

sive experience, conducting its observations on a plan similar to that which we have exemplified in this Treatise.

In looking over Dr. MOSELEY'S Treatise on this occasion, I am sorry to discover that trusting too much to memory, in referring to his work in my last publication, I have given a very imperfect account of what he has communicated on the subject of Sol-Lunar Influence. But when he considers that by my inaccuracy I have deprived myself of the weight of his authority in supporting a proposition I was anxious to establish, he will be inclined to ascribe it to the cause I have stated. Dr. MOSELEY'S observations are contained in the *Conclusion* to his Treatise, between page 550 and 556: they confirm the power of Sol-Lunar Influence in Europe in a very unequivocal manner, and merit the attention of those who wish for information on this subject.---For the note to which this remark refers, vide page 212.

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## ON THE DUTIES

OF A

### *FATTHFUL HINDU WIDOW.*

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BY HENRY COLEBROOKE, ESQ.

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**W**HILE the light which the labours of the *Asiatic Society* have thrown on the sciences and religion of the *Hindus*, has drawn the attention of the literary world to that subject, the hint thrown out by the President for rejecting the authority of every publication preceding the translation of the

*Gitá*, does not appear to have made sufficient impression. Several late compilations in *Europe* betray great want of judgment in the selection of authorities; and their motley dress of true and false colours tends to perpetuate error; for this reason it seems necessary on every topic, to revert to original authorities for the purpose of cancelling error or verifying facts already published; and this object will no way be more readily attained than by the communication of detached essays on each topic, as it may present itself to the Orientalist in the progress of his researches.

FROM this or any other motive for indulgence, should the following authorities from *Sanscrit* books be thought worthy of a place in the next volume of the Society's Transactions, I shall be rewarded for the pains taken in collecting them.

“ HAVING first bathed, the widow, dressed in two  
 “ clean garments, and holding some *cúsa* grass, sips  
 “ water from the palm of her hand. Bearing *cúsa*  
 “ and *tilá* (a) on her hand, she looks towards the  
 “ east or north while the *Bráhmána* utters the mystic  
 “ word *Om*. Bowing to *Nerayana*, she next declares  
 “ (b): “ On this month, so named in such a *Pacsha*,  
 “ on such a *tit'hi*, I (naming herself and her (c)  
 “ family) that I may meet *ARUNDHATI*' (d) and re-  
 “ side in *Swarga*; that the years of my stay may be

(a) *Sesamum*.

(b) This declaration is called the *Sancalpa*.

(c) *Gótra*, the family or race. Four great families of *Bráhmanas* are now extant, and have branched into many distinct races. Since the memorable massacre of the *Cshatriyàs*, by *Parasu Ràma*, the *Cshatriyàs* describe themselves from the same *Gótras* as the *Bráhmanas*.

(d) Wife of *VASISHT'HA*.

“ numerous

“ numerous as the hairs on the human body ; that I  
 “ may enjoy with my husband the felicity of hea-  
 “ ven, and sanctify my paternal and maternal pro-  
 “ genitors, and the ancestry of my husband’s fa-  
 “ ther ; that lauded by the *Apsarases*, I may be hap-  
 “ py with my lord, through the reigns of fourteen  
 “ INDRAS ; that expiation be made for my husband’s  
 “ offences, whether he has killed a *Bráhmāna*,  
 “ broken the ties of gratitude, or murdered his friend,  
 “ thus I ascend my husband’s burning pile. I call  
 “ on you, ye guardians of the eight regions of the  
 “ world ! Sun and Moon ! Air, Fire, Æther (e),  
 “ Earth, and Water ! My own soul ! *Yama* ! Day,  
 “ Night, and Twilight ! And thou, Conscience, bear  
 “ witness : I follow my husband’s corpse on the fu-  
 “ neral pile (f).”

“ HAVING repeated the *Sancałpa*, she walks thrice  
 “ round the pile ; and the *Bráhmāna* utters the fol-  
 “ lowing *Mantras* :

“ OM ! Let these women, not to be widowed  
 “ good wives, adorned with collyrium, holding cla-  
 “ rified butter, consign themselves to the fire. Im-  
 “ mortal, not childless, nor husbandless, excellent,  
 “ let them pass into fire, whose original element is  
 “ water.

From the *Rigvéda*.

(e) *Acāsa*.

(f) In several publications the woman has been described as placing herself on the pile before it be lighted ; but the ritual quoted is conformable to the text of the *Bhāgavata*.

“ When the corpse is about to be consumed in the *Sahótaja*\*, the faithful wife who stood without, rushes on the fire.”

