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Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

The People of India, Volume Three

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KURRUM DOSS.
(158)

Kurrrum Doss is a Jogi or religious devotee, now of Hurdwar, but a native of the Punjab. The name Jogi or Yogi is derived from the word "jog" or "yog," signifying literally union or junction; and in practice, the idea of mental union with the Deity by means of religious abstraction or contemplation.

This sect owes its origin to the metaphysical philosophy of Patanjuli, who was the founder of the doctrine and practice of asceticism, which has existed in India for many centuries, and is still practised in many curious forms. The philosophy of Patanjuli forms one of the great schools of Hindoo metaphysical doctrine, and is distinct from the Vedanta, the Nyaya, the Mimansa, and many others of equally marked, but different character. The Brahmins claim for all of these an immense antiquity; but it is most probable that they arose after the suppression of the Buddhist supremacy, or about the second century before Christ, when the new Brahminism was in its vigour, and expending its superabundant forces in the invention of newly asserted doctrines. The philosophy of Patanjuli if it did not precede, must, however, have closely followed the Buddhists, for there is much in it which embraces the tenets of that peculiar faith; in particular the practice of ascetic devotion, as the best or only means of attaining perfection, and eventual unity with, and absorption into, the divine essence.

The great object to be attained was emancipation from earthly, and consequently sensual existence. It was necessary to restrain the mind and prevent its following sensual desires and objects; and this was to be effected by a course of penance and mortification minutely detailed. If confined, the soul was sure to fix itself upon God; if suffered to stray, it wandered restlessly into voluptuousness. The object of the god seeker, therefore, was to deliver his soul from subjection; in short, to subject his senses to his mind. In the following sketch of the Patanjuli doctrines Mr. Ward's abstract of them is chiefly followed. The first proposition to be entertained was, that the divine spirit and the soul of man are distinct. This was manifestly a denial of the Vedanta doctrine, that the human soul was a portion

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