

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1318092

# The Adepts

In The Eastern Esoteric Tradition

By **MANLY PALMER HALL**



Part One

**The Light of the Vedas**

BF  
1999  
H312  
pt.1



Theology Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California





**THE LIGHT OF THE VEDAS**



BF-  
1999  
H312  
pt.1

# THE ADEPTS

In the Eastern Esoteric Tradition

By MANLY PALMER HALL

---

THE LIGHT OF THE VEDAS

---

ILLUSTRATED

FIRST PRINTING

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY, INC.  
3341 GRIFFITH PARK BOULEVARD, LOS ANGELES 27, CALIF.

*Copyright 1952*  
*By MANLY PALMER HALL*  
*For permission to copy or translate,*  
*address the author.*

This work is a section of a comprehensive survey of the Adept tradition, which will be complete in fifteen parts. It is issued in the present form because of the unprecedented rise in the cost of book-production. Only in this way can the material be made available to students at a reasonable price.



# THE LIGHT OF THE VEDAS

## INTRODUCTION

Numerous references occur throughout the religious literature of the world to an order of enlightened human beings who are the custodians of the essential wisdom of the race. During the medieval revival of the Hermetic tradition in Europe, the higher initiates of this secret Fraternity were called Adepts, and it has seemed reasonable and advisable to preserve this term and title. Modern writers have gathered a quantity of reference material dealing with the Adept tradition, but no work is yet available which may be considered as a systematic outline of the historical side of this inquiry. Scattered intimations are not sufficient to justify the Adept concept. The existence of advanced spiritual types already functioning within and through the body of organized human society is taken for granted by the members of many religious groups. Even though the very existence of Adept-teachers has been artfully concealed, it is not overly difficult to restore the grand theme from available landmarks.

Psychologists are inclined to explain the Adept concept as an extension and refinement of the folk-hero idea originating within human consciousness. What the heroic self is to the individual, the school of the Adepts (the heroic race of the Greeks) is to the collective. Convinced that he has unsuspected potentials within himself, and his convictions sustained by the historical panorama of human progress, man finds no difficulty in accepting a doctrine which teaches that some of his own kind have already advanced beyond the limitations imposed by undeveloped

Methodist World Service Fund

21. Religion

faculties and unexplored resources of consciousness. It is impossible to deny that great sages, the founders of religions, and lesser mystics and saints have discovered within themselves extraordinary sources of spiritual insight and courage. To reject inspired leadership is to undermine the noblest convictions of the race. The materialistic effort to explain all mystical revelations as forms of hallucination is undemonstrable and unsatisfactory.

The universe bears witness to sovereign intelligence manifesting through the constant unfoldment of living organisms from within themselves and according to immutable laws. The supreme source of consciousness, intelligence, and energy the ancients called God. In attempting to organize the God-idea, it was necessary to clothe it in familiar attributes. As time went on, the idea itself was submerged, and Deity was regarded as a vast personality subjected to all the limitations imposed by interpretation. From early contemplation was evolved a triune concept of existence consisting of God, the world, and man. God was remote, intangible, and substantially unknowable; the world was the theater of divine manifestation; and man, the noblest production of the evolutionary processes. At a very early time the human mind found it necessary to populate the qualitative interval between God and man. Familiar examples indicated both the need and the solution.

The nation or kingdom was not composed of merely the ruler and his subjects. The head of the state was powerless without a governing body to administer his will and his laws. Antiquity favored the monarchical form of political administration. By virtue of his internal resources, man was entitled to be governed constitutionally. It was the privilege of the human being to have a voice in the management of his own affairs, but he also required leadership in those larger issues which were beyond his personal experience. It thus came about that religious and philosophical systems envisioned Deity as operating through

orders of tutelary divinities, themselves conditioned aspects of the ultimate sovereignty. The interval between God and man was then filled by descending orders or hierarchies of intelligences, such as were described by St. Paul as the thrones, dominions, and principalities.

At the same time, humanity accepted the challenge of this interval and sought to ascend, through disciplines of spiritual development, toward conscious knowledge of the Hierarchy.\* The only means available for such an ascent were the apperceptive powers locked within the human compound. The Mystery systems of initiation were organized to teach the science of human regeneration by which the inner faculties of the soul could be stimulated and unfolded according to the laws governing such processes in Nature. These sacred institutions flourished collectively for thousands of years, and those who attained mastery were called initiates. These were not merely persons who had received an exalted kind of knowledge; their advancement was the result of the release of internal powers of God-knowing. Through these initiate-teachers, the existence of the Adept tradition was gradually revealed to the world. The whole doctrine is suspended from one primary assumption; namely, that it is possible for the creature to know the Creator. It was further held that unless such a possibility existed the human state was purposeless.

The Adepts are sometimes referred to as a race inhabiting a continent between heaven and earth. This does not mean that the secret Fraternity is a separate creation, but a foreshadowing of the human destiny. Ultimately, the working of natural law will release the extrasensory perceptions in the majority of mankind. The initiate-teachers are therefore referred to as Elder Brothers, who have achieved to a superior state because of dedication to the noblest ideals which can inspire mortal conduct. In-

---

\* When capitalized, Hierarchy represents the Adept Government of the world.

crease of knowledge brings skill, which the word *adept* implies. The miraculous accounts, which are an essential part of the Adept tradition, bear witness to increase of internal wisdom. The Adept is not a magician, but a sage. He does not dominate natural law or violate its patterns. He simply uses the resources of Nature which his inner consciousness has made available.

As the Adept tradition descended to the modern world through the migrations of the Aryan peoples, it is fitting that the first section of the present work should begin with the religious mysteries of Hinduism. The degree of indebtedness to the Eastern wisdom will be more apparent as the story unfolds. There are unfamiliar names and strange terms, but these are defined as used and should not discourage the reader. The Rishis of old Aryavata were the first Aryan Adepts, and from them came the wonderful doctrines and teachings which the East honors today as the Light of the Vedas.

MANLY PALMER HALL

May 1952, Los Angeles, California

# THE ADEPTS

## THE LIGHT OF THE VEDAS

### *The Rise of Brahmanism*

The name *Dravid*, or *Dravidian*, is generally applied to the indigenous non-Aryan peoples who anciently inhabited that part of India which extends from the Vindhya to Cape Comorin. According to the older teachings, the dark-skinned Dravidians belong to the Atlantean distribution of populations. As the result of the early Aryan migrations from the north or possibly due to pressures within their own culture, the Dravids, who are of Turanian stock, departed from the region of the Punjab and the Ganges and withdrew to the central and southern provinces of India, where they now reside. The Dravidians still number approximately 47,000,000, and speak eleven distinct dialects. They exercise considerable moral influence, and their rights and privileges are traditional. The Dravidians did not have a caste system until the Brahmans settled among them. Prior to the Aryan infiltration, they recognized only two classes: patricians and plebians. The kindly ministrations of the Buddhists and Jains helped to overcome the antagonism which the Dravidians felt for the Aryans. A kind of cultural amalgamation was accomplished, and many earlier disputes were arbitrated. The pre-Aryan Dravids seemed to have possessed the Akkadian lunar calendar and a mythology of thirty-three deities belonging to an astrotheological pantheon.

From the ancient remains and the surviving institutions of these peoples, it appears that the Dravidians combined

primitive usages with a comparatively high degree of cultural skill. They practiced totemism, constructed monolithic monuments, and recognized kinship in a female line of descent. They also produced an extensive and important literature, and were advanced in the arts. Actually, the old Dravidians were derived from at least four racial stocks, including pre-Aryan. It was among this heterogeneous population that the Brahmanic religious philosophy arose. The earliest Hindu writings reveal the transition from the Dravidian worship of elements and the phenomena associated with the processes of generation. The Aryan racial factors gained domination over this complex of primitive peoples, and determined the direction of the cultural motion.

Summarizing the importance of Brahmanic learning, H. de Wilman-Grabowska says: "Despite the vicissitudes of an eventful history, it was, as a matter of fact, Brahmanism that made the Hindus out of the Aryan, the Dravidian, and the Autochthonous Indians; it was Brahmanism that gave India its moral and social unity and in some sort makes a nation of that country." \* Brahmanism is a system of religious rites and institutions founded and unfolded by the Brahmans, the sacerdotal class of the Aryan-Hindus. Apparently the term *brahman* originally meant a *priest*, or *one who practiced the observances prescribed for followers of Brahma*. When this caste attained dominion over the Aryan peoples of India, its sphere of influence gradually enlarged until it became a ruling hierarchy. As the political and social pre-eminence of Brahmanism came to be generally acknowledged, its religious philosophy was expanded and refined, resulting in what is called the Brahmanical period of Hindu culture.

Sir Monier-Williams traced the progress of Indian religious thought through three successive stages, which he called Vedism, Brahmanism, and Hinduism. In this ar-

---

\* See *Asiatic Mythology*.

rangement, Vedism is the period of revelation, Brahmanism, the period of organization, and Hinduism, the period of interpretation. The unfoldment of the Indian religious conviction was influenced by the conditions which prevailed during the important formative period. When the Aryas, or Aryans, descended into the Indo-Gangetic plain, they created a protective racial and cultural barrier between themselves and the Dravidians. In order to prevent the submergence of their racial identity, the Aryans gradually integrated and formed an exclusive social group. While such a program is never completely successful, it supplied the motive to those parts of the Vedic texts which emphasize the preservation of the Aryan bloodstream. The early Aryan tribes seem to have recognized three classes: priests, warriors, and agriculturists. These rallied around their religio-philosophical focus, and decreed that the non-Aryan population should be excluded from the rights and privileges of the favored classes. This concept intensified with the passing of time, resulting in the caste system with its rigid observances. The caste distinctions were further extended until the Brahmans, or priestly caste, acquired powers and privileges never equaled by any other sacerdotal class in the history of human society.

A survey of the findings and opinions of Western historians indicate a state of general confusion and a surprising lack of chronological data. It seems that the pageant of Indian civilization must be examined unhistorically. While most religious systems present this difficulty, Hinduism is the classical example. Various explanations have been advanced to explain the almost complete lack of factual chronology. It has been suggested that the Hindus had no adequate written language prior to the 5th century B. C. and were themselves unable to arrange their oral tradition sequentially. But, as usual, this hypothesis conflicts with what appears to be contrary evidence. The simplest way of approaching the Hindu tradition is to borrow the familiar opening line of the fairy tale: "Once upon a time . . . ."

The Hindu compilers and commentators were addicted to the Asiatic instinct for fantasy. Clinging to the astro-mathematical formulas of the old Brahmans, they arrived at chronological conclusions of such incredible proportions that they amazed even themselves. These findings are rejected completely by Occidental scholars, who take refuge in the conviction that Aryan culture began in the 2nd millennium B. C. It is only fair to state, however, that, according to the great Indian sages, primitive Brahmanism, from which the more refined system developed, came into existence in north-central Asia at least 100,000 years ago, perhaps even a 1,000,000 years ago. Nothing will be gained by entering into the languishing debate over the antiquity of the Vedas. Dates will be inserted where they seem reasonable and there is some agreement among the authorities.

As the present outline is concerned primarily with the descent of the Adept tradition, it is not advisable to attempt a critical analysis of the Brahmanical religion. So remarkable is the doctrine and so profound and comprehensive is its unfoldment that it cannot be satisfactorily summarized. Yet, without some framework derived from the grand scheme of Hinduism, it is impossible to explain the Invisible Government of the World. The Adept concept as it is held today in various parts of the world is essentially Brahmanical, and is justified and clarified by the schools of Indian philosophy. Those students seeking additional data should consult the Upanishads, the Brahmanas, and the Puranas. The principal ideas contained in this mass of religious literature reappear in Buddhism and its teachings concerning the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats.

The old Hindu religious poets were aware that their ethical, moral, and social instructions were dependent for justification upon their theocosmological researches. Without some comprehension of the nature of the ever-existing principle, the deities which emerge from it, the formation



of the universe, the generation of life upon the earth, and the spiritual potentials of man himself, the statutes and institutes of formal religion were shadows without substance. It was customary, therefore, to introduce the collections of religious writings and even the great historical and literary epics with abridged versions of the sacred theogonic and anthropological accounts. By this means the principal matters discussed in a particular work are placed in their proper relationship to the grand theme. It seems wise to follow this plan insofar as it relates direct-



—From *Qabbalah*, by Myer

#### THE UNIVERSAL TREE OF THE HINDUS

ly to the Adept tradition. It should be remembered, however, that the descent of the Adept hierarchy is itself only one phase of the Hindu universe-concept. It is concerned with the destiny of the human creature and is the Brahmanic Master Key to the mystery of the evolutionary processes revealing themselves through mankind.

Most ancient peoples regarded analogy as the most useful and simplest of the mental processes. This law is stated in the Hermetic axiom: "As above, so below." The divine will operates through a master pattern, and creation is the statement of this pattern. The universe unfolds through an infinite succession of restatements by the divine mind of the basic pattern on different planes or levels. Thus worlds, races, institutions, and all corporeal bodies are microcosms or miniatures of the original design. They differ in magnitude (size) and multitude (number of their parts) but not in essential nature. To comprehend

one is to understand the formulas of all. From the least to the greatest, all structures reveal the Master Plan, and the Plan itself reveals the Planner. In this orderly scheme of things, there is no place for anything illogical or unreasonable.

The Brahmanas examined the body of God (the creation) strictly in terms of anatomy, physiology, and biology. They went further, however; for, realizing that man had a mind and a consciousness operating usually through the mental faculties, they turned their analogical key in the lock and opened the door which led from the visible universe of effects to the invisible universe of causes. They established the primary creative impulse as occurring on the plane of divine consciousness, the unfoldment of created things upon the plane of divine mind, and the bodies of created things upon the plane of the divine form.

Over the vast project they placed a Hierarchy of administering powers, themselves attributes of the Supreme Being. This Hierarchy likewise descended through the levels of creation, formation, and generation, and its lower termination was the Guru, the venerated teacher or sage. The Guru, surrounded by his disciples, is a microcosm of universal wisdom, serving all life and bringing it to the fulfillment of illumination. Thus the university is the microcosm of cosmic wisdom, the temple, the microcosm of universal consciousness, and the governments of nations, microcosms of the assembly of deities upon Meru, the World Mountain. The Eternal Power in its aspect of the Eternal Teacher ensouls the concept of learning. The body of learning is science; the mind of learning is philosophy; the spirit of learning is religion. These are the original castes or classes of early Aryanism. The scientists and artists are the Vaisyas, the husbandmen of the gods. The philosophers are the Kshatriyas, the warriors—that is, the defenders of truth. The religionists are the Brahmanas, for in the order of learning spiritual acquirements are the most significant. Religion is not merely addiction to a

theological system, but is a spiritual science, the summation of all knowledge and an exact discipline of the unfoldment of human consciousness toward the substance of truth itself.

In the Brahmanic anthropological concept, the human life-wave is divided into seven great racial streams. Modern Theosophical thinkers call these races the Polarian, Hyperborean, Lemurian, Atlantean, and Aryan. The sixth and seventh races have not yet been differentiated, for they belong to the future. More technically, the Polarian, Hyperborean, and most of the Lemurian divisions are referred to as species to signify that they had not attained the state of true human creatures. The fourth, or Atlantean race, mingled with the remnants of the later Lemurians, constituted the Atlantean distribution of peoples. In the Brahmanic anthropology, the Atlantean culture was the dividing point between the involutory and evolutionary arcs of human development.

The Cult of the Dying God, which is one of the more important landmarks in the descent of the esoteric tradition, is believed to have originated in Atlantis. It was therefore present among the Dravidians at the time of the Aryan invasion. Traces of a doctrine of a savior-divinity who took upon himself the sins of the world for the redemption of his children are to be found in all the major divisions of the Aryan religion. It survived the collapse of paganism to form the central conviction of Adventism and the Messianic dispensation. In the older doctrine, the divine victim voluntarily died to save his world. He took flesh, was born in the likeness of a man, and suffered and died for the salvation of all men. In the Esoteric Schools, disciples sought liberation from the illusion of the world, not merely for selfish purposes, but in order that through them the great "penitent" might be released. Evolutionary procedure accomplished two purposes simultaneously. It brought mankind gradually to the fulfillment of its own

destiny, and at the same time liberated the "savior" who had identified himself with the human life principle.

