

Jaimini the disciple of Vyása comes to the Rishi Márcandeya with a string of queries, or rather theological and moral problems, which he had not been able to solve for himself, and which consequently very much disturbed his inquisitive mind. The *first* question was, Why, or how, was Vásudeva, himself *nirguna*, or devoid of qualities, endued with humanity? The *second* related to the *polyandry* in the case of Draupadí, Why, or how, did Kṛishná, the daughter of Drupada, become the common wife of the five sons of Páṇḍu? The *third* had scarcely any pith in itself, though it no doubt represented a difficulty felt at the time by Vaishṇava Brahmins. Why, or how, did the great Baladeva who, be it known, was the *second* form of the Supreme Divinity in Bhágavata theology, expiate, by a pilgrimage, the sin of Brahminicide which he had committed under the influence of liquor? The *fourth* was still more insignificant. Why did the five sons of Draupadí meet with violent deaths, while yet unmarried and infants, as if they had no protectors?

When asked for a solution of these theological problems, Márcandeya told Jaimini he was about to engage in the celebration of certain religious solemnities, and had not the time to satisfy his friend's curiosity. But as the questions appeared to possess some gravity, the Rishi referred the querist to certain *oviparous* sages, inhabiting one of the peaks of the Vindya mountains, and competent, fully, to remove the doubts which distracted the mind of Jaimini. This reference to *oviparous* sages, however, served only to detain the Rishi Márcandeya, the longer, from his contemplated ceremonies,—longer, than the solution of the original questions, as given in the sequel, could have done. Curious as Jaimini was on the theological points already mooted, he