ~~infatuation~~<sup>delusion</sup> (moh)"  
"the happiness of such a man as I have described is the"  
"sum of supreme felicity. " Uttar, 64 (43) 65.

Here there is not only the linking up of morals and religion, which is so frequent and beautiful a trait in the teaching of the poem, but such an enhancing of the power of faith in God, such an enlarging on the easiness of travel by the Bhakti mārg, that those who have trodden either the path of knowledge or the path of works,- religious observances, fasting, and prayer, may well hide their diminished heads. They are not required. And if we go back a few pages we shall find the same idea expressed in the hymn which the Vedas sing in praise of Rāma. Like others, they are impressed by the power of Rāma's fearful Māyā. But far beyond the power of his Māyā is the power of Bhakti.

"Hail, merciful Lord, we worship you along with your"  
"Shakti. Gods, demons, serpents, men and every living"  
"thing are all in the grip of your fearful māyā.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) The word wishan which is translated as fearful, may also mean uneven, bad, wicked, hard to be comprehended. It is with a definite object, no doubt that Tulsidās makes the Vedas the source of the Vedānta philosophy, disparage knowledge (gyān)

"Night and day they wander exhausted in the path of exist-"  
 "ence, sated with Time, karma, and the three qualities... "  
 "Oh Rāma, able to destroy fear and sorrow, protect us we "  
 "pray. Those who intoxicated with pride of knowledge, "  
 "treat with dishonour your world- conquering <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~ (bhakti) "  
 "may obtain a rank greater than that which the gods find "  
 "it difficult to secure: nevertheless we have seen them "  
 "fail. On the other hand, those who repeat your name, "  
 "cross the ocean of existence without any difficulty....."  
 "Those who meditate on Brahm, the unborn, the one without "  
 "a second (advaita), accessible only by inference, beyond "  
 "understanding, let them talk of what they know, Oh Lord; <sup>(1)</sup>  
 "but we shall always sing the glory of your ~~incarnation~~. "  
*attributes.*  
 Uttar, 28 (13) 27.

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Note continued:

in the interest of <sup>devotion</sup> ~~faith~~ (bhakti); the gyan mārg as against  
bhakti mārg. The third path is karm mārg; the way of works  
 or religious observances, viz. meditation, sacrifices, prayers,  
 asceticism and fasting.

(1) See the passage in greater fullness at pp. 218,-221, of MSS.

There now remain to be considered those references to Māyā which are to be found in the second half of the Uttar-Kāṇḍ. As has been said in the tenth chapter, the poet makes the inspired crow his mouthpiece and addresses himself in a very real and sometimes a very novel fashion to a comparison and a reconciliation, if that be possible, of the rival conceptions of Māyā and Bhakti. (1) There are three passages in particular which claim our attention. The first two of these have been already given at length in the chapter referred to. But following our practice, the references to Māyā are set forth once more. They deal with the bewilderment which took possession of Garuḍ when he saw Rāma made captive in the demon's bonds, and describe his subsequent interview with the crow. In his perplexity Garuḍ said:-

"I have heard that the all-pervading, passionless Brahm"  
 "beyond the influence of Māyā and delusion (moh) has "  
 "descended to the earth, but I see nothing of his glory."  
 "By the repeating of his name men escape from the bonds "  
 "of existence. Can this Rāma be he when a base born "  
 "demon binds him in serpent coils."

Uttar 80 (58) 81. (2)

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(1) The word Māyā appears 150 times throughout the poem. In the latter half of the Uttarkāṇḍ it appears almost 50 times.

(2) See MSS. pp.231ff.

Garud first appealed to Nārada, Brahmā and Shiva, and they observed in turn:-

"Rāma's Māyā is very powerful. That which time after " "time has made me dance has spread itself over you. " "The great delusion (moh) has sprung up in your mind. (1)" Uttar. 81 (59) 82.

"Poets and learned pandits come under Māyā's power. " "The power of Hari's Māyā cannot be measured. It has " "often made me dance." Uttar 82 (60) 83.