The deities of Brahmanism are the personified attributes of universal consciousness and universal mind. The theology unfolds in the higher dimensions of the sphere of



—From *The Path*, (Feb. 1887)

#### BRAHMA AND PARASHAKTI

The conscious wisdom of the creative power is here represented as uniting with its female aspect, surrounded by the veil of mystery.

causes. The gods—that is, the extensions of the divine thought—engender organisms and then ensoul them. The material world with its infinite diversity is the Vahan, or vehicle of the modes of divine realization. Consciousness is one in substance, and many in manifestation. It is all-pervading and, by a process of meditation, images within itself the objective cosmos. The world is therefore sustained by will and Yoga. The universal power experiences the creations which it first envisions. To experience these productions of its own thinking, the power accepts volun-

tarily the reality of the mental images, identifies itself with them, and permits itself to be absorbed into them. This continual process of visualizing and identifying results in the complete emergence of the pattern and the complete submergence of the principle. The deity is released by the reversal of the procedure, which is accomplished by the orders of creation themselves conquering gradually by inner strength—the Light of the Logos—the dream appearances, which are real only until they are understood. The work of the Great School is to acquaint the divine power locked in the illusion with its own self-appointed way of liberation.

Assuming that the universe was a compound in which the all-pervading was locked within the all-pervaded, the Brahmanic scholar divided learning into three parts. The first dealt with the vast procedure by which the gods (the principles of consciousness) descended into the illusion which they themselves had fashioned; second, the present condition of the compound as revealed through animate and inanimate creatures, especially the most symbolically significant of these creatures—man himself; third, the divine sciences which reveal how, in the future, consciousness can be disentangled from form by revising the process which originally caused the entanglement. This method of releasing consciousness (the gods) from the state of form-awareness through self-awareness to the ultimate state of unconditioned realization is the secret science of the Adepts.

### *The Adept Hierarchy*

There is much traditional support for the conviction that the *Rig Veda* is the oldest surviving religious book of the world. Although the text has passed through several recensions, the ancient doctrine which it unfolds reveals the fundamentals of the religio-philosophical system of the first Aryas. Around the central mass of the *Rig Veda* has

accumulated numerous commentaries and glosses which form together a wonderful heritage of wisdom. It is believed by Hindu scholars that the Vedic literature was given by the gods through initiate-teachers to guide the conduct of the race that was born in the highlands of the Himalayas. Agni, the god of the secret fire, rode through space in a chariot drawn by seven horses. The shining steeds were the Rishis, who guarded and directed the motion of the esoteric tradition.

From their sacred birthland, the Aryas extended themselves gradually to become, in the course of ages, the dominant people of the earth. In their long migrations, the Aryan tribes carried with them their laws and doctrines. They not only created systems of theology, but also expanded essential knowledge, organizing schools of arts and sciences. The remnants of older races which came under Aryan influence were indoctrinated with the Vedic wisdom, resulting in countless reformations and re-interpretations of older beliefs. The original Aryas were of Atlantean stock, probably descending from the old Semite branch of the Atlantean racial distribution. The differentiation occurred when Vaivasvata Manu overshadowed or ensouled one of the old clans or brood families, ordaining that it should become the vehicle of a new race.

Considered esoterically, all the Aryan peoples are parts of one psychobiological organism. Division took place within the race, but the race itself was not divided. It remained "set apart" for a high destiny. The first division or branch of the Aryas was the Hindu. It is not quite correct to think of the Aryan-Hindus as a separate subrace; actually they were the first emergence of a pattern which was established in and through them. The sages and saints who appeared at the dawn of Hinduism were the fathers or teachers of the entire racial motion. As the tree is concealed within its seed, so the old Hindus were called the progenitors, for nothing could come to birth which was not bestowed through them. From the Hindu, therefore,

came forth the other subraces, as the six continents of the earth emerged from the seventh Imperishable Island. Each subdivision as it emerged carried with it the Light of the Veda. The Aryan religions, therefore, are not separate revelations, but degrees of the unfoldment of one vast spiritual concept.

It is more or less unfortunate to apply limited terms and names to the branches of the Aryan race, but for convenience it is necessary to identify them in some way. The chemistries of time and environment and the changes which came from admixtures with surviving Lemurian and Atlantean stocks produced the vehicles required for the manifestation of the various potencies of the Aryan life-stream. The second subrace has been called the Aryan-Semite, and its cultural heritage has descended through the civilization of the Near East, including the Moorish and the Arabian. Very little is known of the ancient history of these groups. Nor should it be assumed that the subracial stock always occupied the region in which it is now found. The third branch of the Aryas is the Iranian, and its indebtedness to the Vedas is revealed through the *Zend-Avesta* and the ministries of the several Zoroasters. The modern Parsis are the keepers of the fire mysteries of ancient Iran.

The fourth subrace is usually called the Celtic, but it must be considered as embracing the Greco-Roman culture-groups. A study of the Orphic doctrines reveals the Greek indebtedness to ancient India. The fifth subrace is known as the Anglo-Saxon-Teuton, the distribution now dominating world affairs. The grand motion revealed through this descent of subracial groups is from the religious, through the philosophic, to the scientific. There has been a broad emphasis upon barter and exchange, and the Aryan will be remembered as the merchant-prince. Most of his advancements have been motivated by transportation and communication, and wherever he has gone he has created marts and trading centers. As a result of

his dominant pressures, he has brought into manifestation a complex of political systems and problems. Today his spiritual heritage is so completely submerged beneath his material activities that he has all but forgotten his birth-right. He is still bound, however, by an array of interlocking sacred books, and, although plagued by countless sectarian differences, he worships under a variety of names the gods of the first Aryas.

In his long and involved racial migrations, the Aryan has carried within him the Adept tradition. Wherever the rays of the Vedic Light have touched, Secret Schools have flourished. The Philosophic Empire was built around this spiritual heritage. One luminous doctrine has bestowed all the arts, sciences, crafts, and trades now practiced by the Aryans. The truths anciently guarded in shrines and sanctuaries are now locked in the racial subconscious. The Aryan, seeking within himself the keys to his own origin and destiny, contacts the stream of revelation which flows from Vaivasvata Manu. As the visible government of the Aryans is verging toward the World Commonwealth, which is no more than the reunion of scattered fragments, so the internal experience of the truth seeker discovers the one Light locked in the bloodstream of the race.

It was revealed to the Aryan ancestors that the administration of the racial unfoldment was in the keeping of certain custodians. These Adept-princes were once lords over the rulers ordained by divine right. Sometimes called the Trans-Himalayan Brotherhood, these Adepts are required by the law of the Manu to guide the race without interfering with the right of the human being to learn through experience. Like the humblest creature within their spiritual domain, the Adepts must keep the universal laws and are servants rather than Masters of the Great Plan. As the wise parent protects his child but does not overshadow his individuality, so the Hierarchy can only operate in accordance with the conscious will of the gov-



erned. When man seeks light, the Hierarchy reveals itself, but until such time it cannot force growth.

The Manu gave the laws for the regulation of public conduct, and the Hierarchy reveals the divine plan for personal unfoldment. Hundreds of sects and schools have stood as gates leading into an unknown world. Those who pass through these gates discover the one religion and the one discipline. The Eastern sage and the Western saint walk the same path, although some have not discovered the identity of their methods. The Greeks and the Chinese, the Egyptians and the Persians, the Mohammedans and Jews share together the secret doctrine of the Aryans. The road from diversity to unity, from illusion to reality is always and everywhere the way of Yoga. The world has been deceived by difference of language and has mistaken words for ideas. The great teachers who have founded the several religions which now flourish among the Aryan subraces are all to be considered as Adepts or as saintly persons who have received the Adept tradition as an experience of inner consciousness. Some have not known the source of their inspiration, and therefore could not state the unity of the doctrine. Each came in a time and to a group which urgently required spiritual guidance.

Apart from the purposes of the Great School, there have appeared leaders on the intellectual level who had not attained internal serenity. Reasoning only according to their own prejudices and opinions, they launched upon the world materialistic codes of behavior which survived because they catered to personal selfishness and ignorance. Such doctrines, though made respectable by traditional acceptance, cannot be reconciled with the Aryan wisdom. To follow in such schools is to become progressively more confused, until the heart and mind undergo a revulsion and discard that which is internally unacceptable. No matter how long the mind follows false teachings, the inner self is not completely contaminated. There are always emergencies which test the sufficiency of belief.

The gradual emphasis upon creeds and denominations marks a passing phase in human growth. The illusion must be met, experienced, and overcome. Regardless of intermediate circumstances, the Aryan returns sadder and wiser to the life-way of the progenitors. Over these inevitables, man has no authority; he has only the right to seek, discover, and accept. The primordial wisdom-religion divided into two great branches and produced the Eastern and Western Mystery Schools. For a long time these sacred institutions initiated qualified disciples and taught the sacred sciences. The Eastern branch of the Mysteries was like the fabled Banyan tree, the branches of which took root in the earth and became new trees. It was thus that Buddhism accomplished needed reforms in India, and the teachings of Lao-tse and Confucius advanced the spiritual culture of China. The Western Mysteries flourished in Chaldea and had a splendid revival in Egypt. The Egyptians combined qualities of the first Aryan subrace and the advanced Atlantean stock. After the failure of the reforms of Akhenaten, Egyptian religion fell into evil times. The esoteric tradition was re-established in Greece, and carried to the Near East by Moses, who was a priest of the Egyptians.

The Greek Mysteries are the most celebrated in history, but when they were transplanted in Rome they languished and finally ceased. In the meantime, both the Eastern and Western Schools produced initiated philosophers whose systems gradually took over the burden of mental leadership. The Adept-initiates Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle were actually transmitters of the Vedic doctrine. Pythagoras, of course, had direct contact with India, and Plato attempted a similar journey, but was prevented by wars raging along the route. The place of idealistic philosophy in the pattern was highly significant. It formed a middle ground between the profane world and the initiate system. It drew those who were dimly conscious of a better destiny and invited them to prepare their hearts and minds for

internal illumination. In this way the inner life of each truth seeker became a sanctuary in which he could attain initiation, even though the physical institutions had decayed.

It was in the Near East where Asia and Europe met that the alchemy of the Mysteries produced such groups as the Cabalists, the Neoplatonists, and the Gnostics. These were early attempts to bridge the religious hemispheres and re-establish the unity of the esoteric tradition. Much was accomplished, but the world was not ready to perpetuate the institutions which then came into existence. They have survived, however, through the names and teachings of their illustrious leaders. Fragments of many systems, including the Egyptians, the Greek, and the Chaldean, are evident in the early structure of Christianity. This heritage has never been publicly acknowledged—a grievous error, which may yet bring tragic consequences. The opportunity for the proclamation of the Universal Doctrine was lost, and the Keepers of the Flame were forced to retire and take refuge in secret assemblies. From these hidden but powerful groups, a constant outpouring of mysticism continued to embarrass the orthodox.

The term *yoga* seems to strike the keynote of the Aryan wisdom. All true unfoldment is toward unity. The journey is accomplished by a sequence of revelations. The inclusiveness of the divine plan refutes the exclusiveness of benighted purpose. Today there is talk of one world, one religion, one humanity, one universal need, and one divine power. The increasing realization of this pressing requirement for the acceptance of oneness is the path of Yoga. The constant restatement of both the need and the means for meeting the requirement is not the result of formal teaching, but of something which has been called intuition or instinct. It is the inward apperception of the divine purpose. The level of conviction that must be reached in order to experience this conclusion is the “knowing of the Veda.” Behind the books and Scriptures of the Aryas is

the unwritten law. This is the divine plan existing in the divine mind. If the books were all lost or destroyed, the Veda could not perish. It is the legal soul of the Aryans, the laws to be known through the oracle of the heart and to be revealed through the priesthood of the mental faculties.

The concept of the Veda thus receives a newer and larger interpretation. The modern scientist depends upon immutable laws in the development of his formulas. He accepts these with the same unquestioning, even unthinking, faith as that demonstrated by the layman when he arranges his activities to meet the phenomena of day and night. On the level of the divine plan, the Veda stands for immutable principles forever restating themselves. The first Scriptures testified to these immutables and were not the substance of things hoped for by visionaries and mystics. As scientists accomplish their ends by using the laws of the universe, so the Adepts achieve their purposes by understanding and directing the energy of the Veda. To depart is to fail. On both planes—the spiritual and the scientific—the rule is: know and use.

Many may feel that the Adept tradition is fantastic, but is there anything incredible in the belief that there can be experts in the science of life and the art of living? The world has produced great painters, musicians of wonderful virtuosity, skillful architects, and profound scholars. These geniuses are regarded as exceptional, but are accepted because their works bear witness to their abilities. Men have always accepted the possibility of excellence, and from the earliest times have taught that a few dedicated and disciplined mortals have become Masters of the secret sciences of the soul. Because the soul is invisible and the sciences of the soul are not obvious in their workings, those untrained in such matters are not likely to recognize the Adepts and initiates. Yet there are numerous accounts in both Christian and non-Christian sacred books of saints and sages who have walked with God, have performed

miracles, and have led their peoples out of darkness and into the light of better ways. Shall all these accounts be rejected together as hallucinations or infirmities of the mind? What is gained by denying that which has inspired and guided the destiny of nations?

Nor is the record of the Adept-teachers so difficult to find. It is impossible to study any religion without contacting historical accounts of the appearances and activities of these teachers. They have appeared in all nations, and at critical moments have emerged as sages, reformers, and instructors. Equally significant is the message which they brought. It is always the same, for, after all, there is only one adversary—spiritual ignorance. China records the wonderful sages who dwell far apart from men in the Jade Mountains that touch the sky. India tells of the great Yogins whose ashrams and hermitages are above the headwaters of the Ganges. The dervishes and the Sufis have their secret Masters who wander about seeking those worthy to receive the Mysteries. Is it not wiser to ponder and consider? These accounts should not be read to be criticized, ridiculed, or dismissed because they conflict with prevailing prejudices. If the universe has reason and purpose, how are these reasons and purposes served and fulfilled? The Adept hierarchy is the only possible explanation for the wonderful and exact control by which the future of humanity is assured. In a strange way the hierarchy itself is an integral part of the Veda. The law produces the lawgiver and engenders from itself its own servants. Contrary to general belief, it is not the lawgiver but the law itself which comes first.

“The Orientalists,” writes H. P. Blavatsky, “know well that they cannot make away with the landmarks, followed by all subsequent religions, set up in that ‘Bible of Humanity’ called the *Rig Veda*. It is there that at the very dawn of intellectual humanity were laid the foundation-stones of all the faiths and creeds, of every fane and church built

from first to last; and they are still there." \* Ultimately, humanity will have direct contact with the substance of the Veda, but this maturity has not yet been attained. The eye of the *Dangma* (organ of internal vision) is not yet opened. Until such time, the Adepts serve as intermediaries between the law and the people. It is their duty to clothe the eternal truth in parables and fables or to restate the doctrine on the levels of available understanding.

The first codes were simple, but were all that could be accepted and understood. As minds and hearts unfolded, larger revelations were given. Men had to be approached through their external faculties, so the Veda was collected into Scriptures and glosses. It was taught to the outer mind by Rishis and Gurus. It was incorporated into history, and its laws and rules were embodied in the textbooks of arts and sciences. Until he was conscious of the laws around him, man had not the strength to know the laws within him. Thus the Adepts were the shepherds of the flocks and the keepers of the sheepfolds. Their stories are to be found in the traditions of the shepherd-kings who ruled in the long ago.

