

APPENDIX I

THE RIDDLE OF THE VARNASHRAM DHARMA

Reference has already been made to the two dogmas of *Varna Dharma* and *Asharm Dharma*, which are called by the collective names of *Varnashram Dharma* and which form so fundamental a part of Hinduism. It cannot but be instructive to know the views expressed by the ancient writers on these strange dogmas.

I

To begin with *Varna Dharma*. It would be better to collect together in the first place the views expressed in the Vedas.

The subject is referred to in the Rig-Veda in the 90th Hymn of the 10th Book. It runs as follows:—

“1. Purusha has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, on every side enveloping the earth he overpassed (if) by a space of ten fingers. 2. Purusha himself is this whole (universe), whatever has been and whatever shall be. He is also the lord of immortality since (or, when) by food he expands. 3. Such is his greatness, and Purusha is superior to this. All existences are a quarter of him; and three-fourths of him are that which is immortal in the sky. 4. With three quarters Purusha mounted upwards. A quarter of him was again produced here. He was then diffused everywhere over-things which eat and things which do not eat. 5. From him was born Viraj, and from Viraj, Purusha. When born, he extended beyond the earth, both behind and before. 6. When the Gods performed a sacrifice

This is a consolidated version of Riddle No. 16 & 17 entitled 'Varnashram Dharma'. This title does not find place in the original Table of Contents. Hence this is placed as Appendix. It is difficult to identify which of the two versions is later. Quotations have been retained in both the texts while the interpretation seems to be modified at various places. This is a 55-page typed copy without having any corrections by the author.—Ed.

with Purush as the oblation, the spring was its butter, the summer its fuel, and the autumn its (accompanying) offering. 7. This victim, Purush, born in the beginning, they immolated on the sacrificial grass. With him the gods, the Sadhyas, and the rishis sacrificed. 8. From that universal sacrifice were provided curds and butter. It formed those aerial (creatures) and animals both wild and tame. 9. From the universal sacrifice sprang the *rich* and *saman* verses, the *metres* and the *yajush*. 10. From it sprang horses, and all animals with two rows of teeth; kine sprang from it; from it goats and sheep. 11. When (the Gods) divided Purusha, into how many parts did they cut him up? What was his mouth? What arms (had he)? What (two objects) are said (to have been) the thighs and feet? 12. The Brahmana was his mouth; the Rajanya was made his arms; the being (called) the Vaisya, he was his thighs; the Sudra sprang from his feet. 13. The moon sprang from his soul (manas), the sun from his eye, Indra and Agni from his mouth, and Vayu from his breath. 14. From his navel arose the air, from his head the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ear the (four) quarters; in this manner (the Gods) formed the worlds. 15. When the Gods, performing sacrifice, bound Purusha as a victim, there were seven sticks (struck up) for it (around the fire), and thrice seven pieces of fuel were made. 16. With sacrifice the Gods performed the sacrifice. These were the earliest rites. These great powers have sought the sky, where are the former Sadhyas, gods”.

This hymn is known by its general name Purusha Sukta and is supposed to embody the official doctrine of Varna and Caste.

The first thing to do is to inquire which of the other Vedas accept the theory of the origin of the Varna system as propounded in the Purusha Sukta of the Rig-Veda. Examining the different Vedas from this point of view the result appears to be very striking.

The Sama-Veda has not incorporated the Purusha Sukta among its hymns. Nor does it give any other explanation of the Varna Dharma.

The Yajur-Veda discloses a very great degree of diversity of opinion on this issue. Taking up the case of the White Yajur-Veda separately from that of the Black Yajur-Veda the position as it emerges from a comparison of its three available Sanhitas stands thus. Of the three Sanhitas the Kathaka Sanhita and Maitreyani Sanhita do not make any reference to the Purusha Sukta of the Rig-Veda nor do they make any attempt to give any other explanation of the Varna system. The Vajasaneya Sanhita is the only Sanhita of the Yajur-Veda which incorporates the Purusha Sukta but not without transposition of the verses. But the Vajasaneya Sanhita gives a new and original

explanation of the Varna system quite different from what is given in the Purusha Sukta¹:

“ He lauded with one Living beings were formed; Prajapati was the ruler. He lauded with three: the Brahman (Brahman) was created: Brahmanaspati was the ruler. He lauded with five; existing things were created: Bhutanampati was the ruler. He lauded with seven; the seven rishis were created: Dhatri was the ruler. He lauded with nine; the Fathers were created: Aditi was the ruler. He lauded with eleven: the seasons were created: The Artavas were the rulers. He lauded with thirteen: the months were created : the year was the ruler. He lauded with fifteen: the Kshattria (the Kshattriya) was created: Indra was the ruler. He lauded with seventeen: animals were created: Brihaspati was the ruler. He lauded with nineteen: the Sudra and the Arya (Vaisya) were created: day and night were the rulers. He lauded with twenty-one: animals with undivided hoofs were created: Varuna was the ruler. He lauded with twenty-three; small animals were created: Pushan was the ruler. He lauded with twenty-five: wild animals were created: Vayu was the ruler (compare R.V. x. 90, 8). He lauded with twentyseven: heaven and earth separated: Vasus, Rudras, and Adityas separated after them: they were the rulers. He lauded with twentynine; trees were created: Soma was the ruler. He lauded with thirty-one: living beings were created: The first and second halves of the month were the rulers. He lauded with thirty one: existing things were tranquillized; Prajapati Parameshthin was the ruler.”

Turning to the Black Yajur-Veda there is only one Sanhita of it which is available. It is called Taitterriya Sanhita. This Sanhita offers two explanations. The first explanation² is the same which is given in the Vajaseniyā Sanhita as its own original explanation. The second explanation is its own particular explanation and is not to be found in the Vajaseniyā Sanhita. It reads as follows³:

“He (the Vratya) became filled with passions thence sprang the Rajanya”.

“Let the king to whose house the Vratya who knows this, comes as a guest, cause him to be respected as superior to himself. So doing he does no injury to his royal rank, or to his realm. From him arose the Brahman (*Brahman*) and the Kshattria (*Kshatriya*). They said, ‘Into whom shall we enter’, etc.”

The important point is that while the Vajaseniyā Sanhita incorporates the Purusha Sukta from the Rig-Veda the Taitterriya Sanhita altogether omits to take any notice of it whatsoever.

¹ Muir Sanskrit Texts. Vol. I. P. 18.

² See Khanda IV. Prapathaka III verses X following.

³ *Ibid* I p. 22.

The Atharva-Veda incorporates the Purusha Sukta. But the order of the verses varies from the order in which they stand in the Rig-Veda. But like the Vajasiñia Sanhita and the Taitterriya Sanhita of the Yajur-Veda the Atharva is not content with the Purusha Sukta. It offers other explanations. They are not as complete and as universal as the Purusha Sukta but they are special to it¹:

“The Brahman was born the first, with ten heads and ten faces. He first drank the *soma*; he made poison powerless”.

“The Gods were afraid of the Rajanya when he was in the womb. They bound him with bonds when he was in the womb. Consequently this Rajanya is born bound. If he were unborn unbound he would go on slaying his enemies. In regard to whatever Rajanya any one desires that he should be born unbound, and should go on slaying his enemies, let him offer for him this Aindra-Birhaspatya oblation. A Rajanya has the character of Indra, and a Brahman is Brihaspati. It is through the Brahman that any one releases the Rajanya from his bond. The golden bond, a gift, manifestly releases from the bond that fetters him.”

Purusha as the origin of the four Varnas is not the only explanation of the origin of the Varna system that is to be found in the Vedas. There is another explanation. It speaks of people being descended from Manu and is to be found referred to in the following passages²:

“Prayers and hymns were formerly congregated in the Indra, in the ceremony which Atharvan, father Manu, and Dadhyanch celebrated”.

Whatever prosperity or succour father Manu obtained by sacrifices, may we gain all that under thy guidance, o Rudra.”

“Those pure remedies of yours, O Maruts, those which are-most auspicious, ye vigorous gods, those which are beneficent, those which our father Manu chose, those, and the blessing and succour of Rudra, I desire.”

“That ancient friend hath been equipped with the powers of the mighty (gods). Father Manu has prepared hymns to him, as portals of success to the gods.”

“Sacrifice is Manu, our protecting father.”

“Do ye (gods) deliver, protect, and intercede for us; do not lead us far away from the paternal path of Manu.”

“He (Agni) who abides among the offspring of Manu as the invoker (of the gods), is even the lord of these riches.”

“Agni, together with the gods, and the children of Manush, celebrating a multiform sacrifice with hymns etc.”