NA’ REDA TO YUDISHT’ HIRA.

\* Cabin of grass or leaves, sometimes erected on the funeral pile.  
 “ The Shed on the funeral pile of a MUNI’ is called PARN’ O’ TAJA  
 and SAHO’ TAJA.” See the vocabulary entitled HA’ RA’ BALI’.

“ OM !

“ OM! Let these wives, pure, beautiful, commit themselves to the fire, with their husband’s corpse.

*A Pauránica Mantra.*

“ WITH this benediction, and uttering the mystic *Namó Namah*, she ascends the flaming pile.”

WHILE the prescribed ceremonies are performed by the widow, the son, or other near kinsman, of the deceased, applies the first torch, with the forms directed for funeral rites in the *Gr̥hya* (g); by which his tribe is governed.

THE *Sancaipa* is evidently formed on the words of ANGIRAS’;

“ THE wife who commits herself to the flames with her husband’s corpse, shall equal ARUNDHATI’, and reside in *Swarga*;

“ ACCOMPANYING her husband, she shall reside so long in *Swarga* as are the thirty-five millions of hairs on the human body.

“ As the snake-catcher forcibly drags the serpent from his earth, so, bearing her husband from hell, with him she shall enjoy heavenly bliss.

“ DYING with her husband, she sanctifies her maternal and paternal ancestors; and the ancestry of him to whom she gave her virginity.

(g) Extracts or compilations from the sacred books, containing the particular forms for religious ceremonies, to be observed by the race or family for whom that portion of the sacred writings has been adopted, which composes their *Gr̥hya*. We learn from the *Bhāgavata*, that VYA’S A divided the *Vēda* into four (*Rich*, *Yajush*, *Sāman*, and *At’barvan*) or five, including the *Itihāsas* or other *Purānas* as one *Vēda*. PAILA accepted the *Rigvēda*; JAIMINI and CAVI, or SUCRA, the *Sāmarvēda*; BAIAMPAYANA learned the *Rajurvēda*; SAMUNTU, DARUNA, and others of the family of ANGIRAS, the *At’barvavēda*. “ My father (SUC’HA, son of VYA’S A speaks) selected the *Itihāsas* and *Purānas*; then the several *Rīsbis* chose the *Vēdas* variously (parts of each). Their pupils, the successors of their pupils, and the pupils of these, became followers of particular *Sāc’ha’s*.”

“ SUCH

“ SUCH a wife, adoring her husband, in celestial  
 “ felicity with him, greatest, most admired (*h*),  
 “ with him shall enjoy the delights of heaven while  
 “ fourteen INDRAS reign.

“ THOUGH her husband had killed a *Bráhmāna*,  
 “ (*i*) broken the ties of gratitude, or murdered his  
 “ friend, she expiates the crime.” ANGIRAS.

THE *Mantras* are adopted on the authority of the  
 BRAHME *Purana*.

“ WHILE the pile is preparing, tell the faithful  
 “ wife of the greatest duty of woman, *she is loyal and*  
 “ *pure who burns herself with her husband's corpse.*  
 “ Hearing this, fortified (in her resolution) and full  
 “ of affection, she completes the PITRI'MHEDA *Yaga*  
 “ (*k*) and ascends to *Swarga*.”

BRAHME *Purana*.

It is held to be the duty of a widow to burn herself  
 with her husband's corpse; but she has the alterna-  
 tive,

“ ON the death of her husband, to live as  
 “ *Brahmachari*, or commit herself to the flames.”

VISHNU.

THE austerity intended consists in chastity, and in  
 acts of piety and mortification.

(*b*) The word in the text is expounded “ lauded by the choirs  
 of heaven, *Gandharvas*,” &c.

(*i*) The commentators are at the pains of shewing that this ex-  
 piation must refer to a crime committed in a former existence; for  
 funeral rites are refused to the murderer of a *Bráhmāna*.

(*k*) Act of burning herself with her husband.

“ THE

“ THE use of *Tambūla*, dress, and feeding off ves-  
 “ sels of tutenague is forbidden to the *Yati* (l), the  
 “ *Brahmachàri*, and the widow.

PRACHE'TAS.

“ THE widow shall never exceed one meal a day,  
 “ nor sleep on a bed : if she do so, her husband falls  
 “ from *Swarga*.

“ SHE shall eat no other than simple food, and  
 “ (m) shall daily offer the *tarpana* of *cūsa*, *tila*,  
 “ and water (n).