All that could be thus transmitted was but the outer part of the teaching. A Hindu Guru once asked a disciple to open a seed pod and describe what he found inside. The chela did as directed and said: "First, there is the rind or shell, and within this a softer substance which is the meat. In the midst of this is a tiny sproutlike structure which is like the germ." The Master was well satisfied and said: "And what is inside of that?" The disciple was perplexed. "Nothing, Master," he replied. "Ah," said the Guru, "and it is that nothing which is All, and without it that which is apparent is lifeless and meaningless." To those who seek with their objective perceptions the mysteries of the causal universe, there is nothing at the root of existence. Only those who have the inward power

---

\* See *The Secret Doctrine*.

can experience the silence at the source of life. The Adepts point the way and reveal intellectually or rationally the facts involved. In the search for truth, the Veda is the nothing and the All. Its manifestations are infinite, but its substance can be discovered only by the secret disciplines of the soul. The Adepts themselves are equally inscrutable. These servants of the Veda are the hands and feet of the Great Lord. When the Lord is known, they, too, are knowable. The experience of the Veda reveals the Hierarchy. Until that time, neither can be appreciated.

### *The Vedas*

The name *Vyasa*, meaning *one who expands or amplifies, a revealer or interpreter of a mystery to the profane*, was bestowed as a title of distinction in ancient days upon the highest initiated teachers of India. The Puranas refer to twenty-eight Vyasas as the appointed custodians and promulgators of the Vedic doctrine. One of these, identified as Vedavyasa is accredited with the compilation of the Vedic writings and the perfection of their literary form. The Brahmans believe that Vedavyasa flourished about 3100 years before the Christian Era, which would bring his date near the beginning of the Kali Yuga. The compilation took place on the shores of Lake Manasarowar, beyond the Himalayas in the region now known as Tibet. The hymns of the *Rig-Veda* are attributed to saints and sages who lived at different times, some of them ages apart. This would seem to indicate that the work was assembled over a period of many thousands of years.

The contents of the four principal Vedas can be adduced from their names. The *Rig-Veda* is the book of hymns; the *Sama-Veda* is the book of peace, or sanctity; the *Yajur-Veda*, the book of liturgical formulas; the *Atharva-Veda*, the book of magical incantations. With the exception of the *Yajur-Veda*, these writings are mostly in

the form of metrical hymns and verses. The cosmological and theological doctrines contained in the Vedas are expanded and formalized through the Brahmanas and Sutras and given a larger philosophical organization through the Upanishads.

The oldest religion of India is Animism, still held by some primitive tribes. Of the earlier pre-Aryan faiths of this vast region, it can be said that the Vedic sacrifice was a sympathetic magic directed to secure the benefits of sunshine and rain in their proper season. The Vedic poems belonged, at least in part, to the primitive religion of a people to whom the art of writing was unknown. They were perpetuated by oral tradition until, in common with other Scriptural writings, the advance of culture made possible their compilation as sacred books.

One of the Vyasas is said to have authored the Mahabharata, and the twenty-eighth of this line of illustrious sages was the compiler of the Uttara Mimamsa, which inspired one of the six schools or systems of Indian philosophy. The date 1400 B. C. assigned to him by Western Orientalists is more than conservative. He probably flourished much earlier. There were other Vyasas not included in the descent here mentioned. Although the procedure is not entirely acceptable to Orientalists, it may be the wiser course to examine the Hindu accounts.

In the third age of each cycle, Vishnu assumes the person of Vyasa and "divides the Veda." This means that some part of the great teaching is specialized or set aside from the rest to bring about the founding of a school. The Veda has been twenty-eight times divided by the great Rishis in the Vaivasvata Manvantara. All the Vyasas who have passed away (i. e. the twenty-eight) are forms or manifestations of Vedavyasa, for in Indian philosophy all particulars are suspended from general and inclusive principles. This applies to the esoteric tradition as well as to various races and species of creatures that inhabit the seven continents. Vishnu as the permeator is the



light of spirit. As this light shines through the Scriptures, it reveals its own effulgency by the Vyasas, the poet-sages, who interpret the eternal teaching (the Veda) for the beings dwelling in the various time cycles. It must be understood that the Hindu chronology compresses enormous cosmic occurrences and the repetitions of these occurrences on different planes of manifestations into one account. Only the symbolist capable of recognizing certain intimations and clues can arrange the elements of the patterns in their proper order and sequence.

Some authorities say there are eighteen vidyas, or parts of true knowledge. The first four are revealed in the structure of the Vedas, which consist of four separate works considered as a unit. Each of the Vedas is divided into sections. The *Rig-Veda* consists of five parts; the *Yajur-Veda*, of eighty-six; the *Sama-Veda*, of one thousand; the *Atharva-Veda*, of nine. The original writings are described as infinite, but were reduced by Vedavyasa to the classification just given. The Hindus themselves insist that the Vedas were not composed by any human being, and while the name of Vyasa is associated with these books, he is referred to only as the compiler of the Vedas. He acted as editor of the vast body of wisdom which was originally revealed by Brahma himself.

The Vedas are associated with the elements: the *Rig-Veda* with fire, the *Vajur-Veda* with air, and the *Sama-Veda* with the energy of the sun. It would seem that these three sections were regarded as the principal parts of the work, and that the *Atharva-Veda* was incorporated into the structure at a later date. It is noted that the name Vyasa was bestowed upon the sage Dvaitayana as a title of esteem after he had compiled the massive work. In the *Bhagavata Purana*, chapter 3, twenty-two incarnations of Vishnu are listed. In the seventeenth incarnation he appeared as Vyasa, and divided the Veda for the instruction of mankind. In Bengal, Vedavyasa is made a son of Parasara and the father of Pandu.

In the Brahman mythology, the god Brahma originally had five heads. One of these is referred to only as an esoteric mystery. From the four mouths of the other heads issued the four Vedas. This explains why there is occasional reference to a fifth Veda, or secret book, which came from the fifth mouth. If the principal source of Indian esoteric philosophy is the Vedas, their mystical theology derives from the Upanishads, in which the mystery of the direct knowledge of God through a divine science is unfolded.



—From *Qabbalah*, by Myer

#### BRAHMA VIRAJ

The androgenic first manifestation of Brahman,  
the neuter creating power

Brahma must be distinguished from Brahman, which is the universal, impersonal principle, the source of all creation and the ultimate state into which existences are reabsorbed. Brahma is the periodic objectification of this principle, and as such is subject to birth and decay. The reabsorption of Brahma into Brahman causes the pralaya, which is the gradual return of the objective into its subjective, unchanging principle. It should be understood that the Vedas are to nameless truth what Brahma is to Brah-

man. The Great Doctrine emerges at regular intervals from its eternal condition to become the satisfaction of the heart and mind of Brahma. From this vast instruction, the Creator himself achieves in the course of his objective existence to the estate of the perfect sage, and passes into sleep having achieved realization of his own eternal and unconditioned source.

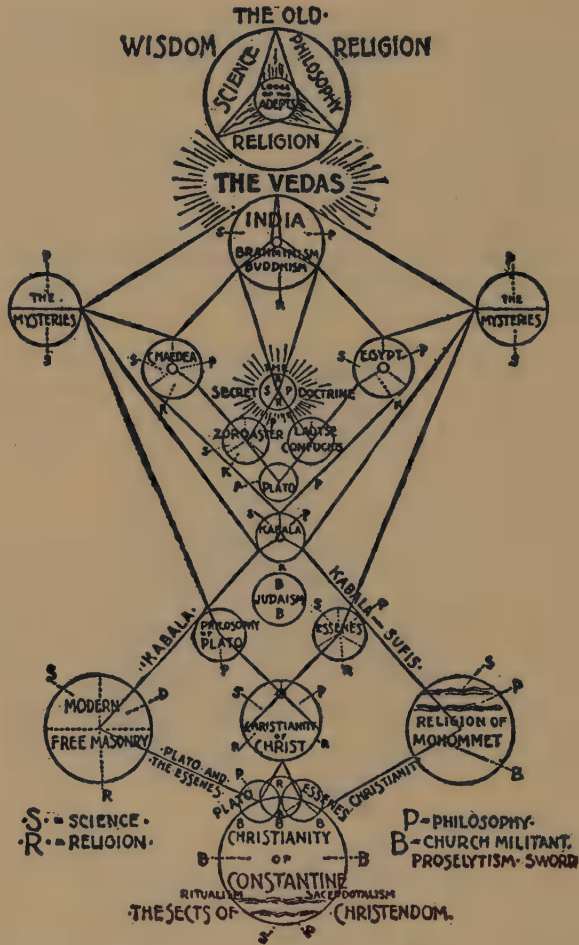
The Vedas display a lofty conception of cosmogony. The *Rig-Veda* fluctuates between two theories: one regarding the universe as the work of a great architect, and the other as the result of natural generation. The Vedas contain no direct statement of a belief in metempsychosis, but it appears in one of the *Brahmanas*. Rebirth is accepted in the Upanishads and has influenced nearly all Hindu thought.\*

In his work *Mystic Masonry*, J. D. Buck, M. D. † combined his interest in the history and philosophy of the Craft with his Theosophical studies. Summarizing the relation between the Vedic tradition and the descent of the Esoteric Schools, he writes: "Antedating the Vedas, then, was the Great Lodge of Adepts, who created the Religion, inspired the Civilization, and taught the profound Science that made old India great. If only traditions and broken monuments remain, these still outrank all modern achievements of man. The ancient government was Patriarchial; the Ruler was also a Master Initiate, and the people were regarded as his children. In those ancient days a Reigning Prince considered it not beneath his dignity to go into the desert alone, and sit at the feet of some inspired recluse, in order that he might receive more light, which he would again dispense to his people. Instead of teaching superstition and idolatry, when the real meaning of the Vedic symbolism is revealed, it will, perhaps, be found to be the thinnest veil ever imposed between the Sublime Wisdom and the apprehension of men."

---

\* See *The Hindu Pantheon*, by Edward Moor.

† 33° honorary, Scottish Rite, Northern Jurisdiction.



—From *Mystic Masonry*, by J. D. Buck

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE UNFOLDMENT OF THE ANCIENT WISDOM RELIGION

Appended to Dr. Buck's book is a diagram unfolding the descent of religions and philosophies from the Lodge of the Adepts through the Vedas. The figure is reproduced herewith and is concise and self-explanatory. The

learned doctor was convinced that from the Vedic focus descended the streams of the Eastern and Western secret doctrine. All the great schools of religious philosophy that have flourished in the Aryan world were custodians of the Light of the Veda. Each fashioned around the essence of the Veda a form or vestment either theological or philosophical. All the great revealed codes of human ethics are therefore divided within themselves into a higher part which perpetuates the Adept tradition, and a lower part which veils the real intent and interprets the teaching on the levels of morality and social utility. In the diagram, the motion of the Veda, in terms of history, shows how the mingling of Platonism and the doctrine of the Essenes resulted in the formation of esoteric Christianity. Unable to survive as a moral code alone, early church Christianity formed a secondary alliance with Platonism and Esseneism through the ante-Nicaean Fathers to emerge in its surviving form as the Christianity of Constantine.

In his Synchronological Chart of the Religions of the World, issued in connection with his *Rivers of Life*, Major-General Furlong traced the Indian religions from their worship of generation, and was of the opinion that the emergence took place approximately 9000 B. C. In his comments, the General noted that he was attempting a synthetic arrangement which would reveal the mingling of streams of belief and that the dating was highly speculative. He suggested the period around 2300 B. C. as the probable date for the *Rig-Veda* and the rise of the doctrine of Avatars. He placed the codification of the Vedas at the end of the old Vedic period as about 1800 B. C. At this time also, he marked the rise of the mantra era, the organization of moral, social, and ecclesiastical laws, and the compilation of the *Yajur-Veda* and the *Sama-Veda*. The first intimation of Meru, or the Mountain of God, Furlong placed one hundred years later, coinciding with the date of the founding of Athens. He put the code of Manu around 900 B. C. in the same century with the phi-

losophy of Kapila. The *Yaska-Veda* (the fifth Veda?) he assigned to the period during which Buddha and Confucius flourished and slightly before the birth of Pythagoras. Following General Furlong's intention to give a survey of this complex situation, his digest is included herewith. That his findings are highly controversial is taken for granted.

In the Mahabharata, Vyasa, described as the arranger of the Vedas, is represented as a dark, ugly dwarf. His eldest son, Dhritarashtra, is the blind king of this great epic. The symbolism may suggest that Vyasa is remembered only as a shadowy person deformed and distorted by conflicting legends. Horace Wilson, an outstanding authority on the sacred writings of the Hindus, considered it probable that the Vedas were finally collected and arranged by a school or schools of learned Brahmans, of which Vyasa was the nominal head. The sage may have been a personification of this assembly of scholars, or they may have regarded him as the power or principle motivating their program of compilation and arrangement.\*

Professor Max Mueller concluded that if Vyasa collected not only the Vedas, the Mahabharata, the Puranas, the *Vyasa Sutras*, and even prepared a prose commentary on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, the work ascribed to him must have been accomplished by several persons or should be assigned to a literary period rather than to one man. Extending his concept, this famous Orientalist continues: "We must learn to look on Badarayana, Gaimini, Kapila, and similar names, as simply eponymous heroes of different philosophies, so that at whatever time these systems were reduced to the form of Sutras, certain opinions could be called by their name." †

Perhaps the professor spoke better than he knew when he suggested that the reputed authors of certain Indian

---

\* See *Works*.

† See *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*.

Scriptures could be identified only as names and intellectual powers. Among the Egyptians, the mysterious Hermes was credited with the authorship of an extensive literature certainly not the work of one man. In sober fact, Hermes was wisdom, which is the true and eternal scribe. Later, certain philosophers carried the name, but it merely implied that they were peculiarly overshadowed by the divine mind. The Vyasas belonged to the same esoteric system of personifying the attributes of the universal intellect. So do other shadowy teachers who cannot be traced historically or established chronologically in the descent of races and nations.

The Mahabharata has been called the national saga of India. Although it occupies a place in Hindu literature similar to that of the *Iliad* among the Grecians, it is a far more important writing. A great part belongs to the class of Scriptures and it enshrines the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Hindu *Book of Psalms*. The Mahabharata unfolds as its principal theme the battle between two families of cousins, the sons of Pandu and the sons of Dhritarashtra. These great clans are called the Pandavas and the Kauravas. In the end, the sons of Pandu conquer, and Dhritarashtra, left childless by the war, decides to retire with his queen, Gandhari, to a place beside the Ganges, there to live out their remaining years in piety and prayer.

The Ashramavasika Parva of the great epic describes the arrival of the old blind king at the hermitage of Vyasa. Here Dhritarashtra was initiated into the ways of the forest hermits and was instructed by great sages according to the commands of Vyasa. Well-pleased with the sincerity of the old king, the foremost of the ascetics renowned for their austerity visited him. Among those who came was the "island-born" Vyasa, with all his disciples and other persons gifted with great wisdom, and even the royal sage, Shatayupa, of advanced years and possessed of great merit.

The celebrated ascetic, Narada, prophesied that Dhritarashtra would live for three years, and after that, accom-

panied by his wife, Gandhari, would go to the regions of Kubera, where he would be highly honored by the "King of Kings." He would go there in a car (vehicle) moving at his will, his body adorned with celestial ornaments. Gifted with a righteous soul, he would roam at will through the regions of the celestials.

Narada is included among the Prajapatis and is often referred to as a Rishi. According to tradition, he was the favorite son of the deity Sarasvati, goddess of wisdom and music. From his divine mother the sage inherited extraordinary skill in all the arts, and was renowned for his ability to play the vina. He is usually depicted as gay and mischievous. He traveled constantly, and there were no mysteries in the three worlds which his curiosity did not solve. He had many of the attributes of the Greek Hermes, and was employed by the gods to carry their messages to all parts of the universe. He was intimately associated with Krishna, with whom, on one occasion, he became involved in a competition of musical skill. Narada, however, did not win against the embodiment of cosmic harmony. Narada occurs in the old legends as a great orator and expounder of the subtleties of the esoteric doctrine.

Later, Yudhishthira, who had taken the kingdom of the Kauravas, visited Dhritarashtra in his hermitage. The victor saluted the vanquished, and was invited to seat himself. On this occasion, Vyasa, surrounded by disciples, appeared to the new ruler. The illustrious Vyasa then took an excellent seat made of kusha grass, placed upon a black deerskin and covered with a piece of silken cloth. Vyasa inquired as to the spiritual accomplishments of Dhritarashtra, and Queen Gandhari told him that her blind and aged husband still grieved deeply for the hundred sons he had lost on the field of Kurukshetra. The wives of these sons also mourned their dead, as did all whose loved ones had perished in the war.



