

## INTRODUCTORY

### I

#### *Indian Philosophy of Salvation*

In the absence of definite data, the language of a book is generally taken as a guide in determining its age. Though a precise date cannot be fixed, the language of the Vedas and of the different Indian philosophies helps us to form an estimate of the age of the different treatises. This, however, is not an infallible guide, as many later treatises were framed in the language of the old, while many later productions were interpolated into old treatises by subsequent writers. For example, in the Vedas several varieties of language are noticeable in the Mantras and the Brāhmaṇas. In respect of authors, no precise conclusion can be arrived at from the names. There has certainly been more than one person of the name of Vyāsa or Yājñavalkya. Similarly, there has been more than one philosopher of the name of Patañjali. The name Patañjali seems to be a family surname as we come across it in different treatises dealing with different subjects emanating from different regions of India. We do not propose to discuss here the relative ages of the different philosophies of India but shall only confine ourselves to the examination of the different religious viewpoints prevalent in India, with reference especially to the evolution, development and influence of the philosophy of salvation in India.

The correct name of Hindu religion is Ārṣa religion or the religion of the Ṛṣis. Ārṣa religion is that which is not contrary to the teachings of the Vedas and that is known as true religion and nothing else. Buddhists also called the original Hindu Religion "Isi-mat" or "Ṛṣi-mat" or opinion of the Ṛṣis. The Vedas which are the basis of the Hindu religion are also based on the words of the Ṛṣis. The seers or composers of the Mantras of the Vedas were Ṛṣis. These Ṛṣis were not considered ordinary men. Those who had uncommon spiritual attainments were regarded as Ṛṣis. The term "Ṛṣis" was used in ancient times in a reverential sense. That is why the Buddhists called Buddha "Mahesi" or "Maharṣi". As a result, in that period men endowed with supernormal knowledge and powers were regarded as Ṛṣis. Even women and non-Brahmins endowed with such powers were regarded as Ṛṣis. The Scriptures "seen" or uttered, i.e. revealed by