

mind of man rises to the level of the deity whom he adores. The *sadhaka* should therefore be able to distinguish between the minor deities at various cosmic levels and Iswara, the Ultimate Reality.

The Devas are more evolved than men. Their span of embodied life being great, they are called the immortals; but they are also subject to birth and death. By worshipping them men may gain longevity and supernatural powers which are all hindrances to *bhakti*, *jnana* and *mukti*.

The *Pitrus* are the manes who form a region of their own. Sending holy thoughts for the welfare of the departed ancestors is good; but drifting into ancestor-worship is not desirable. Priestcraft usually encourages this weakness and credulity in man. The ancestors necessarily get changed with every new birth that man takes. Undue concern therefore for *Pitrus* is purposeless and detrimental to spiritual growth; it only adds to earthly attachment and bondage.

The *Bhūtās* are, in the scale of evolution, intermediate between men and Devas. By worshipping them the votaries may at best get some psychic power, leading to vanity and greater bondage to mundane life.

It is the worship of Iswara, the Supreme Reality, that is beneficial. It leads to prosperity, perfection and emancipation.

A dyer once had a unique method of colouring clothes. He had a solitary dye tub into which he would dip the cloths brought in by the customers and give whatever colour they wanted. Red, yellow, blue, green, purple — all these and more colours were produced from the same tub. An intelligent