It was then that Vyasa said: "Blessed be you, O Gandhari, you shall see your sons and brothers and friends and kinsmen along with your sires this night like men driven from sleep." Upon the instruction of Vyasa, the assembly moved to the banks of the Ganga (Ganges) where they spent the day performing the sacred rites. When night came, the ascetic Vyasa, possessing wonderful spiritual energy, bathed in the sacred waters of the river, and summoned those who had fought on the side of the Pandavas and those who had battled for the Kauravas, including the blessed kings of the various kingdoms. There was a great sound from the waters, and the kings, headed by Bhishma and Drona, with all their armies, rose by the thousands from the waters of the Ganges. All were dressed in celestial vestments and wore brilliant earrings. They were free from all animosity and pride and divested of anger and jealousy. Celestial musicians sang their praises and bards chanted their deeds. Wearing garlands of heavenly flowers, the heroes were waited upon by bands of Apsaras. Vyasa, through the power of his penances and austerities, gave celestial vision to the blind king, Dhritarashtra, and for the first time the aged man saw his sons. All the sorrows of war had passed; the cousins embraced each other, and all disagreements were reconciled. The spectacle lasted for the entire night, and then the vast assembly, with all its chariots and animals, returned to the river.

There is a report that Vyasa, retiring from the world, remained, however, as an immortal-mortal, and still "resides" at Badarikasrama. This is the name of one of the maths, or holy houses, established by Sankaracharya. It is located at Kedarnath in the Himalayas. It was there that Sankaracharya died at the early age of thirty-two. There is still a temple at this spot served by a Nambutiri Brahman. Sankaracharya established four important maths, one at each of the cardinal points of the compass. Is it to be understood that Vyasa (the arranging mind)

took up his secret habitation in the system of philosophical interpretation founded by Sankaracharya?

When the organization of the Aryan race, under the direction of Vaivasvata Manu, supplied a cultural vehicle sufficiently integrated and refined to meet the requirements, the Mystery Religion "incarnated" in the system of rites and observances which then directed the conduct of the Aryans. By this occurrence, the Veda, or the Imperishable Doctrine, itself nameless, was revealed as the Vedas. The Vyasa were a descent of sages who became the good shepherds or guardians of the Vedas. Through them, the high truths of religion were gradually released by means of a series of editings and revisions. Slowly, the errors which resulted from the mixtures of Dravidian and Aryan traditions were corrected. As the racial vehicle improved, the Vyasa supplied the keys which unlocked the secret symbolism of the ancient writings. In this way the race received its philosophical heritage.

Whenever a fuller revelation of the Vedas was necessary, it was given through one of the prepared instruments of the divine mind. Any sage or saint through whom the teaching was released became by that circumstance alone a Vyasa. The great religious reformers of the West, such as Luther, Wycliffe, and Calvin, would be considered Vyasa according to the Eastern system. All reforms are a kind of re-editing or rearrangement of previous doctrines. The human mind, as it unfolds, inevitably requires that its religions sustain and justify mental growth. Periodically, therefore, old interpretations which have lost their utility are discarded, and the basic teaching is restated in contemporary terms. This may occur through a series of religious councils, but more frequently it is brought about by the rise of an individual who bestows the incentive for a fuller statement of personal faith. The Hindus, observing this orderly process in Nature, were convinced that the events themselves were related. The great stream of the Vedas had its Vyasa who appeared when the need arose, and the

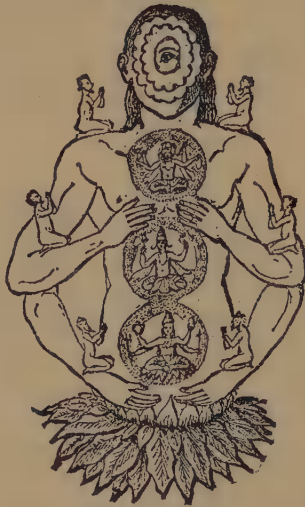
various sects which appeared as the result of the general reformations also had their Vyasas. Reforms are, in turn, reformed; restatements are themselves restated. In this way religions grow and bear their fruit in proper season. The fruit releases its seed which, falling into the receptivity of human nature, is quickened and grows to become new faiths. The story of the Vyasas explains the secret machinery behind the motions of religion.

### *Vaivasvata Manu*

When the time came for the human race to emerge in fulfillment of the divine realization, the "Pervader" accepted upon himself the mood of the thinker. He thus became the mental embodiment of himself and existed as divine power in the quality of mind. By this act the "Pervader," in the terms of the human project, became the first Manu, Svayambhuva, whose name means *the son of the self-existent*. In this system of religious philosophy, the first Manu is the collective intellect of the entire human life-wave. He is the complete man equivalent to the Gnostic Anthropos and the cabalistic Adam. The incarnation of Manu Svayambhuva is accomplished by the sequential embodiments of the seven powers, or principles, latent in the primordial mental essence. Humanity becomes the body of the Manu, and human minds together constitute his mind. The procedure by which the mind of the Manu is unfolded, like the opening petals of the lotus, is through the emergence of six races from the father-mother race.

Each of the races releases into manifestation one of the septenary potentials of the mind of the Manu. These potentials are also personified, and from Svayambhuva appear in order five other Manus and then the seventh. Each represents a mental entirety focused in a mental entity. The Manus incarnate in the races, which not only become their bodies, but also perfect objectively the institutions

through which the higher energies of the Manus labor for their own release. The first race never dies, but as the child disappears in the man, the infant humanity expands through a series of appearances, achieving the likeness of



—From *Qabbalah*, by Myer

#### HINDU SYMBOL OF THE FOUR WORLDS

The fourfold creation is shown taking place within the spiritual body of Brahma

maturity and, ultimately, of old age. The Manu of the fifth great race, the Aryan, is the mind of that race, its collective genius as well as its individual potential. The great being who ensouls the race and bears it out of himself on the plane of mind is called, in the ancient writings, Vaivasvatu Manu. He is the son of Vivasvat, or the son of the sun.

At a remote time, difficult if not impossible to establish historically to the satisfaction of Western thinkers, a great leader arose among or appeared to a comparatively insignificant racial nucleus, and bestowed the cultural impetus which gradually extended itself throughout the Indian con-

continent and, by the process of migration, came to dominate the world. The life of the historical patriarch is too remote to be examined, and he has been elevated by the Hindus to the estate of a semimythical hero descended directly from the god Brahma. Under the name of Vaivasvata Manu, the father of the Aryas, this ancient leader is venerated as the giver of laws and the revealer of the esoteric tradition. *The Institutes* \* which he promulgated have spread throughout human society and have become the basic pattern of Aryan ethics.

The laws of the Manu, according to Eastern thinking, were revealed to direct the unfoldment of the fifth root race, which was born within the great circle of Himavat and is now referred to as the Aryan distribution of peoples. Vaivasvata Manu was the "seed father," and the five branches of the Aryas, which have so far appeared, are descended from him through each other. The Manu's life-mind-principle is diffused throughout his race, which has thus become the enlarging embodiment of himself. The Manu was the agent of the Supreme Deity, and, in the terminology of the Scriptures, when the Eternal One desired to enter or assume the form of the fifth racial outpouring he selected the highest Adept of the previous racial group as his instrument. The fourteen Manus are the potentials of Brahma in terms of the mental principle of races. A race, therefore, is the incarnation of a quality of the divine mind. This quality not only distinguishes one race from another, but also has locked within it the destiny of the creatures which it engenders. The works of the Aryas are revealed through the unfolding of the mental capacities of the Aryan subraces.

In the esoteric interpretation, Vaivasvata Manu is, therefore, also the mind of the Aryas. All productions of the race are the manifestations of this mind, and it is

---

\* Unless otherwise noted, quotations from *The Laws of Manu* are from the translation by Dr. Buhler, as contained in *The Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Mueller.

proper to attribute to the Manu the ever-diversified intellectual accomplishments of the racial mind. The Manu is the father of the religions, philosophies, sciences, arts, and crafts which are devised, invented, or adapted through interpretation from earlier cultures by his children. The purposes of the Manu extend like tiny threads throughout the area under his dominion. Each thread is threefold like the sacred cord, for twisted together in its substance are the spiritual, intellectual, and physical energies which are to be manifested through the religions, philosophies, and sciences that emerge from the racial subjective. Thus the Manu embodies Brahma on the plane of racial development. As creator, the Manu bestows the vital impulse which brings the race into existence; as preserver, he supplies the ethical incentives which protect the racial unfoldment; as redeemer, he contains the ultimate completeness of the pattern which is locked within the racial mental potential.

The secret tradition of the Aryas reveals a universal plan administered by the Eternal Divinity through the agencies of immortal beings and mortals who have attained to the state of heroes. Through this system, the Adept tradition was first revealed. The world and its creatures are the parts of one vast political system which has its source in Brahma. Divinity itself is the priest-king and the eternal penitent who must bear the burden of his own works. The Supreme Power operates through and upon humanity by means of an Invisible Government seated in the higher dimensions of space on the summit of the earth-mountain, the fabled Meru.

The governing body of the earth is a miniature of the vast organization which lies behind the cosmic manifestation. As the sun is the visible center of a solar system and a proper symbol of centralized authority, Vaivasvata Manu is described in some of the genealogies as the son of Surya, the solar aspect of Deity. He is the sun or great light-source of the Aryas and the focus of a racial solar system.

He is accompanied by the seven Rishis, who correspond on the racial plane to the planets. These form his retinue and are also the revealers or distributors of his will. During the reign of the Manu-king, it is written that the whole human race was destroyed by a flood except the princely Adept himself, the Seven Rishis, and their wives. At that time a general pralaya, or cessation of the objective universe, occurred. The story is set forth in the eighth book of the *Bhagavata Purana*. The circumstances are as follows:

A demon named Hayagriva, having stolen the Veda (the eternal doctrine) from the custody of Brahma while he was resting at the close of the sixth Manvantara (period of the sixth Manu), the whole race of men became corrupt except Vaivasvata and the seven Rishis, who then reigned in Dravira. In this emergency, the god Vishnu appeared in the shape of a small fish. In so doing, the Lord fulfilled his eternal promise, for he says in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "When virtue fails upon the earth, then I come forth." Vishnu in his fish Avatar increased in size by being transferred to increasingly larger bodies of water. At last Satyvata (the name of the king of Dravira before he was appointed the Manu and received the mystery name, Vaivasvata) placed the fish in the ocean, where it gained huge proportions. The Avatar then turned and addressed the faithful prince in these words: "In seven days all creatures who have offended shall be destroyed by a deluge, but thou shalt be secure in a capacious vessel miraculously formed. Take, therefore, all kinds of medicinal herbs and esculent grain for food and together with the seven holy men, your respective wives, and pairs of all animals enter the ark without fear. Then shalt thou know God face to face and all thy questions shalt be answered."

Having said this, Vishnu, in the form of the fish, disappeared. After seven days the oceans began to overflow the coast lines, and the earth was flooded by constant showers. Then Satyvata, meditating on the substance of

Deity, saw a large vessel moving on the waters. He entered it, having in all respects conformed to the instructions of Vishnu, who then reappeared in the form of the great fish, and suffered the vessel to be tied with a sea ser-



—From Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*

#### THE FIRST AND SECOND INCARNATIONS OF VISHNU

In the Matsya avatar, Vishnu, represented rising from the body of a fish, destroys Hayagriva and restores the Veda. In the second, or Kurma avatar, the deity takes the form of a tortoise and supports upon his shell the sacred mountain Madara.

pent as a cable to his huge form. When the deluge had ceased and the waters had subsided, Vishnu slew the demon Hayagriva, recovered the Veda, instructed Satyvata in the divine knowledge, and appointed him the seventh Manu, bestowing upon the prince the title-name, Vaivasvata.

Early commentators have been impressed by the parallels between the deluge of the seventh Manu and that asso-



ciated with the Biblical patriarch, Noah. After the deluge, Satyvata, then the Manu, is supposed to have had ten sons, of whom the eldest was Ikshvaku. The Manu also had a daughter, Ila. The progeny of Manu was divided into two great branches: the children of the sun through Ikshvaku, and the children of the moon through Ila. It is said that this Ila married the first Buddha (Mercury), the son of Chandra (the moon). The seven Rishis, although their wives are mentioned, are not listed as progenitors of human families.

Manu is named in the *Rig-Veda* together with other sages of remote antiquity. He is spoken of as the father of a family, and one legend concerning him opens with the bringing of water so that he could wash his hands. He was the inventor of sacrificial rites and the author of the legal code. He was a ruler of men and a Rishi, through whom sacred texts were revealed. He is described as a king and the ancestor of kings and there is a reference to his coronation. The *Rig Veda* contains many passages which speak of the sacrifices made by Manu and of his having kindled the sacred fire and invoked the gods to accept the offerings of the sages. He is said to have invented the funereal sacrifices. He befriended mankind by revealing to humanity the ceremony (esoteric disciplines) practiced by the gods. He is credited with the revelation of mantras. There is also the statement: "All Manu said is medicine." Others have carried the same name which is familiar in the legal descent.

*The Laws of Manu*, attributed to this ancient legislator, have largely influenced Hindu culture. The age of the code is doubtful, as the earlier texts have been manipulated. Sir William Jones, the first translator of the code, thought that it belonged to the Vedic Age, about 1200 B. C. Later writers supposed that it was compiled in the 4th century B. C. Professor Max Mueller and Dr. Burnell place it about the beginning of the Christian Era. The internal evidence supports the antiquity of the work. It

seems to antedate the practice of suttee, or the suicide of widows. It advises that the son should protect the widowed mother. In the code, Brahmans are called the Lords of the World. The Kshatriya, or warrior, caste is to defend them, the Vaisya caste is to collect wealth for them, and the Sudra caste is to perform menial offices. The great epics of Indian literature are unnoticed as are also many of the deities of the later pantheon; only Vedic divinities are mentioned. The caste system which later came to dominate India seems to have been derived from the *Black Yajur-Veda*, which was compiled probably before 500 B. C. In the code, metempsychosis, as a means of purification of the soul, is taught.

In *The Laws of Manu*, chapter I, verses 32-34, 36-41, the great sages approach Manu, who is seated "with a collected mind." He declares to them the sacred ordinances by first unfolding the proportions and workings of the divine plan. In answering the questions of the sages, Manu often speaks as though he were himself the ordaining power of the world. Desiring to give birth to the race of men, the Lord became half male and half female, and from his female aspect produced Viraj. Manu continues thus:

(33) "But know me, O most holy among the twice-born, to be the creator of this whole (world), whom that male, Viraj, himself produced, having performed austerities.

(34) "Then I, desiring to produce created beings, performed very difficult austerities, and (thereby) called into existence ten great sages, lords of created beings . . .

(36) "They created seven other Manus possessing great brilliancy, gods and classes of gods and great sages of measureless power . . .

(41) "Thus was this whole (creation), both the immovable and the movable, produced by those high-minded ones by means of austerities and at my command, (each being) according to (the results of) its actions."

These holy penitents (sages), by their salutary counsels and the example of their austerities, disclosed the paths of virtue and rectitude to mankind.

### *The Rishis*

The term *Rishi*, meaning *the inspired one*, is used in early Indian literature to designate the great scholars and saints through whom the mantras or sections of the Vedas were revealed to mankind. The title was observed as a mark of esteem upon many ancient scholars, and, by extension, to certain recent and even contemporary religious leaders. Strictly speaking, the Rishis of the East are comparable to the Adepts of the Western esoteric tradition. They are human beings belonging to the present life-wave who have, by the extraordinary cultivation of their spiritual faculties and powers, become conscious instruments of the divine plan and the natural teachers of unenlightened humanity. The Rishis are said to dwell in retirement and frequently select remote places for their habitations. They have their disciples whom they instruct, and are Masters of the esoteric arts and sciences associated with their religious philosophy.