"The Lord's Māyā is very powerful. Who is so full of " "knowledge that delusion (moh) does not touch him? The " "vehicle of Vishṇu, for him Māyā was too strong. No " "wonder sinners are deluded. It deludes Shiva and the " "Creator. What then are others? Helpless and weak! " "Knowing that this is so, seers worship Bhagwān who is " "the Lord of Māyā." Uttar, 85 (62) 85.

But when Garud, the vehicle of Vishṇu arrived at the crow's dwelling place:-

"his Māyā, delusion (moh) and anxiety, all disappeared." Uttar 86 (63) 87.

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(1) "Time after time, he who is supremely wise (Nārada) de-" "clared the power of Hari's Māyā." Uttar 82 (60) 83.

This statement accords with what we read earlier:-

"The virtues and vices, in their various forms fashioned"  
"by Māyā, along with delusion, love and other errors of "  
"judgment which envelop the whole world, never go near "  
"that mountain." Uttar 79 (57) 80.

As for the crow, he refused to believe that Garud had been really bewildered:-

"You had no doubt, delusion, Māyā. In sending you "  
"under the pretence of being deluded, Raghupati did "  
"me a kindness." Uttar. 96 (69) 98.

But despite this statement, he proceeds to declare that Māyā has blinded everyone, including Brahmā and Shiva, and asks:-

"Who is there in the world whom Māyā has not pervaded?"  
"There is no one so strong but desire lays hold of him "  
"even as the weevil worm does with wood. The desire "  
"for a son, for wealth, for a woman, whose understand- "  
"ing have not these three soiled? They are all Māyā's "  
"followers. Her power is unmeasured. Who can des- "  
"cribe it? When Shiva and Brahmā see it, they are "  
"afraid. What need to take account of others. The "  
"mighty army of Māyā pervades the world. Her generals "  
"are lust and other kindred evils. Her warriors are "

"pride, hypocrisy and heresy. She is the servant of "  
 "Raghubir, and though we recognise her to be false, yet"  
 "there is no escape without the mercy of Rāma. Māyā "  
 "causes all the world to dance. Her doings none can "  
 "comprehend. By the play of the Lord's eyebrows she "  
 "dances like an actress with all her company."

Uttar, 97 (70) 100.

This is the passage to which Sir George Grierson particularly refers when he finds so close a parallel to the Christian Tempter in the language of Tulsidās. And it is certainly not unreasonable to imagine that in the course of his wanderings, the poet may have foregathered with some Mohammedan Maulvi or Jesuit priest, and learned from them to identify Māyā and her mighty army with the Devil and his angels. But whatever the influence of Christianity on the Bhakti movement as a whole may have been, we can find a closer parallel, not only to the Christian Tempter but also <sup>to</sup> the Gnostic Demiurge, much nearer home, in the Bījak of Kabīr. <sup>(1)</sup> According to Kabīr, the Supreme God is not the Creator of the universe. It was the handiwork of Niranjān, whom God brought into existence and provided

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(1) It will be remembered that Kabīr was one of Rāmānand's disciples and lived 100 years before Tulsidās.

with a wife whose name was Māyā. Of Māyā and her evil influence, Kabīr has more to say than even Tulsidās. She is the old witch, the temptress, the great bandit, who has taken the whole world captive. She has decked herself with delusion.

"She drew after her Shiva and Brahmā, and lures away "  
 "all others with her. On one side stand gods, men "  
 "and ~~menis~~<sup>saints</sup>; on the other side she alone. Her glance "  
 "fell on them, she spared none. She set one seal "  
 "on all. and in her veil enmeshed them." (1)

Whether he was indebted to Kabīr or not for this new attitude to Māyā, it is unquestionable that in the extract we have given. Tulsidās looks at Māyā from a fresh point of view. He sets her apart. She is no longer Rāma's primal energy who accompanies him from heaven, his Māyā, his param shakti, who becomes incarnate at the same time as he does. We have seen how she was often thought of as a more or less magical force which he was able to exercise and to withdraw at will. We have seen too that gods, demons and men possessed similar powers, which are spoken of as Māyā. But here, as we ~~say~~<sup>say</sup>, is

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(1) See Kabīr's Bījak, translated by Rev Ahmad Shah (Hamirpur, 1917) who says "Māyā leads the whole world astray in error, and" salvation from the ocean of existence, the endless cycle of " birth and rebirth, is impossible, except by the knowledge of the " One and devotion to Him alone." p. 36.

something new. Māyā is spoken of as a mysterious and awful instrument of evil. She stands at the head of an army of vices who wage war <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ the souls of men. And yet it must not be forgotten that there is the other element <sup>also, the element</sup> which even when he is carried away with his new idea, the poet will not allow himself to forget. Because however great and evil her influence may be, Māyā continues to be recognised as the agent and servant of Raghur.