“ In *Vaisāc'ha*, *Cārtica*, and *Māgha* she shall ex-  
 “ ceed the usual duties of ablution, alms, and pilgri-  
 “ mage, and often use the name of God in prayer.”

The *Smṛiti*.

AFTER undertaking the duty of a *Sati*, should  
 the widow recede, she incurs the penalties of  
 defilement.

“ IF the woman, regretting life, recede from the  
 “ pile, she is defiled; but may be purified by ob-  
 “ serving the fast called *Prājāpatya*” (o).

APASTAMBA.

THOUGH an alternative be allowed, the *Hindu* le-  
 gislators have shown themselves disposed to encou-  
 rage widows to burn themselves with their husband's  
 corpse.

(l) *Sannyast*.

(m) If she has no male descendants. See *Madana Parijata*,

(n) Oblations for the manes of ancestors to the third degree,  
 though not exclusively; for the prayer includes a general petition  
 for remoter ancestors. Yet daily oblations (*Vaisvédéva*) are sepa-  
 rately offered for ancestors beyond the third degree.

(o) It extends to twelve days; the first three, a spare meal may  
 be taken once in each day; the next three, once in each night; the  
 succeeding three days, nothing may be eaten but what is given  
 unsolicited; and the last three days are a rigid fast.

HA'RĪTA

HA'RÍTA thus defines a loyal wife : " She, whose  
 " sympathy feels the pains and joys of her husband;  
 " who mourns and pines in his absence, and dies  
 " when he dies, is a good and loyal wife.

*Hárita.*

" ALWAYS revere a loyal wife, as you venerate  
 " the *Dévatás*; for, by her virtues, the prince's em-  
 " pire may extend over the three worlds."

*MATSYA Puràna.*

" THOUGH the husband died unhappy by the dis-  
 " obedience of his wife: if from motives of love,  
 " disgust of the world, fear of living unprotected,  
 " or sorrow, she commit herself to the flames, she  
 " is entitled to veneration."

*Mahá Bhárata.*

OBSEQUIES for suicides are forbidden; but the  
*Rigvèda* expressly declares, " that the loyal wife who  
 " burns herself, shall not be deemed a suicide. When  
 " a mourning of three days has been completed, the  
 " *Srâddha* is to be performed\*. This appears from  
 " the prayer for the occasion, directed in the *Rig-*  
 " *vèda.*"

REGULARLY the chief mourner for the husband  
 and for the wife, would, in many cases, be distinct  
 persons: but the *BHAVISHYA Puràna* provides, that

" WHEN the widow consigns herself to the same  
 " pile with the corpse of the deceased, whoever per-  
 " forms the *Criyá* for her husband, shall perform it  
 " for her."

\* The shortness of the mourning is honourable; the longest  
 mourning is for the lowest tribe.

" As

IES  
 and feeding off ves.  
 the *Yati* (1), the  
 PRACHE'TAS.  
 meal a day,  
 husband falls  
 food, and  
*cúsa, tila,*  
 shall ex-  
 and pilgri-  
 prayer."  
 the *Smr'i ti.*  
 i, should  
 penalties of  
 de from the  
 ified by ob-  
 PASTAMBA.  
 the *Hindu* le-  
 d to encou-  
 ir husband's  
 ana *Parijata,*  
 the third degree,  
 general petition  
 (*ddéva*) are sepa-  
 e.  
 spare meal may  
 each night; the  
 at what is given  
 HA'RÍTA

“ As to the ceremonies from the lighting of the  
 “ funeral pile to the *Pinda*; whoever lights the pile,  
 “ shall also offer the *Pinda*.” VA'YU *Puràna*.

IN certain circumstances the widow is disqualified  
 for this act of a *Sati*.

“ SHE who has an infant child, or is pregnant, or  
 “ whose pregnancy is doubtful, or who is unclean,  
 “ may not, O princess! ascend the funeral pile.

“ So said NA'REDA to the mother of SAGARA.”

“ The mother of an infant shall not relinquish the  
 “ care of her child to ascend the pile; nor shall one  
 “ who is unclean (from a periodical cause) or whose  
 “ time for purification after child-birth is not passed,  
 “ nor shall one who is pregnant, commit herself to the  
 “ flames (q). But the mother of an infant may, if  
 “ the care of the child can be otherwise provided.”

VRIHASPATI.

IN the event of a *Bràhmana* dying in a distant  
 country, his widow is not permitted to burn herself.

“ A *Viprà* or *Bràhmana* may not ascend a second  
 “ pile.” GO'TAMA.

BUT with other casts, this proof of fidelity is not  
 precluded by the remote decease of the husband, and  
 is called *Anugamana*.