The human Rishis, for practical purposes, must not be confused with the "Rishi-Prajapati,"\* *the revealers*, in whose keeping is the secret wisdom of Aryavarta, the land of the Aryas. The word *Aryan*, by which it has become customary to designate the now-dominant race of Europe, is from the Sanskrit *Arya*, meaning *the holy*. This was once the title of a Rishi who had mastered the Aryan path of salvation. The Aryans are, therefore, the sanctified or those set apart to accomplish arhatship through the disciplines revealed by the Rishis. Esoterically, the "Rishi-Prajapati" are equivalent to the Hierarchies described by St. Paul. They are superhuman beings who bring the experiences of previous cycles of evolution to earth-humanity.

---

\* Term used by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

These Hierarchies are the patrons, or Elders, who overshadow the Esoteric Schools, binding the human institutions to the cosmic scheme.

It is not always clear in the Hindu writing whether the "Rishi-Prajapati," implying the Hierarchy, or the Rishis, implying the Adepts, are referred to in a particular instance. This is further complicated by the Indian philosophy which associates the human Adepts with their divine prototypes. The vast pattern unfolds through the action of the Hierarchy upon the system of Esoteric Schools formed in its likeness. The superior is forever reflected in the inferior, all things being alike in essence, but different in appearance. It should also be remembered that man himself is the incarnation of a hierarchy. When Vaivasvata Manu became the father of the Aryas, he was accompanied by the seven Rishis. This mystical septenary of illuminating powers reappears in most of the old mythological systems.

Seven rays of light surround and adorn the head of Brahma. In Northern Buddhism, these ornaments are called the Dhyani Buddhas. These are also "the seven spirits that follow their Lord" mentioned in the Egyptian funereal ritual. These spirits before the throne are the revealers, or agencies, through which Deity extends the domain of his consciousness. As the white light is broken into the seven colors when passed through a prism, so the eternal light of the Logos, first differentiated by the prismatic triad, reveals its septenary potentials. The colors bear witness to the principle of light. When this symbolism is applied to the light of wisdom, it explains the phenomenon of the Rishis. They are the seven truths born of one truth, as this is distributed through the threefold substance of the world. When the seven colors of wisdom are brought together and reunited, they become again pure light. This is the secret ritual of the Rishis, who by certain "austerities" return their colors to the purity of colorless radiance.

In the *Vishnu Purana*, book III, chapter I, the seven Rishis are listed with the following account: "These are the seven persons by whom, in the several Manvantaras, created beings have been protected. Because this whole world has been pervaded by the energy of the deity, he is entitled Vishnu, from the root *Viś* 'to enter', or 'pervade'; for all the gods, the Manus, the seven Rishis, the sons of the Manus, the Indras, the sovereigns of the gods, all are but the impersonated might of Vishnu." \* Thus the seven Rishis appear in each of the Manvantaras, becoming the ancient sages or advisors. In some accounts, those of each age are descended in a direct line from the original Rishis. There is a further implication that they are the continuous re-embodiments of one great line of teachers.

It is mentioned in the old writings that when Vaivasvata Manu created his race, the seven Rishis did not establish lines of descent. They did not become the fathers of people. Madame Blavatsky intimated that the seven Rishis of the Hierarchy were really identical with the seven Prajapatis, the fathers and creators of mankind, and also with the Kumaras, the first sons (the mind-born) of Brahma, who refused to procreate and multiply.

The Kumaras were esoterically seven and exoterically four in number. Their names all signify degrees of the human intellect, for they were concerned with the development of the principle of mind, which is the distinguishing attribute of the human being. In some of the Eastern Esoteric Schools, the Kumaras are said to be the wave of egos who incarnated through the animal men in the closing cycles of the third root race. They explain, therefore, the account in Genesis, vi: 2: "That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." This incident is expanded in the *Book of Enoch*.

The Kumaras, or virgin egos, refused to create bodies, but waited until the evolution of form produced vehicles

---

\* Translated by H. H. Wilson, M. A., F. R. S.

suitable for their manifestation. The Kumaras then descended and ensouled the bodies, in this way quickening the species and causing the transition from an animal condition to a truly human state. The Kumaras brought with them the Hierarchy of superhuman teachers, and through these the vast pattern of the Mystery system was revealed, and suitable institutions for its dissemination on the physical plane were established. The Rishis revealed the powers of the Kumaras in the expansion of the wisdom-aspect of the human ego. Thus the several orders are easily confused. The Kumaras are further extended in their symbolism to become Kumara, the virgin warrior, sometimes referred to as the god of war. Sanat Kumara corresponds with Michael the Archangel, the secret god of Israel. Michael is the invincible virgin combatant and appears in the legendry of many peoples as the world hero. He is the dragon slayer of folklore, and symbolizes collective humanity in its aspect of the hero soul. He is involved in all the religious mysteries in the ritual of the dying god. Each candidate re-enacts the drama of the folk hero. Thus the symbolism proves itself, and the Kumara emerges in his original meaning as the collective ego of humanity.

The wisdom religion did not unfold through the primitive structure of animal humanity. It entered the human scheme of things with the descent of the Kumarcic egos. The cabala describes a heavenly university where Adam was instructed prior to his fall. This college of the immortals was the Great School which humanity, now a compound of mental powers and animal propensities, is gradually reconstructing through the enlargement and ensoulment of its cultural institutions.

The teachers who belonged to the heavenly university formed one order of Rishis, and their disciples, gathered from the human life-wave, form another. Through the process of physical embodiment, the Kumaras were deprived of their conscious wisdom. They descended into darkness, and in the long difficult process of learning to

control their animal vehicles were guarded and guided by the "fathers." These fathers, in turn selecting vehicles suitable for their purposes, overshadowed or inspired advanced types which emerged from the racial compound. These were the poet-sages who conversed with the immortals in the dawn of time and who received the instructions which were later to be organized as the Scriptural writings of mankind.

While it is not possible to examine in detail the opinions of the ancient Hindus concerning their initiated sages, the doctrine can be summarized with reasonable accuracy. There has always been in the world since the rise of an order of self-conscious life a hierarchy of Adepts. This hierarchy is composed of properly initiated priest-philosophers who serve as the "hands and feet" of the Adept-king. The organization of the hierarchy is analogous to that of the cosmos itself, and through its initiates the Great School is distributed throughout human society like an arterial system. The primary function of the Adept-teachers is to initiate humanity into those sublime mysteries by which the corporeal man, cleansed of bodily limitations, may ascend to reunion with his own divine nature. This note is sounded in the closing lines of the *Golden Verses* attributed to Pythagoras.

This release is possible through the mastery of the seven esoteric arts and sciences, the keys to which were reported to be in the keeping of the King Brahman. Like the Egyptian hierophant who carried the "keys of the kingdom," the Hindu sage is the custodian of the seven interpretations by which the great Scriptures can be unlocked. The attainment of adeptship is possible as an inalienable birthright to all human beings. The path of discipleship leads through the wise to wisdom itself. The truth seeker is first the disciple of some learned man, who may be himself in one of the lower grades of the hierarchy. As the student's abilities increase, he is advanced, and the cultivation of his spiritual faculties properly guided. As the body

passes from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, and from youth to maturity, so the invisible internal man must be matured by the laws of God and in obedience to the laws of Nature. The grades of discipleship represent degrees of spiritual maturity. When the internal self has been properly and sufficiently enlightened, the disciple is ready for formal initiation into the Great School. As a disciple, he sees through a glass darkly; as an initiate, he sees face to face.

The symbolical initiatory system of the State Mysteries of antiquity set forth the machinery of the initiation process. The novice is tested as to character and temperament; the disciple is examined for ability and capacity. If he possesses the proper requisites, his abilities are cultivated and intensified. If he lacks the proper qualifications, he is advised to return to society and further prepare himself. The ritualistic dramas unfold the mystery of the hero soul and are consummated by the resurrection of the dead. The new initiate is told that he is the personification of a great process constantly unfolding about him and within him. Having been initiated, he is entitled to be called "twice-born." He is then one of the philosophic race, symbolized in India by the Brahman—the twice-born man.

As an initiate, he has certain privileges and limitations. He may continue striving for adeptship. If he attains this, he passes from honorary membership in the hierarchy to active membership. Several choices are then open to him. These are paths of service, and his future career is determined by the choice which he makes. The mystic experiences the fact of the esoteric tradition in his heart; the initiate discovers it with his mind. The Adept alone, however, stands in the midst of the mystery, identified with it and utterly dedicated to its release through his own perfected organism. In the several schools of Indian philosophy, the particulars are differently interpreted. All, however, acknowledge the Light of the Vedas and the



Hierarchy of Rishis which administers the distribution of the esoteric tradition.

It is not purposeful to extend this outline to the various specific opinions as to the distribution of the Esoteric Schools at the present time, their locations, or the identities of their Masters and disciples. About such matters there is endless controversy, and numerous sects advance dubious evidence to support their own pretensions. The truth seeker must learn discrimination, and this is gained, not by depending upon the advice of others, but by the development of judgment. Suffice it to say that the Hermetic axiom, "When the disciple is ready, the Master is there," remains effective. The great Aryan Adepts have revealed to the race all the wisdom that is necessary to bring the earnest soul to the feet of the Master. It is not lack of knowledge, but the failure of dedication and the unwillingness of the human being to perform patiently the disciples of self-improvement that prevent the profane from reaching the steps of the sanctuary.

The Rishis are the Adepts of long ago. Dr. Buck calls them the "really Sublime and Perfect Masters." Thus, in the terms of Freemasonry, he acknowledged them as the ancient and wonderful lights of the Great Lodge. It is said that these sage-saints did not die, but, having completed their work for a given time, they retired into the "forests" to remain as meditating ascetics until the Lord calls them to further work. There is a legend that they will remain until the coming of the next Avatar, then they will rise and meet him and assemble about him, and in the depths of valleys or on the tops of mountains they will tile their Lodge. These Rishis are dedicated to remain with humanity and to guard the race during those intervals in which the Great One is in meditation. They are his servants and they keep his house for him until he shall return. Then he will bless them and say to them: "Well done, good and faithful servants."

The Adept hierarchy, with its magnificent unfoldment, was adapted to Buddhism, and from the Buddhist writings can be gained a clearer exposition of the Doctrine. This will be discussed in the section devoted to the descent of the Adept tradition through Buddhism. The Invisible Government of the World, with its Adept-king and its circles of Adepts, initiates, and disciples, supplies the ethical keynote to the Eastern way of life. To the Hindu mystic, there are no accidents in Nature. Life is unfolding according to a magnificent program. The high destiny of humanity is inevitable; disasters and tragedies belong to the world of appearances. The indestructible self within each human being is eternally growing, and the vicissitudes of mortal existence are like the trials of the Mysteries, tests of courage and integrity. Nothing that is real can be destroyed; nothing that is unreal can be preserved. Beyond what seems to be injustice there is a power of right ever victorious. There can be no doubts about Providence, no fear of the future, no vain regrets for the past. The Invisible Government guards and guides, and its way is certain. Between the unseen causes difficult to understand and the visible effects equally difficult to understand is the great revelation of the Vedas. Between gods and men are the bright shining Rishis, the teachers and the messengers of the Adept-king. They are the witnesses of the faith which is a fact. So noble a doctrine, so enlightened a conviction must bear a wonderful fruit. Those who have accepted it in their hearts and have found it reasonable in their minds can face the eternities to come with a good hope.

### *Mount Meru*

Brahmanism, philosophically and religiously reformed by Buddha and his Arhats, was distributed throughout the vast continent of Asia and adjacent regions. Although Mount Meru, or Su-Meru, is not mentioned in the *Rig-Veda*, there is a brief reference in the *Ramayana* implying

that the theme would be familiar to the reader. The subject is unfolded at considerable length by the sage Parasara in the second chapter of the *Vishnu Purana*. The Puranic literature in general supplies the details of the world-mountain concept, and the numerous sects which inherited the traditions have improvised upon the basic theme.

The old Aryans, attempting to create a geography which would be in physical conformity with their cosmic speculations, represented the earth diagrammatically as flat and bounded by a circular chain of mountains. Within the mountainous circumference were alternate zones of land and water arranged concentrically. The description is reminiscent of Plato's account of Atlantis. In the center of the zones of mountains and seas is Jambudvipa, the habitable earth. This is the island of the jambu tree, the world tree which provided the gods with soma, the drink of immortality. The roots of the jambu tree are in the underworld of Yama, and its crest is so high that it casts a shadow on the moon. The tips of the jambu tree are in the heaven of the gods, and its trunk is the sustaining axis of the universe. The concept can be traced in the Avestan "tree of all seeds," and the symbolism appears in Europe in the form of Yggdrasil, the world ash of Nordic mythology.

Jambudvipa is shaped like an open lotus flower, the petals representing the habitable continents, and its center rising in an immense convexity to supply the abode of the divinities. The Puranas describe how Mount Meru, the pillar or axis of the world, sustaining and uniting the three parts of existence—heaven, earth, and hell—rises in the midst of Jambudvipa. The summit of Meru is the celestial earth in the form of a circular plateau, in turn surrounded by hills. Above Meru, sphere after sphere ascends, expanding in spiritual significance and forming a celestial counterpart of the terrestrial world which is unfolded below. On the summit of Meru is the city of Brahma, and, like filaments from the root of the lotus, numerous

# 須彌山圖



—From *Tenmon Zukai*, by Iguchi Johan

17th-CENTURY JAPANESE WOODCUT OF THE UNIVERSE MOUNTAIN

mountains project from its face. John O'Neill suggests that Meru means *central* or *essential*, like the Latin *medius* and the old Irish *medon*. There also seems to be the implication of a spear, probably meaning an axis. He be-

lieves the root *Brahm* means *to whirl*, and suggests that Yggdrasil has the same implication. In the Kalevala, the great epic of Finland, the branches of the universe oak shut out the light from the north. The myth of Jack and the beanstalk, especially the Russian version, is a form of the world-tree concept.\*

There is a Mount Meru in each of the universal systems included within the cosmic scheme. As early as 1808, J. D. Patterson, in *The Asiatick Researches*, placed Meru at the North Pole, and Lenormant agreed with Renan that the concept also appeared in the Greek myth of Meropis. In Japanese Buddhism, Meru occurs as Shumi or Someiro, both equivalent to Su-Meru; that is, the center of the universe. This is the same as the Mount Alburz of the Parris. Meru is compared to a bell-shaped *dhatūra* (fruit), which is sweet to taste and produces slumber, and to a lotus, the gem of Jambudvipa, or region of the golden apple tree of life, placed also in the center of the "Jewel India." †

The sage Parasara described the world mountain at considerable length. His account is substantially as follows: Within the circle of the Brahma egg revolve the planets. Quite in the middle of the egg, the earth globe is supported by ether and bears the supreme might of Brahma, which is of the nature of self-supporting force. Within the earth are seven cavities, the abodes of serpents and demons. The mountain of gold, Meru, passes through the middle of the earth globe and protrudes on either side. At its upper end are stationed, along with Indra, the gods and the sages. At its lower end in like manner is the habitation of demons. Surrounding the axis mountain on every side is a great ocean, like a girde about the earth dividing the hemispheres of the gods and the demons. On all sides of Meru are distributed the islands or continents, spread out like the petals of an inverted lotus. In both directions from

---

\* See *The Night of the Gods*.

† See *Faiths of Man*, by Major-General J. G. R. Furlong.

Meru are two Pole stars fixed in the midst of the sky. The caves under Meru are the potalas, and in these mysterious regions the lovely daughters of Daityas and Danavas wander about fascinating even the most austere. Below the seven potalas is the form of Vishnu, proceeding from the quality of darkness which is called Shesha. This is the great serpent with a thousand heads, each marked with the mystic sign of the swastika. It is on this serpent that Vishnu sleeps during the intervals of creation and upon whose numerous heads the world is supported.