On the face of it, this looks very inconsistent. But it is not so inconsistent as it seems. We have to remember the poet's cardinal doctrine. It was that the world with every thing it contains, both what moves and what does not move, is an expression of the Divine power and purpose. He will allow nothing to exist that is beyond ~~its~~ <sup>their</sup> grasp. And because he believed that, it was inevitable he should say that Rāma was Māyā's lord. Nevertheless he was anxious in the interests of morality to bring home the fact that sin and vice were not only abhorrent and real, but that God was not to blame if they hampered and stained the soul. Writing of the Stoics, Warde Fowler says;-

"The idea of a personal Deity, distinct from the universe"  
 "and its Creator was obnoxious to them; it would have "  
 "committed them to a dualism of mind and matter which "  
 "from the outset of their history they emphatically re- "  
 "pudiated; their conviction was of a Unity in all things"



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 "committed them to a dualism of mind and matter which "  
 "from the outset of their history they emphatically re- "  
 "pudiated; their conviction was of a Unity in all things"

"and to this they consistently held in spite of constant"  
"and damaging criticism."

These words are followed by a quotation from Dr Bussel: "Though"  
"he yearns to see God in the moral order of the universe, he "  
"is forced in the interests of Unity to identify Him with every"  
"other known force."<sup>(1)</sup>

Tulsidās, time after time, is forced in the interests of  
Unity to do exactly the same. But he is manifestly uncomfort-  
able. If the doctrine of dualism is repugnant to him, he  
nevertheless believes in the personality of Rāma and in the  
personality of the soul also. It may be easy to show that he  
is illogical. But we must recognise that he is making a bold  
attempt to bring home the reality of sin. And when he does  
so, he is shedding his pantheistic conceptions for the time at  
least, and refuses to think that both virtue and vice are to  
be traced back to God. Rāma himself is made to say;-

" And yet when men do not secure salvation and go to "  
"the other world and there suffer torment, beating "  
"their heads they falsely lay the blame on Time, Karma"  
"and God."<sup>(2)</sup> Uttar, 64 (43) 65.

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(1) Warde Fowler's Roman Religious Experience. p. 366, quot-  
ing a passage in Seneca by F. W. Bussell; in Marcus Aurelius  
and the Later Stoics. p. 42.

(2) The chapter on Karma, Time and God must not, however, be  
forgotten, and the way in which Rāma himself <sup>there</sup> puts the blame on  
them.

An opinion with which the crow agrees when he tells the king of birds:-

"Stupid and unlucky persons in the power of Māyā and "  
"with a curtain over their minds, in their foolish "  
"obstinacy raise doubts and attribute their own ignor-"  
"ance to Rāma." Uttar, 103 (73) 107.

Sin, then, is something which ought not to be. It is contrary to the will of God. Had Tulsidās been a pantheist, really at heart, he would not have worried about sin. But he believes in the personality of God.

"The religion of Nirgun Brahṃ was not agreeable to me"  
"Love for Sagun Brahṃ had a greater hold on my heart."  
Uttar 170 (107) 185.

And though with certain aspects of his mind, he sometimes approaches perilously near the same opinion, he nevertheless refuses to accept the statement of the rishi;+

"Between Him and you there is no difference, like water"  
"and the wave." Uttar, 170 (107) 185.

And asks;-

"How can a soul in the grip of Māyā be the same as God."  
Uttar, 172 (108) 186.

One would therefore be inclined to hold that in this great passage Tulsidās is doing something more than using language

that suggests comparison with a Gnostic Demiurge and the Christian Tempter. His belief in a personal God and his love for righteousness have brought him face to face with the problem of evil. He has not given us a solution. Nobody has. But he knows that the problem would be darker if he lost his faith in God and in the beauty of holiness.