¹ Muir's Sanskrit Texts Vol. I. p. 21-22.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 162-165.

“Ye gods, Vajas, and Ribhukshans, come to our sacrifice by the path travelled by the gods, that ye, pleasing deities, may institute a sacrifice among these people of Manush on auspicious days.”

“The people of *Manush* praise in the sacrifices Agni the invoker.”

“Whenever Agni, lord of the people, kindled, abides gratified among the people of Manush, he repels all Rakshasas.”

Let us now turn to the writing called the Brahmanas and take note of what they have to say on this question.

The explanation given by the Sathapatha Brahmana is as follows¹:

“(Uttering) ‘bhuh’, Prajapati generated this earth. (Uttering) ‘bhuvah’ he generated the air, and (uttering) ‘svah’, he generated the sky. This universe is co-extensive with these worlds. (The fire) is placed with the whole. Saying ‘bhuh’, Prajapati generated the Brahman (saying) ‘bhuvah’ he generated the Kshattria; (and saying) ‘svah’, he generated the Vis. The fire is placed with the whole. (Saying) ‘bhuh’, Prajapati generated himself; (saying ‘bhuvah’ he generated offspring; (saying) ‘svah’ he generated animals. This world is so much as self, offspring, and animals. (The fire) is placed with the whole.”

Besides this there is another explanation to be found in this Brahman²:

“Brahma (here, according to the commentator, existing in the form of Agni, and representing the Brahman caste) was formerly this (universe), one only. Being one, it did not develope. It energetically created an excellent form, the Kshattria, viz, those among the gods who are powers (kshattrani), Indra, Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrityu, Issana. Hence nothing is superior to the Kshattria. Therefore the Brahman sits below the Kshattriya at the rajasuya-sacrifice; he confers that glory on the kshattria (the royal power). This, the Brahma, is the source of the Kshattria; Hence, although the king attains, supremacy, he at the end resorts to the Brahma as his source. Whoever destroys him (the Brahman) destroys his own source. He becomes most miserable, as one who has injured a superior. 24. He did not develope. he created the Viz-Viz, those classes of gods who are designated by troops, Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, Visvedevas, Maruts; 25. He did not develope. He created the Sudra class, Pushan. This earth is Pushan; for she nourishes all that exists. 26. He did not develope. He energetically created an excellent form, Justice (Dharma). This is the ruler (kshattria) of the ruler (kshattria), namely Justice, hence nothing is

¹ Quoted by Muir Sanskrit Texts Vol. I. p. 17.

² Muir’s Sanskrit Texts. Vol. I p. 20.

superior to justice. Therefore the weaker seeks (to overcome) the stronger by justice, as by a king. This justice is truth. In consequence they say of a man who speaks truth, 'he speaks justice;' or of a man who is uttering justice, 'he speaks truth.' For this is both of these. 27. This is the Brahma, Kshattria, Viz. and Sudra.

"Through Agni it became Brahma among the gods, the Brahman among men, through the (divine) Kshattriya a (human) Kshattriya, through the (divine) Vaisya a (human) Vaisya, through the (divine) Sudra a (human) Sudra. Wherefore it is in Agni among the gods and in a Brahman among men, that they seek after an abode."

The Taittiriya Brahmana has the following explanations to offer. First is in the following terms¹:

"This entire (universe) has been created by Brahma. Men say that the Vaisya class was produced from rich-verses. They say that the Yajur-Veda is the womb from which the Kshattriya was born. The Sama-Veda is the source from which the Brahmans sprang. This word the ancients declared to the ancients."

The second refers only two varnas—only Brahman and Sudra and says²:

"The Brahman caste is sprung from the gods; the Sudra from the Asuras"

The third explains the origin of the Sudras in the following terms³:

"Let him at his will milk out with a wooden dish. But let not a Sudra milk it out. For this Sudra has sprung from non-existence. They say that that which a Sudra milks out is no oblation. Let not a Sudra milk out the Agnihotra. For they do not purify that. When that passes beyond the filter, then it is an oblation"

The next thing would be to see what explanation the Smritis have to offer for the origin of the Varna system. This is what Manu has to say in his Smriti⁴:—

"He (the self-existent) having felt desire, and willing to create various living beings from his own body, first created the waters, and threw into them a seed. 9. That seed became a golden egg, of lustre equal to the sun; in it he himself was born as a Brahma, the parent of all the worlds. 10. The waters are called narah, for they are sprung from Nara; and as they were his first sphere of motion he is therefore called Narayana. 11. Produced from the imperceptible eternal, existent and non-existent, cause, they male (purusha) is celebrated in the world as Brahma. 12. After dwelling for a year in the egg, the glorious being, himself, by his own contemplation, split

¹ Muir I. p. 17

² & ³ Muir's Sanskrit Texts Vol. I p. 21.