It is obvious from the Indian literature that Meru is located at the Pole, for it is definitely stated that at Meru the degrees of latitude are all one. The caves under the mountains refer to the seven bodies of the planetary globes. Beneath the potalas are the divisions of Naraka, the twenty-one parts of hell. The sun illumines all parts of the surface of Jambudvipa except the summit of Meru. The sun travels around the world keeping Meru always on its right side; therefore it is night beyond Meru when it is day in the southern regions. In *The Asiatick Researches* \* is reproduced a Hindu zodiac. The outer circle shows the zodiacal signs; the second circle, the planets and nodes, which are marked with letters *h* and *i*. In the center is the earth surrounded by the great sea. Within this rises Mount Meru, capped with the radiant court of Brahma. This is approximately the accepted arrangement of the Hindu cosmogony, and is obviously inspired by the form of the lotus. The six seated figures on the sides of Meru may be Rishis in meditation.

There are several detailed descriptions of Mount Meru, but these differ, and one will serve to indicate the trend of the symbolism. The height of Meru is eighty-four thousand yojans. † The summit of the mountain is greater in diameter than its base, so that it is like the seed cup of the

---

▪ (London, 1801, Vol. 2, p. 303) See, also, *The Works of Sir William Jones*.

† *Yojan*—Hindu measurement of distance, approximately five miles.

ORIENTAL ZODIACK.

Vol. I.

pa. 345.



—From *The Works of Sir William Jones*

HINDU ZODIAC

The planets and constellations are grouped about the earth which is surrounded by an ocean. In the midst of the earth rises Meru, on the crest of which is growing the Tree of Life.

lotus of the earth. Meru is divided into three peaks, upon which are situated the three sacred cities. Beneath these are the eight cities in which dwell the regents of the eight

directions of space. On the highest summit is the vast city of Brahma, enclosed by the River Ganges. In the *Bhagavata*, this sacred river flows over the great toe of Vishnu's left foot. The *Vayu Purana* merely causes the river to descend from the lunar orb and does not refer to Vishnu.

The holy mountain has four flanks which face the cardinal points and are of different colors: red on the north, yellow on the south, white on the east, and dark brown or black on the west. Four rivers spring from a single source under the foot of Vishnu at the Polar Star. They divide on the summit of Meru and issue from the jaws of a cow, an elephant, a lion, and a horse. They water four regions, in which grow four trees of life for the different species. Incidentally, the Buddhists recognize only one tree of life. On the summit of Meru lives Indra, with his female dual-principle, Indrani. On the same golden mountain, sometimes called Kailasa, dwells Siva. Su-Meru, Maha-Meru, Kalasa, Kalaya, and Suralaya are all names for the same heavenly peak.

In the great palaces on the top and sides of Meru dwell the seven gods or leaders of the celestial sphere. These seem to multiply or to appear in various degrees of sanctity as Rishis, Septarishis, Maharishis, Manus, or Munis. Meru has its pendant or infernal counterpart, Ku-Meru. This lies to the extreme south and probably signifies the South Pole, with its asuras or evil spirits. The demon Asmodeus fled to the south. Ahriman forced passage through the earth, and the wicked fell headforemost so as to be upside down in the southern hell. According to the Chaldeans, the twelve southern extra zodiacal constellations had dominion over the dead. In the Egyptian mythology, the most northern part of the earth rose till it touched heaven. At the southern extremity of the earth was another mountain where dwelt the gods of the south. These were the deities of Amenti, abiding in the inverted precinct or reversed world.





—From *Die Kosmographie der Inder*, by Kirfel

THE SUMMIT OF MT. MERU ACCORDING TO THE  
COSMOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF THE JAINS

Indra, the old Hindu god of the wind and sky, is fabled to have lost for a time his kingdom to the asuras, the stars of the Southern Hemisphere, which were under the dominion of Yama, who held court in the Antarctic Circle. Indra and the suras (good spirits) governed from the Northern Hemisphere. The metropolis of Meru is the Olympus of Indra, the mountain of golden gems. Indra corresponds with the Jove of the Latins. He presides over the celestial band which is stationed on the summit of Meru. Within Meru is the self-moving chariot of the

gods. There resides Brahma with four faces, also the greatest of those who know the Vedas, the great gods and the inferior ones. There is the court of Brahma consisting of the whole earth. Thousands of great gods are in this beautiful court. There abide the Brahmarishis, the wise and wonderful teachers.

The axis tree of the world has three layers, which are called three barks. The exterior layer is Brahma; the second is Vishnu; the inner is Siva. A lotus floating on the water is the emblem of the world. The stalk originates from the navel of Vishnu sleeping at the bottom of the ocean, and the flower is the cradle of Brahma for mankind. Meru is involved in the symbolism of generation representing the male principle. The world was believed to resemble the symbolic lingam which is still venerated by the followers of Siva. The germ is, therefore, both Meru and lingam. The petals and filaments are the mountains which encircle Meru, and are also the type of the yoni.

The deity Siva is represented in Indian art in his terrestrial paradise, Kailasa, which is situated on the summit of one of the numerous peaks of the wonderful and mystical mountain, Meru. Kailas, or Kailasa, is a word possibly of Tibetan origin and is the name of a mountain in Tibet lying to the north of the sacred lake, Manasarowar. This peak rises to an altitude of nearly twenty-two thousand feet, and its shape is roughly like that of a Hindu temple with a conical summit removed. It is a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage. Since the treaty of Lhasa, western Tibet has been opened to the people of India. Both Hindus and Buddhists solemnly make this pilgrimage and march around the mountain, a journey which occupies an average of three days. Of course, the ritual is entirely symbolical, and Mount Kailasa merely represents the inaccessible Meru.

According to the Eastern esoteric tradition, Meru is located at the North Pole of the earth's auric field. It is not actually a mountain at all, but represents the intellec-

tual focus of the powers which govern and sustain the planet. Beneath Meru are the spheres of illusion, the seven layers of the earth's magnetic constitution. In the midst of these, like an island, is the physical globe with its continents. The magnetic pole of the planet is supposed to be directly beneath Meru. When in the great geological processes the polar caps of the planet solidified, they formed continental areas which gradually extended toward the equator. The first solidifications were called the Sacred Islands or the Imperishable Lands. The northern island corresponded with what is now the great region of the Gobi Desert, and here the first living things were generated. The gods abiding in the celestial overearth descended upon the polar cap, which was called the "diadem of the earth mother." The creatures which were to populate the planet evolved in the magnetic plane before the physical globe came into existence. When the planet was able to sustain physical forms, these beings descended to become the progenitors of races and species.

Mount Meru is the abode of the Hierarchy, and in its great audience palace the deities responsible for the management of the terrestrial world assemble in council, like the Olympian divinities of the old Greeks. Here also assemble the human Rishis, the great sages, who are the instruments of the World King. This concept of planetary government is reflected downward to become on earth the great school of Adepts and initiates. By analogy to the human constitution, Meru corresponds to the mind with its powers, and the earthly vehicle of the mind, which is the brain, is analogous to the formal association of Adepts which constitutes the Invisible Government of the earth. From the brain go forth the impulses which control and direct the physical body, but the source of these impulses is not the brain, but the mind which overshadows it. Meru, the planetary mind, is connected with the great solar order, or Hierarchy, through the thirty-two orders of superior beings which ascend to union with the consciousness of the

sun. As mind itself is an attribute of consciousness, an extension of it into the higher substances of the form-world, so Meru is located at the point in the constitution of a planet where the spiritual and material substances meet and form a neutral zone.

The symbolism of Hindu geography, like the Ptolemaic astronomical system, is correct on its own plane, even though it seems to violate the modern heliocentric concept of the machinery of the solar systems. It is the element or substance of earth and not the planet that is placed in the center of an auric field of the real but invisible energies. The descent of the gods from Meru is equivalent to the entry of the entity into its body at the time of incarnation. The same processes repeat themselves on all the planes of existence. Meru is important to the Adept tradition because it explains the descent of divine wisdom into the mystery of generation. The wisdom religion does not accept the belief that man generates within himself, by the mere circumstance of environment, the universal learning necessary to his own protection. As life enters form to become a person, so Universal Truth descends into that person when its organisms are sufficiently refined, and the person becomes illumined. The same procedure by which the Arhat attains identify with universal consciousness by becoming a suitable receptacle explains how the Light of the Vedas, creating first the planetary mind (Meru), flows through it, like the heavenly river, and descends in four streams to water the plains of Jambudvipa.

Meru is, therefore, the archetype of the world to come and is later associated with the Maitreya Buddha. The pattern of Meru will ultimately be impressed upon the whole social structure of mankind. As yet, however, the pattern is reflected into the Adept School, which is the nucleus or seed of Meru. As the school unfolds, like the symbolical lotus, and extends its power throughout the world, its golden heart is the Chang Shambhalla of the Northern Buddhists. This is the city of the Adepts, located

directly beneath the paradisiacal abode of the gods. In India the Council of the Adepts is held to take place in the Gobina, the remote sanctuary located in the inaccessible desert of Shamo, or Gobi. The Gobina stands upon the outcropping of azoic rock, which is the earth's oldest existing material substance. This outcropping is the Imperishable Island and is marked with the first footprints of the gods. The Gobina, then, is the earthly Meru, the center of the great systems of Mystery Schools.

Races and species unfold according to the geography of the Meru concept, and through them the World Government is being slowly but inevitably perfected. Meru is the seal, and the earth reveals the impression of that seal upon and within itself. Naturally, it is not a place, but a condition of consciousness. Even consciousness, however, has its dimensions and abode. The highly symbolical descriptions of Meru are no more remarkable than parallel accounts of the New Jerusalem. The heavenly city of Revelation, like the abode of Hindu gods, is foursquare, is watered by the river of life, lighted by the lamb (the light of God), and within it grows the tree which is for the healing of the nations. St. Augustine's city of God is Su-Meru, and the good saint's city of evil, which he called Babylon, is the Ku-Meru, or South Pole. This doctrine came from Egypt, but as the Egyptians themselves admitted, it was brought originally from India.

Aristotle emphasized the prevailing practice of personifying universal energies and forces, creating in that way pantheons of divinities. The entire concept of Meru is such a process of embodying the universal agencies, in order to interpret and associate in various patterns principles in themselves too abstract to be understandable. When St. John ascended the ladder of the planetary zones, he came to a little door in the wall of heaven. Passing through this, he found himself in the magnificent spiritual palace beyond the sky. By extending the interpretation as St. John did, Meru is not only the mountain of the Pole,

but also a celestial earth which encloses the terrestrial one. For this reason the Hindu says that the generation of the physical world took place within the womb of Meru. The planet is therefore an embryo floating in a sea of amniotic fluid and enclosed within the uterine membrane of the sky.

In Hindu astronomy the planets are all in the fetal state. Only suns have actually been born. The descriptions of the underworld below Meru, with all its caverns and passageways, refer to the physical planet earth and its etheric envelope. As the unborn child is nourished from the energies of its parents, so the unborn planet is sustained by the vitality of Meru by which it is surrounded. The Great School repeats the process on a lower plane. Its purpose is to bring embryonic humanity to birth through the womb of the Mysteries. Man is born when the spirit of wisdom within him is strong enough to give him personal contact with the source of eternal life. Until then, he is nourished by the gods through the Adepts.

### *Parasara*

The story of the birth of the Rishi Parasara is contained in the *Adi Parva* of the Mahabharata. It extends through several chapters, beginning with 178. The father of the sage was named Saktri, the son of the Rishi Vashistha. Once there was a king named Kalmashapada. This king was a great hunter, and one day when he was in the forest he came upon Saktri, one of high soul and the eldest of the hundred sons (disciples) of the Rishi Vashistha. The king ordered the sage Saktri to stand out of his way so that he could pass along the narrow path. Saktri replied gently and in sweet words: "O great king, this is my way. This is eternal religion. The king should yield the way to the Brahmanas according to all the precepts of religion."

An argument ensued. The king demanded that his order be obeyed, and the holy man refused to yield. Finally, Kalmashapada struck the saint with his whip. Saktri,

momentarily angered by this violence against a sanctified person, cursed the king, declaring that an evil spirit should enter into Kalmashapada's body and that from that day he should be a cannibal wandering about the earth eating human flesh. In obedience to Saktri's curse, a rakshasa, named Kinkara, took up its abode within the king so that he was terribly afflicted and lost his reason. Later, tormented by the evil spirit that dwelt in his flesh, the king, wandering about, came upon Saktri in a remote place. He cried out to the holy man: "Because you have afflicted upon me this extraordinary curse, therefore, I shall commence my life of cannibalism by eating you." The demented king then killed Saktri and devoured him as a tiger eats its prey.

Later, Adhrisanti came to her father-in-law, the Rishi Vashistha, saying: "I am Adhrisanti, the wife of Saktri. I am an ascetic woman, engaged in asceticism." Adhrisanti then told the Rishi that she carried in her womb a child begotten by Saktri. The old Rishi was very glad because there was to be a child of his race, so he took the woman to his hermitage. One day Vashistha saw King Kalmashapada wandering in the solitary forest, and he approached the demented ruler and sprinkled over him water which had been sanctified by holy prayers. Then the mind of the king was restored and he saluted the Rishi, saying: "O excellent Rishi, I am your disciple. Tell me what is your desire now, and what I am to do." The Rishi told him to return to his kingdom, rule wisely, and obey the Vedas.

In the hermitage, Adhrisanti gave birth to a son, who was born a Master of the Vedas. This child believed that the Rishi Vashistha was his father, but the mother, not wishing her son to deceive himself, told the boy the entire story of Saktri's death. Thus it was that the young man, who was to be known in the world by the name of Parasara, nursed in his heart a terrible grievance against the rakshasas. When he was grown, Parasara performed mysterious incantations by which he determined to destroy

all the rakshasas. These demons belong in the same classification as the Kabiri of the Egyptians and the Titans of the Greeks.

According to legend, the early Atlantean peoples were divided into two groups: those who retained inner contact with the divine power, and those who darkened their inner vision and dedicated themselves to the advancement of their material ambitions. The rakshasas were the descendants of the latter group, and in the Hindu writings they represent a primitive, debased order of creatures that opposed the Rishis, who were teaching a more advanced and enlightened ethical code. By extension, these demons, or evil spirits, were merely the animal instincts and propensities which attempted to defeat the inspired servants of the Vedas. As a group, therefore, the rakshasas were, and are, personifications of atavism, or reversion to a more primitive type or the recurrence of that type or its characteristics in later and higher levels of culture.

Parasara sat before three blazing fires, and his own body looked like a fourth fire. In the flames were consumed countless of the evil spirits, young and old. In order to end this ceremonial of destruction, the great and liberal-minded Rishi Atri and four other sages approached Parasara, and Rishi Pulastya said: "Oh Parasara, peace is the highest virtue; therefore practice peace. . . . Oh son of Vashistha, what befell your father came upon him on account of his own curse. It was for his own fault that Saktri was taken to heaven. Oh Rishi, no rakshasa was capable of devouring him; he himself provided for his own death. . . . Give up this sacrifice. Let it come to an end."

Parasara then threw away the fires which he had kindled, and he threw them so far that they fell into a great forest on the north of the Himalayas, and there the fires may be seen to this day. It was through the favor of the wise Pulastya and the divinely learned Vashistha that Parasara, having received the enlightenment and freed his heart and mind of revenge and remorse, was given the in-



structions which made it possible for him to compose the *Vaishnava* (*Vishnu*) *Purana*, containing ten thousand stanzas. In recapitulating the succession of the narrators of part of the *Bhagavata*, the disciple Maitreya states that this first *Purana* was communicated to him by his Guru Parasara, as had been desired by Pulastya. \*

The Rishi Pulastya was one of those who were called the mind-born sons of Brahma. In one account, Pulastya was derived from the ear of Brahma. It is said that the patriarch Daksha had twenty-four daughters. One of these, Priti, meaning *affection*, became the wife of Pulastya. This Rishi was the father of Visravas, who was, in turn, the father of Ravana, the king of Lanka, who occurs as the villain of the *Ramayana*. Pulastya rode in the chariot of the sun as one of the seven guardians in the month of Madhu, or Chaitra. In the third book of the *Vishnu Purana*, the Rishis of the present great cycle (Manvantara) are described as descending in a direct line from the seven mind-born sages. In this series, Dattoli was the son of Pulastya. The intent seems to be to indicate through a series of cryptic names the manifestation in each cycle of certain divine powers and attributes. The list is too complicated to be detailed here.