The second passage is the crow's account of his experiences with Rāma during his childhood in Avadh.<sup>(1)</sup> Some of the statements regarding Māyā are in the conventional style. Others proclaim the need and the power of Faith:-

"Māyā enveloped me by the contrivance of Raghupati. "

"But the Māyā caused me no pain."

"Souls of every kind are in the grip of Māyā. If all"

"were of the same degree of knowledge what would be "

"the difference between God and the soul? The soul "

"in his pride is in the grip of Māyā; Māyā, the store-

"house of the qualities (guṅkhāni) is in the grip of "

"God. The soul is in the power of another. Bhagwān "

"is free. Souls are manifold. The husband of Laksh-

"mī is one. Though the distinctions made by Māyā are "

"unreal, without Hari's help our countless efforts will"

"not avail." Uttar. 110 (77) 114.

When he jumped down Rāma's throat the crow saw everywhere -

"the merciful Bhagwān, the lord of Māyā." 119 (81) 122.

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(1) See MSS. pp. 237-242.

And when he came out of it again -

"Rāma, seeing his perplexity, restrained the power of "  
"his Māyā."

But when the crow asked as a boon that his heart might be filled with devotion to Rāma, he was promised that he would obtain not that boon alone. It would be followed by others, because Devotion is the mine of every happiness:-

"Sages cannot secure it, though they make a million "  
"attempts, repeating prayers, practising asceticism, "  
"and giving their bodies to be burned. Every good "  
"quality will dwell in your heart, devotion, know- "  
"ledge, wisdom, self-control. You will know every "  
"secret. And in the accomplishment of it, by my "  
"grace there will be no pain. The errors produced "  
"by Māyā will not pervade you." Uttar, 125 (84) 128.

In a subsequent exposition of his doctrine (siddhānt) Rāma said:-

"My Māyā is the cause of the world, living creatures, "  
"of every kind, both ~~what~~ moves and what does not move."  
"They are all dear to me: they are all created by me. "

But he has a special place in his heart for those who ~~have~~ <sup>are</sup>  
~~devoted to~~ <sup>devoted to</sup> ~~faith in~~ him;-

"It is the truth. No one is so dear to me as my own"

"servants. If the Creator were lacking in devotion, "  
 "of all creatures he would be unloved by me; whereas "  
 "the very lowest soul, if he have bhakti, is very "  
 "much loved indeed." Uttar, 127 (85) 130.

This statement is confirmed by the crow's summing up of his own religious experience, very beautifully expressed:-

"Māyā has never enveloped me since Rāma made me his "  
 "own. <sup>(1)</sup> And I tell you, oh king of birds, from "  
 "my own experience, without the worship of Hari "  
 "your trouble will not depart. Without Rāma's "  
 "grace, you will not understand his power; without "  
 "understanding his power, there will be no faith "  
 "(pratīti). Without faith, there is no love (prīti)"  
 "Without love, devotion (bhakti) is not steadfast. "  
 "It is like oil in water." Uttar, 129 (87) 132.

The third and final passage to which reference must be made, did not find a place in the chapter dealing with the crow's philosophy. It is of peculiar interest and forms a suitable close to our discussion of the poet's teaching. And for the reason that it brings together, not only Māyā and Bhakti, but introduces Gyān (knowledge) also, and when

(1) In Uttar 127 (85) 129, the promise was also given -

"The errors produced by Māyā will not pervade you."

it does so, it gives the most elaborate assertion which Tul-sidās makes throughout his poem of the superiority of <sup>Devotion</sup> Faith to Knowledge; bhakti-mārg as against gyān-mārg. It is his final, and, as he must have felt, his most convincing proof. And yet by his recognition of knowledge as a valuable discipline, he probably seeks to conciliate opponents. Indeed at times he makes concessions to the doctrine of monism, not easy to reconcile with the retort which the crow gave to the rishi when he somewhat contemptuously asked:-

"How can a soul in the grip of Māyā, cut off from "

"others and stupid, be the same as God." Uttar 172 (108)

186.

Indeed it was the crow's account of his argument with the rishi which provoked the curiosity of Garud and led to the important announcement which we shall now quote.