⁴ Muir's Vol. I pp. 36 and 37.

it in twain. That the worlds might be peopled, he caused the Brahman, the Kshattriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra to issue from his mouth, his arms, his thighs, and his feet. 32. Having divided his own body into two parts, the lord (Brahma) became, with the half a male (purusha) and with the half, a female; and in her he created Viraj. 33. Know, o most excellent twice-born men, that I, whom that male, (purusha) Viraj, himself created, am the creator of all this world. 34. Desiring to produce living creatures, I performed very arduous devotion, and first created ten Maharshis (great rishis), lords of living beings, (35) viz. Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Prachetas, Vasistha, Bhrigu, and Narada. 36. They, endowed with great energy, created other seven Manus, gods, and abodes of gods, and Maharshis of boundless might; (37) Yakshas, Rakshases, Pishchas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Asuras, Nagas, Serpents, great Birds, and the different classes of Pitris; (38) lightnings, thunderbolts, clouds, portentous atmospheric sounds, comets, and various luminaries; (39) Kinnars, apes, fishes, different sorts of birds, cattle, deer, men, beasts with two rows of teeth; (40) small and large reptiles, mouths, lice, flies, fleas, all gadflies, and gnats, and motionless things of different sorts. 41. Thus by my appointment, and by the force of devotion, was all. This world Both Motionless and Moving, created by those great beings, according to the (previous) actions of each creature.”

There is also another view expressed by Manu in his Smriti as to the basic reasons for dividing men into four classes¹:

“I shall now declare succinctly in order the states which the soul reaches by means of each of these qualities. 40. Souls endowed with the Sattva quality attain to godhead; those having the rajas quality become men; whilst those characterized by tamas always become beasts— such is the threefold destination. 43. Elephants, horses, Sudras and contemptible Mlechhas, lions, tigers, and boars form the middle dark condition..... 46. Kings, Kshattriyas, a King’s priests (purohitah), and men whose chief occupation is the war of words, compose the middle condition of passion.... 48. Devotees, ascetics, Brahmans, the deities borne on aerial cars, constellations, and Daityas, constitute the lowest condition of goodness. 49. Sacrificing priests, rishis, gods, the vedas, the celestial luminaries, years, the fathers the Sadhyas, form the second condition of goodness. 50. Brahma, the creators, righteousness, the Great one (mahat) the Unapparent One (avyakta) compose the highest condition of goodness.”

¹ Muir’s Sanskrit Texts Vol. pp. 41.

It is interesting to compare with these views: those contained in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The Ramayana says that the four Varnas are the offspring of Manu, the daughter of Daksha and the wife of Kasyapa¹.

“Listen while I declare to you from the commencement all the Prajapatis (lord of creatures) who came into existence in the earliest time. Kardama was the first, then Vokrita, Sesha, Samsraya, the energetic Bahuputra, Sthanu, Marichi, Atri, the strong Kratu, Pulastya, Angiras, Prachetas, Pulaha, Daksha, then Vivasvat, Arishtanemi, and the glorious Kasyapa, who was the last. The Prajapati Daksha is famed to have had sixty daughters. Of these Kasyapa took in marriage eight elegant maidens, Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kalaka, Tamra, Krodhavasa, Manu and Anala. Kasyapa pleased, then to these maids, ‘ye shall bring forth sons like to me, preserves of the three worlds’. Aditi, Diti, Danu and Kalaka assented; but the others did not agree. Thirty-three gods were born by Aditi, the Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, and the two Asvins. Manu (wife) of Kasyapa, produced men, Brahmans, Kshattriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. ‘Brahmans were born from the mouth, Kshattriyas from the breast, Vaisyas from the thighs, and Sudras from the feet,’ so says the Veda. Anala gave birth to all trees with pure fruits.”