When it became necessary for a deity to manifest itself, it always selected one of the families of descent from the Rishis. Parasara explained the mystery to Maitreya thus: "In the Krita age, Vishnu, in the form of Kapila and other (inspired teachers), assiduous for the benefit of all creatures, imparts to them through wisdom. In the Treta age, he restrains the wicked, in the form of a universal monarch [a Chakravartin], and protects the three worlds. In the Dwapara age, in the person of Veda-vyasa, he divides the one Veda into four, and distributes it into innumerable branches; and, at the end of the Kali (or fourth age), he appears as Kalki, and re-establishes the iniquitous in the

---

\* See *Vishnu Purana*, translated by H. H. Wilson.



—From Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*

THE KALKI, OR WHITE HORSE AVATAR OF VISHNU  
Based upon a native drawing.

paths (of rectitude). In this manner the universal spirit preserves, creates, and, at last, destroys all the world.”\*

The ages here mentioned are the Yugas, or four divisions of time into which each cycle is divided. In the Kali Yuga, Vishnu will appear as Kalki, the White Horse Avatar. Referring to the dialogue form of the *Vishnu Purana*, H. P. Blavatsky wrote that Parasara, the Aryan Hermes, instructed Maitreya, the Indian Asclepius. The date of Parasara is variously given, and he is said to have flourished between the 6th and 14th centuries B. C. This uncertainty may be due to the name having been applied to several persons who acted as compilers or interpreters of the *Vishnu Purana*.

The deity will reveal himself in the form of, or accompanied by, a white winged horse, adorned with wonderful trappings. The horse is represented with his left foot lifted, but when he shall set it down upon the earth, the wicked and the impious will be punished. Is not this white horse the mysterious horse of the Muses, Pegasus, which reappears as an important symbol in the 17th-century restoration of the esoteric doctrine in Europe?

### *The Six Systems*

Professor Max Mueller, in his introduction to the studies of the schools of Indian philosophy, makes special mention of his admiration for the honesty which permeates the systems. Writing of the old sages and their doctrines, he says: “If they are idealists, even to the verge of nihilism, they say so, and if they hold that the objective world requires a real, though not necessarily a visible or tangible substratum, they are never afraid to speak out. They are *bona fide* idealists or materialists, monists or dualists, theists or atheists, because their reverence for truth is stronger than their reverence for anything else.” †

---

\* See *Vishnu Purana*.

† See *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*.

The schools which descended from the vast structure of the Scriptures and their commentaries are called the Vedanta, the Purvamimamsa, the Sankhya, the Yoga, the Nyaya, and the Vaisesika. The term *mimamsa*, which is associated with the name of each school, means *investigation* or *a method for examining the revelations of the great teachers*. Although the six systems are not in complete accord, it is customary to consider them as essentially complementary. The Indian scholar regards these investigations as forming an evolutionary sequence, each school advancing or unfolding the grand concept. A metaphysical, religious, and philosophical instruction is peculiar to each.

The Vedic period of Indian philosophy is said to have extended from 1500 to 600 B. C. During this time the Indian systems passed through the ritualistic, theological, and spiritistic phases nearly always present at the beginning of an ethical culture. The Epic period extended from 600 B. C. to A. D. 200, and is marked by the reconstruction of the religious concept. Two important reformations belong in the Epic period: Jainism and Buddhism. In these schools, philosophical considerations took precedence and produced what has been called an idealistic materialism. The period of the six systems began about A. D. 200, and the schools originating during this period have continued to exercise a broad influence.

Each of the six systems is associated with the names, lives, and teachings of celebrated sages and saints. In most cases, historical data is meager and biographies difficult to compile, but the founders were regarded as possessing extraordinary faculties and powers. According to the definition of the word *Adept*, the illustrious men who revealed the system are entitled to be included among the initiate-teachers of the Eastern wisdom. There is a curious confusion in the use of names by which several persons have come to be extensions or manifestations of each other. As the teacher always becomes identified with his mission and

the doctrine which he promulgates, it is possible that the descent of the school is implied when the sequence of sages is mentioned.

The Vedanta system is based on the Sutras of Badarayana. Of this Master, little is known. He was referred to as a saint and is one of several ancient scholars to be identical in authority with the original work. Vedanta philosophy can be summarized in the statement: "There is nothing worth gaining, there is nothing worth enjoying, there is nothing worth knowing but Brahman alone, for he who knows Brahman is Brahman." In this usage, the term *Brahman* means *unconditioned reality*. Moksha, or salvation, is release from the tyranny of appearances, which are forever changing or passing from a present to a future state. Maya is not material illusion, but expresses relativity as distinguished from reality. Enlightenment is the acceptance, as experience, that the soul is eternally one with reality. The veil of illusion is the acceptance of that which is less than Brahman. The end of moral discipline is not the victory of right over wrong or the solution of the mystery of existence, but the experience of reality as completeness in Brahman.

The sage Gaimini is intimately associated with the rise of the Purvamimamsa as a text of personal responsibility. Though not essentially a philosophical doctrine, the Purvamimamsa unfolded into a broad system involved with the discovery of the substance of duty (dharma). The word *purva* means *former*, and the name of the school can be translated: *the earlier investigation*. There is no indication in this school that the world is unreal or that individual souls are merely unenlightened fragments of totality. Duty is fulfilled by a series of observances largely ritualistic and involving a variety of moral and ethical actions. Life itself is regarded as ritualistic, and every act performed by the human being produces an appropriate effect somewhere or sometime. Thus salvation comes to

be the consequence of a cause which is set in motion by the truth seeker.

In the Sankhya system, there are evidences of borrowing from the Vedanta, Yoga, and Nyaya doctrines. Growth in all its forms is a release into manifestation of latent potentials. Thus it must be implied that behind manifestation there is infinite power awaiting expression. Human souls are separate and individual, and liberation is freedom from prakriti (Nature). The Sankhya system may be summarized in the phrase "freedom through discrimination." The human being attains his true place in the universal pattern by recognizing the availability of superior qualities. He must work out his own salvation with diligence even though he is substantially indestructible. The intelligent self is a spectator and remains so until it becomes absorbed in things seen, heard, or accepted through the testimonies of senses and faculties. Prakriti is active and changeable, but purusha (self) illumines objectivity from within, and is therefore able to be the solitary witness. In practical terms, the Sankhya teaches what the Neoplatonists called "the victory of self over circumstance."

Indian tradition advances Kapila as the author of the Sankhya system. No date is available for him, but he seems to have been a historical person. As Buddhism reveals a dependence upon his teachings, he must have lived before the middle of the 6th century B. C. There are many legends about the life of Kapila, but these are confusing and contradictory. Buddhist lore connects the name of Kapila with the city of Kapilavastu in Kolasa, the birth-place of Buddha. This may be a subtle reference to the source of Buddhistic doctrine.

It is not known that any works by Kapila have survived. Those bearing his name or attributed to him seem to be of more recent data. He is remembered principally as the personification of a philosophical concept. The name of Kapila and Patanjali are associated in the descent of the Sankhya and Yoga schools of philosophy. The par-

allel existence of the systems of Kapila and Buddha gave rise to the old quotation: "If Buddha knew the law and Kapila not, what is truth? If both were omniscient, how could there be difference of opinion between the two?" Professor Mueller was not certain in his own mind that Buddha borrowed from the Sankhya philosophy. Indian scholars are inclined to differ with this eminent German Orientalist.

There is reference to the atheism of Kapila. He is supposed to have stated that there are no logical proofs to establish the existence of one God. He also taught reincarnation, and Patanjali advanced arguments against it in connection with the admission of a Supreme Being generally called Isvara, the Lord. It is clearly noted in the *Bhagavata Purana* that Kapila *revived* the Sankhya. This would mean that some part of the doctrine existed before his time. Such evasion of responsibility for the origination of a system of thinking is familiar throughout the Hindu religion. Everything is a revival, and sources are seldom discussed. Kapila is accepted as the founder of the Sankhya school, which was certainly based upon earlier traditions.

The Yoga system is best defined by comparison with the teachings of the Sankhya school. Patanjali is accredited with the authorship of the *Yoga Sutras*, but in this case, also, the teacher appears as the reviver and compiler. Patanjali is sometimes called Shesha the Divine Serpent. He has been assigned to the 2nd century B. C., but this would create difficulties if he actually debated with Kapila. He may or may not have been the Patanjali who was a grammarian. As this man flourished about two hundred years before the birth of Christ, this may account for the confusion. A person named Vyasa—the everpresent compiler—prepared a commentary on the *Yoga Sutras*, but this sage could scarcely have been Vedavyasa.

The original concept of Yoga was a rebellion against the tyranny of the mind. True participation in reality is achieved by suppressing mental activity and accomplishing

the state of samadhi. There are several Yogas suitable to those of various interests and inclinations. The path of discipline is fulfilled by a series of controls imposed upon objective life, bodily structure, and the emotional and mental functions. The word *yoga* actually means *union*, but not necessarily identity with any personal conception of Deity. Through the experience of samadhi, the perfect life in and of spirit is known as a transcendence of all objective processes. The Yogi attains an illumination which is essentially without qualities or attributes. The end is a suspension of consciousness in undifferentiated Being.

The Nyaya system seems to have been integrated about 150 B. C. Its basic textbook, the *Nyaya Sutras*, was written or compiled by the saintly logician, Gotama, sometimes called Aksapada, the eye-footed; one whose eyes are directed toward his feet. This Gotama, or Gautama, should not be confused with the Buddha. The word *nyaya* means *logic*, but the system so-designated is not limited to the Western concept of the term and is unfolded as a complete philosophical system. The Nyaya recognizes four sources of true knowledge: perception, inference, analogy, and credible testimony. Of these, inference is the most important. There is much reminiscent of the categories of Aristotle in the development of the Nyaya syllogisms. Like the peripatetic system, this Eastern school avoids direct examination of God or First Cause. Deity alone is omniscient and omnipotent, and these qualities sustain the universe. God, however, is without such attributes as lead to involvement in the existence-cycle.

The validity of knowledge is not self-apparent. A fact must be established by application on the plane of action. That which does not fulfill the reasonable expectancy cannot be regarded as true. Thus the tendency to religious speculation is curbed, and nonutilitarian ideas or doctrines are passed through the sieve of discrimination. The individual is a self-motivating agent, possessing qualities which make possible the accomplishment of sufficiency. The per-



son and the body are separate entities, and the inner life is enriched by instruction. All that is invisible or beyond conclusive definition is to be known or discovered by disciplined inference. The inevitable conclusion will be correct if the processes by which it is obtained are adequate and without error. The inductive system, later unfolded in European philosophy by Francis Bacon, is an essential part of the Nyaya school.

The Vaisesika system is associated with the name of Kanada, the atom-eater. The names Kanada, Kanabhaksa, or Kanabhuj, all with the same meaning, probably refer to the atomic speculations of this sage and are nicknames. Kanada composed his principal text, the *Vaisesika Sūtras*, between the 2nd and 4th centuries A. D. It is in the cosmogony of this system that the theory of atoms is developed. The universe passes through periodic cycles of creation and destruction, or manifestation and nonmanifestation. During the Night of Brahma, or period of universal dissolution, the particles of the elements remain separate and dissociated. The re-emergence of the cosmos is the result of the union of souls and atoms. This union occurs first in the more attenuated elements, and the compounding continues until all structural forms are manifested. Dissolution is the reversal of this process. Complete annihilation is impossible, as all forms are ultimately reduced to atoms which are indestructible.

Naturally, the overconcept leads to the development of a consistent ethical concept. The souls of human beings are individual but eternal. Though separate from each other, they are diffused throughout space, but the manifestations of soul power—apprehension, feeling, and action—are limited to the bodily focus. The definition of the atom becomes also the definition of the self and is stated as “something existing, having no cause, and eternal.” The keynote of the school is analysis, and its trend is toward the discovery of the particulars of the world. True individu-

ality is considered as evidence and proof of the reality of the concept of particulars.

In the words of Professor Hirayanna: "These six systems may be regarded as falling into three pairs—Nyaya-Vaisesika, Sankhya-Yoga and the two Mimamsas—as the members forming each pair agree either in their general metaphysical outlook or in their historical basis or in both." \* The same author restates the important observation that it is not safe to assume that the six systems originated at the times when the schools were formalized. High antiquity is indicated by such references to "ancient seers" as occurs in the traditions of origins. Actually, the era of the Sutras, a type of religious literature unique to India, was a period of reduction to written form. Older oral teachings had been carefully preserved and perpetuated from Master to disciple. Originally held as too sacred to be publicly disseminated, the instructions were later made available by interpreters and reformers. The age of revelation followed naturally after the decline of the Brahmanic Mysteries. It was deemed advisable or necessary to broaden the intellectual life of the people. The process was almost identical with the exposition of the Orphic theology of the Greeks through the philosophical schools established by such initiate-teachers as Pythagoras and Plato.

Sir William Jones, the pioneer Orientalist, drew several interesting analogies between the six Indian systems and the schools of Greek philosophy. He likened the Vedanta to the Platonic sect, the Sankhya to the Italic, the Purvamimamsa to the Socratic, the Nyaya to the peripatetic, and the Vaisesika to the Ionic. Sir William concluded that the logician Gotama corresponded with Aristotle, Gamini with Socrates, Vyasa with Plato, Kapila with Pythagoras, Patanjali with Zeno, and Kanada with Thales. Even though the parallels are extremely general, the observations are interesting.

---

\* See *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*.

*The Bhagavad-Gita*

The *Bhagavad-Gita*, or the *Song of the Lord*, is contained in chapters twenty-five to forty-two of the *Bhishma Parva* of the Mahabharata.\* It is in the form of a dialogue between the hero Arjuna and the god Krishna, who manifested himself upon earth to restore righteousness. The *Song* fits so naturally into the place where it occurs that it is difficult to imagine that it could be a later interpolation. Hindu writers are therefore inclined to assign this dialogue to the 14th or 15th century B. C. The *Bhagavad-Gita* is not only the guide of the learned and thoughtful of India, but is also held with deep veneration by the masses.†

The Mahabharata is one of the great epics of Indian literature. It is believed that the nucleus of the story was derived from the struggle between two ancient clans. Although not committed to writing until about the beginning of the Christian Era, it records events which took place nearly three thousand years earlier. The Kauravas and the Pandavas were related families, whose disputes finally ended in war. The two clans, with their allies, arranged themselves on the plain of the Kurus, near the site of the modern city of Delhi. Arjuna, the famous archer and leader of the Pandavas, looking across the plain, beheld in the ranks of the hostile army many relatives and friends. He also saw courageous and honorable men sincerely convinced that their cause was just. Arjuna was appalled at the prospect of bringing suffering and death to many whom he respected and admired. Arjuna turned to Lord Krishna, who had taken human form and stood beside him as the driver of his war chariot, and received the blessed instructions.

The symbolism involved is immediately obvious. The plain of Kurukshetra is the objective or illusionary uni-

---

\* See the Dutt translation.

† See *Hinduism, Ancient and Modern*, by Rai Bahadur Lala Baij Nath.



—From a native painting

ARJUNA KNEELING BEFORE KRISHNA ON THE  
BATTLEFIELD OF KURUKSHETRA

verse. The five Pandava princes represent the perceptive powers of the mind. Arjuna, as the embodiment of the Pandava principle, carries the mighty bow, Gandiva. He

is the race or culture hero, the truth seeker, the objective self who contemplates the knowable. The armies spread out embody the principle of duality, by which the supreme unity is obscured. Each faction sincerely believes in the justice of its cause, but reconciliation is impossible on the plane of objectivity. It is the duty of Arjuna to use the sword of quick detachment that separates the false and true. He is unable, however, to overcome the phenomenal sphere of the not-self with its attachments and antagonisms. The armies cry for battle, for in the world of conflict minds hasten to die for their opinions.