"There is one thing I wish to ask, oh sea of com- "

"passion, my lord, tell me and explain. Saints, "

"sages, Vedas and Purānas say nothing is so diffi-"

"cult to attain as gyān (knowledge). So the sage "

"told you.<sup>(1)</sup> But you did not honour it as you "

(1) At first the rishi, being a follower of advaita, spoke in praise of Knowledge. Eventually he is represented as changing his attitude and singing the praises of Hari and faith.

"honour devotion. Between knowledge and devotion, "  
 "what is the distinction? Tell me, oh Lord, abode "  
 "of mercy." The well disposed crow was pleased to "  
 "hear this question of the king of birds and gracious-"  
 "ly replied. 'Between devotion and knowledge there '"  
 "is no difference. Both dispel the pains which '"  
 "spring from existence. Sages say there is some '"  
 "distinction. But listen with attention to what I say!"  
 "' Knowledge, asceticism, profound meditation and dis'"  
 "'cernment, these are all masculine. The male in '"  
 "' every way possesses dignity and strength. The '"  
 "' female is naturally weak and stupid. It is only'"  
 "' a man free from passion and strongminded who is '"  
 "'able to give up women, not a sensualist in the '"  
 "' power of worldly objects and hostile to the feet '"  
 "'of Raghubir. Even sages, learned and treasure '"  
 "'houses of wisdom, become agitated when they see a '"  
 "'woman's fawn-like eyes and moon-like face. Woman's '"  
 "'Māyā is manifest to all, I am not here expressing '"  
 "'any biased opinion. I merely declare the teaching '"  
 "' of the Vedas, Purāṇas and saints. A woman is not '"  
 "'infatuated (moh) by a woman's form, Garud; this never'"  
 "'happens. But listen. Māyā and Bhakti are both '"  
 "'feminine, as everyone knows. Again Bhakti is be- '"  
 "'loved by Raghubir, while he looks on Māyā as only '"



"a dancing girl. Raghurāyā is favourable to Bhakti"  
 "and in consequence Māyā fears her greatly. Rāma's "  
 "Bhakti! There is no one like her. She is without "  
 "limit. He in whose heart she dwells is blessed for"  
 "ever. Seeing her, Māyā is stricken with awe and can"  
 "do nothing of her own power. Those sages who are "  
 "specially wise, as they reflect on this, recognise "  
 "that Bhakti is the treasure house of all happiness."  
 "This mystery of Raghunāth no one will quickly com- "  
 "prehend. He who by Raghupati's mercy does understand"  
 "it, will never, even in a dream, be the victim of "  
 "delusion (moh). Listen now to the difference be- "  
 "tween gyān and bhakti. For those who listen, the "  
 "result is an unbroken love for Rāma's feet. Listen, "  
 "my son to this untellable story. It may be con- "  
 "ceived but it cannot be told. The soul is a part "  
 "of God (īshwar ansh), indestructible, intelligent "  
 "pure, by nature an accumulation of joy. But it "  
 "comes under the power of Māyā and is caught like a "  
 "parrot or a monkey. The foolish soul is tied with "  
 "a knot and though it is an unreal knot, release is "  
 "difficult. Since the soul has become involved in "  
 "worldly objects, the knot is not loosened and there "  
 "is no happiness. The Vedas and Purāṇas have proposed "  
 "many expedients, but there is no escape. It becomes "  
 "more and more entangled. The soul (jiv hriday) is "

"filled with the darkness of delusion (moh), and it " "cannot see in what way the knot is to be unloosed." "When God (īsh) causes such a combination, it is " "likely there will be no release." Uttar 177 (111) 192.

The poet then proceeds in parabolic language to picture the efforts of the soul to secure release.

"If by the mercy of Hari, sincere piety (sātvik śraddhā)" "comes like a cow and dwells in the heart, then the" "prayers, penances, fasts and the innumerable religious" "rites and observances which the Vedas prescribe as the" "correct rule of conduct (dharmāchār) are the green " "grass on which the cow grazes." 181 (113) 197.