The Mahabharata gives the following explanation²:

“Born all with splendour, like that of great rishis, the ten sons of Prachetas are reputed to have been virtuous and holy; and by them the glorious beings were formerly burnt up by fire springing from their mouths. From them was born Daksha Prachetas, and from Daksha, the Parent of the world (were produced), these creatures. Cohabiting with Virini, the Muni Daksha begot a thousand sons like himself, famous for their religious observances, to whom Narada taught the doctrine of final liberation, the unequalled knowledge of the Sankhya. Desirous of creating offspring, the Prajapati Daksha next formed fifty daughters of whom he gave ten to Dharma, thirteen to Kasyapa, and twenty-seven, devoted to the regulation of time, to Indu (Soma)..... On Dakshayani, the most excellent of his thirteen wives, Kasyapa, the son of Marichi, begot the Adityas, headed by Indra and distinguished by their energy, and also Vivasvat. To Vivasvat was born a son, the mighty Yama Vaivasvata. To Martanda (i.e. Vivasvat, the sun) was born the wise and mighty Manu, and also the renowned Yama, his (Manu's) younger brother. Righteous was this wise Manu, on whom a race

¹ Muir's Sanskrit Texts Vol. I pp. 116-117.

² Muir's Sanskrit Texts Vol. I. pp. 125.

was founded. Hence this (family) of men became known as the race of Manu. Brahmans, Kshattriyas, and other men sprang from this Manu. From him o king, came the Brahman conjoined with the Kshatriya.”

In another place the Mahabharata gives the origin as it is given in the Purusha Sukta:

“The king should appoint to be his royal priest a man who will protect the good, and restrain the wicked. On this subject they relate this following ancient story of a conversation between Pururavas the son of Illa, and Matarisvan (Vayu, the Windgod). Pururavas said: You must explain to me whence the Brahman, and whence the (other) three castes were produced, and whence the superiority (of the first) arises. Matarisvan answered: the Brahman was created from Brahman’s mouth, the Kshatriya from his arms, the Vaisya from his thighs, while for the purpose of serving these three castes was produced the fourth class, the Sudra, fashioned from his feet. The Brahman, as soon as born, becomes the lord of all beings upon the earth, for the purpose of protecting the treasure of righteousness. Then (the creator) constituted Kshatriya the controller of the earth, a second Yama to bear the rod, for the satisfaction of the people. And it was Brahma’s ordinance that the Vaisya should sustain these three classes with money and grain, and that the Sudra should serve them. The son of Illa then enquired : Tell me, Vayu, to whom the earth, with its wealth, rightfully belongs, to the Brahman or the Kshatriyya ? Vayu replied: All this, whatever exists in the world, is the Brahman’s property by right of primogeniture; this is known to those who are skilled in the laws of duty. It is his own which the Brahman eats, puts on, and bestows. He is the chief of all the castes, the first-born and the most excellent. Just as a woman when she has lost her (first) husband, takes her brother in law for a second; so the Brahman is the first resource in calamity; afterwards another may arise”.

There is a third view maintained in the Shantiparva of Mahabharata¹:—

“Bhrigu replied: ‘Brahma thus formerly created the Prajapatis, Brahmanic, penetrated by his own energy, and in splendour equalling the sun and fire. The lord then formed truth, righteousness austere fervour, and the eternal veda (or sacred science), Virtuous practice, and purity for (the attainment of) heaven. He also formed the gods, Danavas, Gandharvas, Daityas, Asuras, Mahoragas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Nagas, Pisachas, and men, Brahmans,

¹ Muir’s Sanskrit Texts Vol. I pp. 139-140.

Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, as well as all other classes (varnah) of beings. The colour (varna) of the Brahmans was white; that of the Kshatriyas red; that of the Vaishyas yellow; and that of the Sudra black.' Bharadvaja here rejoins: ' If the caste (varna) of the four classes is distinguished by their colour (varna), then a confusion of all the castes is observable. Desire, anger, fear, cupidity, grief, apprehension, hunger, fatigue, prevail over us all, by what then, is caste discriminated? Sweat, urine, excrement, phlegm, bile and blood (are common to all) the bodies of all decay; by what then is caste discriminated? There are innumerable kinds of things moving and stationary, how is the class (varna) of these various objects to be determined ?"