“ THE widow, on the news of her husband's dying  
 “ in a distant country, should expeditiously burn  
 “ herself: so shall she obtain perfection.” VYA'SA.

(q) It has been erroneously asserted, that a wife, pregnant at the  
 time of her husband's death, may burn herself after delivery.  
*Hindu* authorities positively contradict it. In addition to the text  
 it may be remarked, that it is a maxim, “ What was prevented in  
 “ its season, may not afterwards be resumed.”

“ SHOULD



“ SHOULD the husband die on a journey, holding his *sandals* to her breast, let her pass into the flames.”

BRAHME *Puràna*.

The expression is not understood of *sandals* exclusively: for thus USANAS or SUCRA.

“ EXCEPT a *Viprà*, the widow may take any thing that belonged to her husband, and ascend the pile.

“ BUT a *Viprà* may not ascend a second pile; this practice belongs to other tribes.” SUCRA.

IN two of the excepted cases, a latitude is allowed for a widow desirous of offering this token of loyalty, by postponing the obsequies of the deceased: for VYA'SA directs that, “ If the loyal wife be distant less than the journey of a day, and desire to die with her husband, his corpse shall not be burnt until she arrive. And the *Bhavishya Puràna* permits that the corpse be kept one night, if the third day of her uncleanness had expired when her husband died.”

WITH respect to a circumstance of time (*r*), which might on some occasions be objected, the commentators obviate the difficulty, by arguing from several texts, “ that to die with or after her husband, is for a widow *Naimittica* (*s*) and *Càmya* (*t*), and consequently allowable in the intercalary month;” for DACSHA teaches, that “ whenever an act both *Naimittica* and *Càmya* is in hand, it is then to be performed without consulting season.” They are at the trouble of removing another difficulty:

(*r*) Occasional observances are omitted on intercalary days.

(*s*) Eventual; incumbent when a certain event happens.

(*t*) Optional; done for its reward.

“ DHRITARA'SHTRA, in the state of *Samadhí*,  
 “ quitted his terrestrial form to proceed to the MUC-  
 “ TI, or *beatitude*, which awaited him. When the  
 “ leaves and wood were lighted to consume the corpse,  
 “ his wife GA'NDHA'RI' was seen to pass into the  
 “ flames: Now also, a husband dying at *Cási* and  
 “ attaining *Mucti*, it becomes his widow to follow  
 “ the corpse in the flames.”

IT were superfluous to pursue commentators through all their frivolous distinctions and laborious illustrations on latent difficulties.

ALL the ceremonies essential to this awful rite are included in the instructions already quoted. But many practices have been introduced, though not sanctioned by any ritual. A widow who declares her resolution of burning herself with the corpse, is required to give a token of her fortitude: and it is acknowledged, that one who receded after the ceremony commenced, would be compelled by her relations to complete the sacrifice. This may explain circumstances described by some who have witnessed the melancholy scene.

OTHER ceremonies noticed in the relations of persons who have been present on such occasions, are directed in several rituals:

“ ADORNED with all jewels, decked with *minium*  
 “ and other customary ornaments, with the box of  
 “ *minium* in her hand, having made *pújá*, or adoration  
 “ to the *Dévátás*, thus reflecting that *this life is*  
 “ *nought: my lord and master to me was all*, — she  
 “ walks round the burning pile: she bestows jewels  
 “ on the *Brahmanas*, comforts her relations, and  
 “ shows

“ shows her friends the attentions of civility; while  
 “ calling the Sun and elements to witness, she dis-  
 “ tributes *minium* at pleasure; and having repeated  
 “ the *Sancalpa*, proceeds into the flames: there em-  
 “ bracing the corpse, she abandons herself to the fire,  
 “ calling *Satya! Satya! Satya!*”

THE bye-standers throw on butter and wood: for  
 this, they are taught, that they acquire merit ex-  
 ceeding ten million fold, the merit of an *Aswamedha*,  
 or other great sacrifice. Even those who join the  
 procession from the house of the deceased to the  
 funeral pile, for every step are rewarded as for an  
*Aswamedha*. Such *indulgences* are promised by grave  
 authors: they are quoted in this place only as they  
 seem to authorize an inference, that happily the  
 martyrs of this superstition have never been numerous.  
 It is certain that the instances of the widow's sacri-  
 fices are now rare: on this it is only necessary to ap-  
 peal to the recollection of every person residing in  
*India*, how few instances have actually occurred  
 within his knowledge. And, had they ever been  
 frequent, superstition would hardly have promised  
 its indulgences to spectators.