With the help of her calf, which is love, the heelrope which is abstinence, the milk bowl, which is faith (bishwās) and the cowherd, who is a mind without guile, the milk of true religion (param dharm) is at last obtained. It is set to boil on the fire of continence, then the air of patience cools it, while the rennet of steadfastness turns it into curds. Contentment is the maid who churns it. Discernment is the vessel in which it is churned. Self-restraint is the churning pole. Truth and good works the string. As a result there is procured the pure spotless, excellent butter of asceticism.

The poet, so far, has spoken of the heart or hriday, in which the cow of piety comes to graze. He now refers to it as intelligence or buddhi, and tells us how after lighting the fire of abstract meditation (yog) and bringing the coals of good and evil actions, Intelligence allows the butter of Knowledge (gyān) to cool, while the dirt of self-seeking (mamtā) is burned. Having thus secured a perfectly clean butter, Intelligence pours <sup>it</sup> into the lamp of the soul (chit) and places the lamp on the stand of equanimity. From the cotton plant (kapās) of the three conditions and the three qualities, it produces the cotton of the fourth condition (turiya) and from this prepares a wick. <sup>(1)</sup>

"In this way there is lighted a lamp full of "  
 "splendour, replete with knowledge (gyān) in "  
 "which, when they approach it, all the grass- "  
 "hoppers of pride and other vices are consumed."  
 "(The conviction that) I am He; existence, in- "  
 "divisible, that is the lamp's intensely burning"  
 "flame. The joy which springs from this "

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(1) We are already acquainted with the three qualities, sattva, rajas, tamas. But the three conditions are new. According to the Vedānta philosophy they are the three conditions of the soul; waking, dreaming and profound, dreamless sleep. The fourth condition (turiya) is, says Monier Williams, that state in which the soul has become one with Brahm, the universal spirit.

"experience of the spirit (ātmā) is manifest. The "
 "distinctions and errors, rooted in existence, are "
 "destroyed. Delusion (moh) and the other unnumber-"
 "ed hosts of darkness are wiped out. It is thus "
 "that Intelligence finds a light, and sitting in "
 "the house of the heart (ur) seeks to disentangle "
 "the knot. Should any one discover how to untie "
 "the knot, then that soul has achieved his purpose."
 "But when Māyā sees the soul loosening the knot, it"
 "causes many difficulties and gives orders to many "
 "and varied agents (riddhi siddhi). They come "
 "and expose Intelligence to greedy desire. By "
 "force, by fraud, by scheming, they get near the "
 "lamp and blow it out. But if Intelligence is "
 "very wise, he knows they are not friendly and "
 "does not give them a glance even. If no harm "
 "result to Intelligence from these impediments, "
 "then the gods (sur) tyrannise over him. The "
 "Senses are so many doors and windows. At each "
 "there sits a god, keeping watch. When they see "
 "a sensual breeze beginning to blow, in sheer per-"
 "versity, they open the doors. Should the breeze "
 "get into the house of the heart, the candle of "
 "gyān (knowledge) is extinguished. With the light"
 "extinguished, the knot cannot be untied. Intelli-"
 "gence has been confounded by the wind of sensuality."

"The senses and the gods do not approve of Know- "  
 "ledge. They are always fond of sensual pleasure."  
 "The wind of sensuality having made Intelligence a "  
 "fool, who can again light the lamp? The soul has "  
 "once more to endure the many and varied pains of trans-"  
 "migration. Oh, Garuḍ, Hari's Māyā is very difficult "  
 "to traverse. It cannot be crossed. Knowledge is "  
 "difficult to describe, difficult to understand, dif-"  
 "ficult to acquire. If by a happy chance true know-"  
 "ledge is acquired, many hindrances still remain. "  
 "The path of knowledge is like the edge of a sword. "  
 "For those who fall upon it, there is no salvation. "  
 "On the other hand, they who do achieve their pur- "  
 "pose and for whom the path is freed from obstruction,"  
 "obtain the highest state, release from transmigration."  
 "But release from transmigration (kaiwalya) the high- "  
 "est state, is very difficult to obtain, as saints, "  
 "purāṇas, Vedas and other Scriptures declare."

184,(114) 201.