Bhrigu replies: There is no difference of castes :

In the same Shantiparva there is a fourth theory¹:

"Bharadvaja again enquires: 'What is that in virtue of which a man is a Brahman, a Kshattriya, a Vaisya, or a Sudra; tell me, o, most eloquent Brahman rishi'. Bhrigu replies: 'He who is pure, consecrated by the natal and other ceremonies, who has completely studied the Veda, lives in the practice of the six ceremonies, performs perfectly the rites of purification, who eats the remains of oblations, is attached to his religious teacher, is constant in religious observances, and devoted to truth is called a Brahman. He in whom are seen truth, liberality, inoffensiveness, harmlessness, modesty compassion, and austere fervour,—is declared to be a Brahman. He who practises the duty arising out of the kingly office, who is addicted to the study of the Veda, and who delights in giving and receiving, is called a Kshattriya. He who readily occupies himself with cattle, who is devoted to agriculture, and acquisition, who is pure, and is perfect in the study of the Veda,— is denominated a Vaisya. He who is habitually addicted to all kinds of food, performs all kinds of work, who is unclean, who has abandoned the Veda, and does not practise pure observances,— is traditionally called a Sudra. And this (which I have stated) is the mark of a Sudra, and it is not found in a Brahman: (such) a Sudra will remain a Sudra, while the Brahman (who so acts) will be no Brahman".

Let us inquire what the Puranas have to say on the origin of the Varna System.

To begin with the Vishnu Purana. There are two theories propounded in the Vishnu Purana on the origin of the Chaturvarna.

According to one ascribes the origin to Manu²:

¹ Muir's Sanskrit Texts Vol. I pp. 141-142.

² Muir's Sanskrit Text Vol. I pp. 220-221.

“Before the mundane egg existed the divine Brahma Hiranyagarbha, the eternal originator of all worlds, who was the form of essence of Brahma, who consists of the divine Vishnu, who again is identical with Rik, Yajush, Saman and Atharva Vedas. From Brahma’s right thumb was born the Prajapati Daksha; Daksha had a daughter Aditi; from her was born Vivasvat; and from him sprang Manu. Manu had sons called Ikshvaku, Nriga, Dhrishta, Saryati, Narishanta, Puramsu, Nabhagandishta, Karusha, and Prishadhra.”

“From Karusha the Karushas, Kshattriyas of great power, were descended.”

“Nabhaga, the son of Nedishta, became a Vaisya”.

Of this explanation ascribing the origin to Manu there is another and a different version in the Vishnu Purana:

“Desirous of a son, Manu sacrificed to Mitra and Varuna; but in consequence of a wrong invocation through an irregularity of the hotri-priest, a daughter called Illa was born. Then through the favour of Mitra and Varuna she became to Manu a son called Sudyumna. But being again changed into a female through the wrath of Isvara (Mahadeva) she wandered near the hermitage of Budha the son of Soma (the Moon); who becoming enamoured of her had by her a son called Pururavas. After his birth, the god who is formed of sacrifice, of the Rik, Yajush, Saman, and Atharva-Vedas, of all things, of mind, of nothing, he who is in the form of the sacrificial Male, was worshipped by the rishis of infinite splendour who desired that Sudyumn should recover his manhood. Through the favour of this god Ila became again Sudhumna.”

“According to the Vishnu Purana, Atri was the son of Brahma, and the father of Soma (the moon), whom Brahma installed as the sovereign of plants, Brahmans and stars. After celebrating the rajasuya sacrifice, Soma became intoxicated with pride, and carried off Tara (Star) the wife of Brihaspati the preceptor of the gods, whom, although admonished and entreated by Brahma, the gods, and rishis, he refused to restore, Soma’s part was taken by Usanas; and Rudra, who had studied under Angiras, aided Brihaspati. A fierce conflict ensued between the two sides, supported respectively by the gods and the Daityas, etc. Brahma interposed, and compelled Soma to restore Tara to her husband. She had, however, in the meantime become pregnant, and borne a son Budha (the planet Mercury), of whom, when strongly urged, she acknowledged Soma to be the father. Pururavas, as has been already mentioned, was the

son of this Budha by Illa, the daughter of Manu. The loves of Pururavas and the Apsara Urvashi are related in the Satapatha Brahmana, xi. 5, 1, 1 in the Vishnu Purana, iv. 6, 19 ff; in the Bhagavata Purana, ix, 14; and in the Harivamsa, section 26. The Mahabharata, Adip. sect. 75, alludes to Pururavas as having been engaged in a contest with the Brahmanas. This passage will be quoted hereafter. According to the Vishnu Purana, iv, 7, 1, Pururavas had six sons, of whom the eldest was Ayus. Ayus had five sons: Nahusha, Kshatra-vriddha, Rambha, Raji, and Anenas.”

