

There would be some relief from this horrible doctrine if in subsequent chapters of Manu there were kindly tokens of grace, or sympathy for woman, or any light of hope here or hereafter, but the whole teaching and spirit of the Code rests as an iron yoke upon womanhood, and it is largely a result of this high authority that the female sex in India has for ages been subjected to the most cruel tyranny and degradation. It might well be said that, in spite of our horror at infanticide, the most merciful element of Hinduism with respect to woman is the custom by which so large a proportion of female children have been destroyed at birth.

The same fatalistic principles affect all ranks and conditions of Hindu society. The poor sudra is not only low born and degraded, but he is immovably fixed in his degradation. He is cut off from all hope or aspiration: he cannot rise above the thralldom of his fate. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna declares to Arjuna that it is

“Better to do the duty of one’s caste  
Though bad or ill performed and fraught with evil,  
Than undertake the business of another,  
However good it be.”

Thus even the laws of right and wrong are subordinate to the fatality of caste, and all aspiration is paralyzed.

On the other hand, even the enemies of Calvinism have repeatedly acknowledged that the system as a moral and political force is full of inspiration; that its moral earnestness has been a great power in molding national destinies. Mr. Bancroft has not hesitated to declare that the great charters of human liberty are largely due to its strong conception of a divine and all-controlling purpose. Even Matthew Arnold admitted that its stern “Hebraic” culture, as he called it, had wrought some of the grandest achievements of history. But the Hindus, noble Aryans as they were at first, have been conquered by every race of invaders that has chosen to assail them. And what wonder, while for ages they have been paralyzed by this philosophy of Krishna!

“This,” says Sir Monier Williams, “is the *Summum Bonum* of Brahminical philosophy, *viz*: the loss of all personality and separate identity by absorption into the Supreme—mere life with nothing to live for, mere joy with nothing to rejoice about, and mere thought with nothing upon which thought is to be exercised.”

Buddhism does not present the same fatalistic theory of creation as Brahminism, but it introduces even a more aggravated fatalism into human life. Both alike load down the newly born with burdens of guilt and consequent suffering transmitted from former existences. But in the case of Buddhism there is no identity between the sinner, who incurred the guilt, and the recipient of the evil karma, which demands punishment. Every man comes into the world entangled in