And now comes the contrast, about which the poet wishes there shall be no mistake:-

"But by the worship of Rāma, salvation (mukti) comes"  
 "without asking for it, as it were by chance. As "  
 "water cannot rest without support, however numerous "  
 "your efforts, so the happiness of salvation (moksh)"

"cannot be got apart from devotion to Hari. Wise "

"devotees of Hari as they thus reflect, speak dis- "

"respectfully of release from the body (mukti) and "

"are desirous of Bhakti. By the practice of bhakti"

"without effort and toil, Ignorance (avidya) which "

"is the cause of mundane existence is destroyed." (1)

"You eat for the sake of filling the stomach, and "

"the heat of the stomach digests the food. Like- "

"wise devotion to Hari is easy and gives satisfaction."

"Who will be such a fool as not to rejoice in it? "

"Without the feeling, I am the servant and Rāma is "

"worthy of devotion, the sea of existence cannot be "

"crossed. Reckon this to be the established truth"

"(2) and worship Rāma's lotus feet. He can "

"make the wise foolish and the foolish wise. Such "

"power belongs to Raghubir. The soul that worships"

"him is blessed." Uttar 183 (115) 202.

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(1) Sansār often rendered world means a passing through a succession of states, the circuit of mundane existence, transmigration. See Monier Williams Sanskrit Dictionary, p. 1040.

(2) Siddhānt: the established line of reasoning or view of any question, the true logical conclusion, proved fact, established truth, axiom, dogma. Monier Williams, p. 1114.

The poet's attitude to Māyā is one more illustration of the fact that he is an orthodox Hindu, profoundly influenced by the thoughts of those around him and by the literature of his country. Beginning with the Rig Veda where "Indra by his magic powers (māyā) goes about in many forms,"<sup>(1)</sup> to the comparatively modern Vishnu Purāna which tells of how Vishnu produced from his body an illusory form (māyā moh), and speaks of Māyā as the mother of the world,<sup>(2)</sup> that literature was accustomed to the use of moh and māyā. Take for instance the Bhagavadgītā which contains the beginnings of the bhakti movement.<sup>(3)</sup> It is true there are only five references to Māyā. But on page after page of that short work, we read how the soul suffers from delusion, how it is bewildered and beguiled. And the word that is employed is always moh or some of its compounds.

(1) Griffith, Hymns of Rig Veda, VI, 47,18; and Hume, p.105, quoted in Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad.

(2) See Wilson's Translation of Vishnu Purāna, Vol. III, p.206, Vol.V, p.95. See MSS. p.96.

(3) See Dr Annie Besant's text with translation. "This divine illusion (Māyā) of Mine caused by the qualities is hard to pierce; they who come to Me. they cross over this illusion (Māyā). The evil doing, the deluded, the vilest of men, they come not to me, they whose wisdom is destroyed by illusion (Māyā)." 7, 14-15. See also 4,6, and 18,61.

With such precedents before him and surrounded as he was by Shiva-worshipping Vedāntins, it is not surprising that Tulsidās should have yielded to the prevailing atmosphere and made such a constant use of advaita phrases. It is not suggested that he accepted the interpretation which Śhaṅkara put upon those phrases. He believed too strongly in a God endowed "with all imaginable auspicious qualities," and in the personality of Rāma for such an inference to be possible. Nevertheless the tendency is there, and we cannot minimise it. The effort which Rāmanuja made to shew that the Upanishads could not be used to prove the theory of illusion, had apparently no influence on Tulsidās. <sup>(1)</sup> He has none of the zeal which the earlier advocates of bhakti displayed in confuting the doctrine of Māyā. And as we have seen, he is to a large extent unconscious of the problem by which they were faced or of the danger to which their movement was exposed.

Nevertheless, one certain fact remains, and it is a fact which we must emphasise. However great Māyā's influence may be, account for her origin as we please, she is, in the long

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(1) That modern scholars also differ in their interpretation of the Upanishads is shewn by the following:

"Gough maintains, in my judgment, an erroneous position"

"viz., that the Upanishads teach the pure Vedāntism of "