“Kshattravridha had a son Sunahotra, who had three sons, Kasa, Lesa, and Gritsamada. From the last sprang Saunaka, who progenited the system of four castes. Kasa had a son Kasiraja, of whom again Dirghatamas was the son as Dhanvantri was Dirghatamas.”

The second ascribes the origin to Brahma as the following extract from the Vishnu Purana shows¹:

“Maitreya² says: You have described to me the Arvaksrotas, or human creation; declare to me, o Brahman, in detail the manner in which Brahma formed it. Tell me how and with what qualities, he created the castes, and what are traditionally reputed to be the functions of the Brahmanas and others. Parasara replies: 3. When, true to his design, Brahma became desirous to create the world, creatures in whom goodness (sattva) prevailed sprang from his mouth; 4. Others in whom passion (rajas) predominated came from his breast; others in whom both passion and darkness (tamas) were strong, proceeded from his thigh; (5) others he created from his feet, whose chief characteristic was darkness. Of these was composed the system of four castes, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, who had respectively issued from his mouth, breast, thighs, and feet. 6. Brahma formed this entire fourfold institution of classes for the performance of sacrifices, the gods nourish mankind by discharging rain. Sacrifices, the causes of prosperity, (8) are constantly celebrated by virtuous men, devoted to their duties, who avoid wrong observances, and walk in the right path. 9. Men, in consequence of their humanity, obtain heaven and final liberation; and they proceed to the world which they desire”.

In the Harivamsa are to be found two theories. It upholds the theory of the origin of the Varnas as being born from one of the descendents of Manu as the stock of descent than the one mentioned by the Vishnu Purana³:

¹ Muir's Sanskrit Texts Vol. I pp. 61-62.

² The Vishnu Purana is cast in the form of a dialogue between Maitreya the student who asks questions and Rishi Parashara who answers his questions.

³ Muir's Sanskrit Text Vol. I p. 227.

“The son of Gritsamada was Sunaka, from whom sprang the Saunakas, Brahmanas, Kshattriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras.”

“Vitatha was the father of five sons, Suhotra, Suhotri, Gaya, Garga, and the great Kapila. Suhotra had two sons, the exalted Kasaka, and King Gritsamati. The sons of the latter were Brahmans, Kshattriyas, and Vaisyas.”

The other version speaks of their being formed by Vishnu who sprang from Brahma and had become Prajapati Daksha and is as follows¹;

“Janmejaya² says: I have heard, o Brahman the (description of the) Brahma Yuga, the first of the ages. I desire also to be accurately informed both summarily, and in detail, about the age of the Kshattriyas, with its numerous observances, illustrated as it was by sacrifice, and described, as it has been by men skilled in the art of narration. Vaisamapayana replied: I shall describe to you that age revered for its sacrifices and distinguished for its various works -of liberality, as well as for its people. Those Munis of the size of a thumb had been absorbed by the Sun’s rays. Following a rule of life leading to final emancipation, practising unobstructed ceremonies, both in action and in abstinence from action constantly intent upon Brahma, united to Brahman as the highest object,— Brahmans glorious and sanctified in their conduct, leading a life of continence, disciplined by the knowledge of Brahman,— Brahmans complete in their observances, perfect in knowledge, and contemplative, when at the end of a thousand yugas, their majesty was full, these Munis became involved in the dissolution of the world. Then Vishnu sprung from Brahma, removed beyond the sphere of sense, absorbed in contemplation, became the Prajapati Daksha, and formed numerous creatures. The Brahmans, beautiful (or, dear to Soma), were formed from an imperishable (akshara); the Kshattriyas from a perishable (kshara), element; the Vaisyas from alteration; the Sudras from a modification of smoke. While Vishnu was thinking upon the castes (varna) Brahmans were formed with white, red, yellow, and blue colours (varanaih). Hence in the world men have become divided into castes, being of four descriptions, Brahmans, Kshattriyas Vaisyas, and Sudras, one in form, distinct in their duties, “two-footed, very wonderful, full of energy(?), skilled in expedients in all their occupations. Rites are declared to be prescribed by the Vedas for the three (highest) castes. By that contemplation practised by the being sprung from

¹ Muir’s Vol. I pp. 152-153

² The Harivamsa is a dialogue between Janmejaya and Vaishampayan.