"Śhaṅkara." Hume, The thirteen principal Upanishads, p.38



run, compelled to yield to something greater, and that is Bhakti. We may exalt her and say that she is Rāma's primal energy, by means of which he creates, preserves and destroys the world. She may be his instrument for deceiving gods and men, or she may be identified with Sin. We may forget that she is Sītā, Rāma's bride, and reduce her to the status of a dancing girl. But whatever the part she plays, we are never allowed to forget that Rāma is her lord. The poet's language is full of contradictions. Of one thing however, he is never in any doubt. Rāma is real, if all else is a dream. And that is Tulsidās' message to the world. It may be that he was wise in his generation. To the Western student, the philosophy of Rāmanuja makes a stronger appeal. It seems to us that only on such a foundation is there room for the exercise of love and piety in a world of reality.<sup>(1)</sup> But though the poet has surrendered much that his predecessors had gained by trying to achieve a compromise between theism and monism, the very fact that he does so, has enabled him to win and keep the ear of India. With one aspect of his mind he thinks and speaks in terms of the advaita; with the other he thinks and speaks of a personal God, who loves him and whom he loves.

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(1) Bhāndārkar, op cit p. 51.

And it is on that note we would wish to close our examination of the poet's contribution to the religious thought and life of India. He believes with all his heart and soul that God became incarnate to render a service to the world. Such a belief must inevitably produce feelings of gratitude in those for whose sake the service is rendered. This is a conviction which took possession of India at an early stage in its religious history. The earlier incarnations, the fish, the boar, the tortoise, were of a cosmological character. The appeal to the individual was largely in abeyance. The personal element first shewed itself in the manifestation of the man-lion, when Vishṇu appeared to save his devotee Prahlād, and again though in destructive fashion, in Rāma of the Axe, and Buddha. But Vishṇu's incarnation as Krishna and Rāma introduced a new element. In both these cases we find the god not only taking human form, but living among men, sharing their sorrows and their joys, inviting their love and rewarding their devotion. This is a necessary element in all true religion. Present in Hinduism from the time of the Bhagavadgītā, it has grown and flourished in congenial soil. It has found its highest and most spiritual expression in the work of Tulsidās. His hero is the worthiest figure in all Indian literature.

Some reference should be made to the claim that has been put forward that for much that is valuable in its teaching, the Bhakti movement is indebted to Christianity. It is impossible not to be impressed by passages such as the one which appears in the Mahābhārata, describing Nārada's visit to the white island, where he saw men possessing the lustre of the moon, and was told that the great being worshipped there could only be seen by those devoted to him. (1) Nor can we ignore the fact that it was in South India where the Nestorians had planted a vigorous church in the early centuries of the Christian era that the doctrine of Bhakti first secured a philosophic defence and was established on a secure basis.

It is true that there are many ideas common to both Christ-

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(1) See the Shānti Parva. chap. 337-340 of the Mahabharata. Bhandarkar, (Vaishnavism etc.) quotes the passage p.4-8. See also my Summary of the Mahābhārata p.177-180. For an interesting account of the Bhakti-marg and the influence of Christianity see Grierson's article in E.R.E. Vol. 2, p.539. Bhandarkar recognises that the Krishna birth stories were borrowed. Hopkins' chapter, Christ in India, in India Old and New should also be referred to, especially the parallels he finds between the Gospel of John and the Bhagavadgītā. But see Monier Williams' Indian Wisdom, Muir's Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers, and Barth's Religions of India.

ianity and Bhakti. They are at one in making much of God's grace and minimising the value of works. They both tell us that love is the fulfilling of the law. They both proclaim that a pure heart is where God delights to dwell. And they both promise immortal life, not in God but with God. But while we recognise such similarities, that does not necessarily mean that these similarities are due to borrowing from Christian sources. Inspiration there very probably was, but it is difficult to deny that India had the beginnings of a bhakti movement of her own and believed in avatārs before the dawn of the Christian era.(1) When that is so, may we not hold, despite the many startling coincidences, that God has spoken to both East and West in language that is akin. The hearts of men are everywhere very much the same, and it is natural that when they believe in an incarnate God towards whom they entertain feelings of love and devotion that these feelings should be expressed in words and acts that will remind us of what was said and done in other lands.

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(1) This is on the assumption that those portions of the Bhagavadgītā, which teach devotion to a personal God, in the form of an avatār, were written before the influence of Christianity could spread to India. For the conflict of opinion as to the date and structure of the poem, consult Garbe on the Bhagavadgita in E.R.E. and his reference to the contrary views of Holtzmann.