Arjuna stands in his war chariot, and in that decisive moment his soul experiences the darkness of despair. Sri Krishna, the High-haired One, is the overself. He is the experience of the eternal, sought and found on the threshold of pain and terror. Arjuna was resolved to permit his enemies to kill him rather than to raise his arm against them. Krishna, however, rebuked the prince for his lack of insight, and reminded him of the ageless teachings of his race. It is therefore said that the *Gita* is the milk of the Vedas. In no other writing are the ancient doctrines so directly and specifically applied to a mortal dilemma. Even though Krishna is the Lord of Love, he admonishes Arjuna to advance the battle. The prince is to test his own heart, fulfill the deeds which are ordained, and without selfishness or fear serve the greater good.

The substance of Krishna's first discussion is the re-statement of noumenal truth. The wise (enlightened) grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. Krishna says that there was never a time when he did not exist nor when Arjuna himself or the princely men or the most humble soldiers had not existed. There could never be a time when any, be they gods or mortals, would cease to exist. That which dwells within the body passes through childhood, maturity, and old age in that body and passes to other bodies. It is only the obscured instrument of the senses and emotions that causes pleasure and pain or the

illusion of birth and death. All appearances come and go and none of them stay. THAT (the Eternal Being) which fills all the universe and enters into every living creature is imperishable. It is audacity to believe that the Changeless One can be destroyed or injured or its purposes defeated. Only forms and appearances have ends. The Incomprehensible Dweller which inhabits forms and appearances is eternal. He is, indeed, without perception who says: "I am slain," or "I have slain." The soul is never born and never dies, nor can it ever come to the non-existence of itself. Even as a man casts aside worn-out garments and takes others that are new, so the Dweller in the body puts off worn-out bodies and goes to others that are new.

Still Arjuna is not satisfied. How can he know the answer to the riddle of right and wrong? As he stands upon the brink of war, how can he experience in his own heart the mystery of the eternal peace? Krishna then reveals the rules of self-examination when uncertainty weakens resolution. What is the motive that impels to action? Is it love for some and hate for others that lead us into the chaos of unreasonable conduct? Do ambition, pride, envy, greed, yes, even the impulse to survive weaken resolution and make the self the servant of fiery desire? Each man must search his own heart, and by so doing apply to himself the measure of the law. There is only one deed that does not fetter the self: this is sacrifice, the generous giving of all for the common good. This is the true meaning of the sacrificial ceremonies of the *Rig-Veda*. Who gives of what he has bestows only illusion, but who gives all of himself performs the virtuous deed.

When the Creator fashioned the universe, he desired that law and order should prevail throughout all the world. He therefore first brought forth the Prajapatis, the Lords of progeny, and he revealed through them the religion of works. From the Prajapatis descended the great sages and teachers who taught the will of the Lord. In the Esoteric

Commentaries, the Prajapatis were neither gods nor supernatural beings, but advanced spirits from another planet who possessed the skill required to direct the progress of earth-humanity.

The Creator then brought forth another order of saintly beings "without desire or passion, inspired with holy wisdom, estranged from the universe and undesirous of progeny." \* These, declining to create or to become fathers of peoples, remained, as the name of the first of their number implies, ever pure and innocent. The *Linga Purana* says: "Being ever as he was born, he is here called a youth; and hence his name is well known as Sanatkumara." In the *Ashiva Purana* the Kumaras (the forever youths) are always described as yogins. The *Kurma Purana*, after listing them, says: "These five, O Brahmans, were yogins, who acquired entire exemption from passion." The period of the Kumaras was pre-Adamic; that is, before the separation of the sexes and before humanity had received the creative or sacred fire as told in the Greek myth of Prometheus.

From the Kumaras came the religion of renunciation, or the path of inner holiness, for they were not directly concerned with the unfoldment of the objective world. Thus the Prajapatis stand behind the building processes of Nature, and the Kumaras sustain the redemptive aspects of consciousness. These concepts mingle to form "the two-fold Vedic religion of works and renunciation that maintain order in the universe." † The doctrine which contrasts the path of works and the path of renunciation requires the periodic restatement of the internal as supreme. When in the course of ages men turned from the Vedas and corrupted their faith, the esoteric tradition was obscured. To meet this recurring emergency, the Kumarcic power manifested itself through a series of divine incarnations.

---

\* See *Vishnu Purana*.

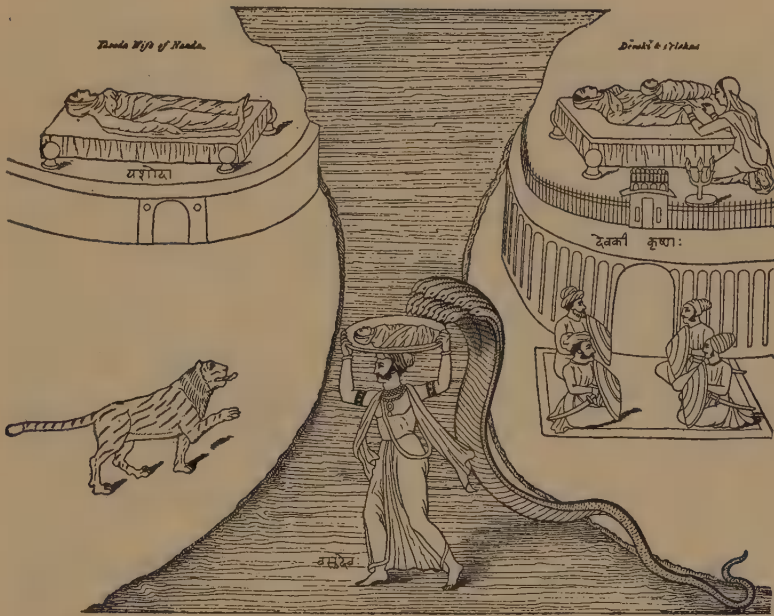
† See *The Bhagavad-Gita*, with the Commentary of Sri Sankaracharya, translated by A. M. Sastri.

Such embodiments of powers, substantially beyond the human state and therefore not subject to the laws of physical generation, are called Avatars. In the Hindu system, any part of the Universal Being which becomes impersonated is regarded as an incarnation of that Being. The disciple should not assume that the Supreme Deity took flesh and became mortal. Rather a ray or extension of Narayana, the creating aspect of Vishnu, fashioned by will and Yoga the semblance of a body and manifested through this vehicle for those unable to experience the Divinity by direct effort of consciousness. Certain heroes who are believed to have been chosen as instruments for the revelation of the powers of Vishnu are revered as Avatars of the god.

The legends surrounding the birth of Krishna take the traditional form which is involved in most of the great Indian epical writings. At the close of the third great age, the Dvapara Yuga, a Rajput clan, the Yadavas, had come upon evil times. The rightful king had been deposed by his son, who was in reality a rakshasa (demon) in human form. This evil ruler brought great trouble and misery to his people and neglected all the worthy pursuits. In this emergency, the earth cried out to the gods asking for purification. At the request of the other divinities, Vishnu resolved to incarnate among the Yaduvamsis, and with him came other wonderful beings, saints, sages, and celestials. The parents of the Avatar were Vasudev and Davaki. At this time, Kans, the wicked king, had a dream or vision, in the midst of which a voice spoke from the invisible world telling him that he would die at the hand of the eighth child of Davaki.

When the hour of the birth of Krishna drew near, the king placed a strong guard about the house of Vasudev, ordering that the child be slain the moment it was born. But Vishnu, to make certain that his incarnation survived, caused all the guards to fall asleep and the locks to open in the gates and doors. Vasudev then placed the infant





—From *The Hindu Pantheon*, by Moor

THE INFANT KRISHNA BEING CARRIED TO SAFETY  
BY HIS FATHER

Krishna in a basket, which he carried on his head and departed from the place. In the meantime, the sages and astrologers rejoiced greatly, for they knew that the Avatar had come. The king, hearing the reports, ordered all the children to be slain, but he could not outwit the god.

There are many wonderful stories of the miracles performed by the child Krishna. After numerous adventures, he joined the Pandavas and served as Arjuna's charioteer during the great war. When at last his time came to depart from the world, he wandered alone into a forest. There seated in the shade of a great tree, he entered into a state of Yoga. As he was thus meditating, a hunter, mistaking him for a deer, fired an arrow which wounded the foot of Krishna. When the archer came closer and

beheld what he thought to be a mendicant in meditation, he was fearful lest he had injured a saint. Realizing the situation, Krishna rose and comforted him, and in the presence of the hunter he ascended to heaven surrounded by a radiance that filled the whole sky.

In the *Gita*, the supreme goal of human life is the cessation of samsara, or the transmigratory cycles and the causes of rebirth. Krishna exhorts Arjuna thus: "Abandoning all dharmas, come to Me alone for shelter." Here *dharma* means *action*. This is the religion of renunciation. At the same time, Krishna inspired Arjuna to accept also the path of Karma Yoga. This is attainment by works or by the fulfillment of all responsibilities indicated and proscribed by the Vedas. The disciple is instructed that when the virtuous performs an action he places his act in Brahman. In other words, he releases himself from all consequences by existing only to fulfill the eternal law. The end of all Yogas is moksha, or salvation. The religion of renunciation attains the supreme bliss by direct apprehension of the substance of the Kumaras.

Krishna urged Arjuna to accept the dual form of reality and to fulfill both aspects of the law. The first requirement of true devotion is obedience. The illusion must be overcome by fulfillment and not by rejection. The spiritual journey is through the illusion to the real; therefore, Krishna unfolded the principles of Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga. The end is bliss; the means, obedience. Yet Arjuna was not required to obey Krishna, for in the discourse the Avatar became merely the embodiment of the Vedas. All instruction was grounded in the sacred tradition. The hero of the Pandavas was inspired to cling to the timeless truths. All that Krishna did was to restate these principles and to inspire the hero to acknowledge them and abide by them and in them. The peculiar integrity and beauty of the *Gita* is its wonderful summary of all that is necessary to clarify the human uncertainty.

The inner experience of being in the world but not of it finally satisfied the human doubts of Arjuna. He realized that he was but one of that vast throng which populates the world. Like all the others, he must experience pain and pleasure. From the unknown he came; to the unknown he would return, and with him all the princes and warriors. He was involved in a pattern which he could not break without disturbing the intricate network of laws which hold and bind all creatures. Each human being must live out his destiny, and it is not the right or privilege of any man to go against inevitables. Strife and discord, love and hate, hope and despair, joy and sorrow—all these are included in the heritage of illusion. There is no escape through authority, for one man cannot save another. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, each combatant must face an experience; each must learn for himself that which not even the gods may teach. Pressed on by eternal conflict, mortal creatures must come, each in his own way and in his own time, to that moment "which no man knoweth." Yet whatever be the price, that moment is full payment. Who shall say where truth shall first be known?

### *Brahmanic Mysteries*

In ancient times the caste of the Brahmans exercised unlimited authority over all the departments of Hindu life. Supported by the weight of tradition, this remarkable order of men was responsible for the development and perfection of early Indian culture. These men were a class apart, separated from non-Brahmans by the inflexible rules of the caste system. It would be a mistake, however, to accept the popular misconception that the term *Brahman* is synonymous with aristocracy. The members of this social order were not feudal princes or rich and powerful overlords. Their privilege came not from their worldly goods or their noble ancestry. They were recognized as inspired

leaders, sages, and illumined priests who devoted their lives to the mysteries of the Vedas.

Buddha defined a Brahman, not as one born into that caste, but as a noble human being dedicated to the service of truth. Confucius used the term "superior man" to identify a person living according to the highest standards of enlightenment, ethics, and morality. In the writings of Plato, a class called the Philosophic Elect was introduced and advanced as a natural aristocracy suitable for leadership in society. As a sacerdotal order, the Brahmans were the custodians of the esoteric keys of the Hindu religion. After the rise of Buddhism, the Brahman initiates opposed the Buddhist Arhats, whom they regarded as endangering the legitimate descent of the secret doctrine. This divergence of convictions caused the Buddhist teachers to leave India and establish their schools in other Asiatic countries.

In spite of popular opinion to the contrary, the deeper aspects of Brahmanical learning have not been revealed or exposed to foreigners. The one exception was Pythagoras, who became a Brahman by adoption and was initiated at Elephanta and Ellora. He was given the name Yavan-charya. His name is said still to be preserved in the records of the Brahmans as the Ionian teacher.\* Even after the rise of Moslem power in India, the initiates of the Brahman temples and monastic communities elected a council of superiors or Elders, presided over by a Brahma-matma. He was a Supreme Pontiff and the sole guardian of the highest mysteries and formulas. This hierophant was always an aged man and served as the teacher and initiator of those who had earned adeptship. So strict were the obligations of these Eastern rites and so heavy the penalty for profaning them that the very existence of the system has been questioned by Occidental scholars.

All Brahmans pass through three symbolical initiations which, however, may be considered as constituting ad-

---

\* See *Ancient Freemasonry*, by Frank C. Higgins.

mission into the caste. It is likely that these rites have descended from the tribal rituals of earlier peoples. The first initiation is given at birth, and the child receives from the family astrologer his mystery, or sacred, name. This he will never reveal under any circumstance. The second initiation occurs at the seventh year, when the boy receives the three-strand Brahmanical cord which he will wear until death. The third initiation takes place at adolescence (about the eleventh or twelfth year) when the youth is accepted into his caste with appropriate ceremonies. When he becomes a Brahman, he assumes all the obligations and responsibilities peculiar to this group. By implication, these rituals confer membership or citizenship in the Empire of the Enlightened. Thus the entire caste is one school of the Mysteries, dedicated to a code of laws more severe than those imposed upon the members of other classes.

Early in the development of Brahmanism, the Adept tradition was revealed through the legends associated with the Rishis. These are generally regarded, like the Greek heroes, as an intermediary order of human beings partaking of divine and mortal attributes. In the order of created beings, these holy sages are placed below such godlings and invisible creatures as belong to the suites of the superior divinities. Although the Rishis were mortals, they possessed superhuman wisdom and power equal to, and in some instances greater than, the gods themselves. Three orders of these wonderful persons can be distinguished in the religious literature of the Hindus. The first and highest group includes those saints who reside with the gods and serve as counselors and ministers. Next are the Brahma Rishis, venerated as the revealers of the esoteric tradition. The third circle is made up of the Rajah Rishis, those of royal or princely origin who led their tribes and nations as illumined rulers.

These sages have flourished in all the periods of the world. Some participated in the creation of the solar sys-

tem; others appeared at the time of the compilation of the Vedas and became the custodians of knowledge. A further list can be compiled of saints who inspired and led the numerous reformations and reorganizations of the Hindu doctrines in more recent times. In the Epics and Puranas, myths relating to the Rishis are more numerous than those told of the divinities. The basic concept which is unfolded through the mass of legendry is simple even though the commentaries make it appear complicated. The gods, although occasionally incarnating or manifesting themselves to their peoples, selected the Rishis as their usual agents and representatives, empowering these heroes to interpret the divine will according to the needs of mortals.

The changes which time has wrought in the form and ideology of the Indian religions are reflected in the popular regard for the Rishis. Originally, these sages were concerned principally with the rituals of the faith and were the leaders of sacrifice. As philosophy enlarged the metaphysical side of Brahmanism, the saints were viewed as great Yogis or ascetics. They were the exponents of meditation and austerity, through which disciplines they acquired and maintained their internal contact with the essence of the doctrine and perfected their superhuman powers. Even today exceptional mystics, especially those who have retired from the world, are venerated as Rishis or as high disciples of these inspired teachers.

Although Brahmanism is identified in the West with esoteric doctrines and practices, such a conclusion is not entirely true. The Adepts and initiates of the order are acknowledged by the modern Brahman, but he has had little, if any, direct contact with such exalted beings. Modern ascetic schools seek through the practices of Yoga and other mystical disciplines to prepare disciples for the conscious experience of the Hierarchy. The number of Hindus dedicated to the quest is considerable, but very few progress beyond a sincere and intense devotion to the instructions of their Gurus. Such contact with the Adepts as

do occur are internal experiences, and about such illuminations little is said and less is written. Most of the published works dealing with the subject are founded upon reports calculated to intrigue foreigners and satisfy curiosity.

Louis Jacolliot, who was for some years Chief Justice of Chandernagor (French East Indies), accumulated considerable lore relating to the theory and practice of the occult sciences in India. His summary is indicative of a serious effort to examine a most recondite subject. Unfortunately, Monsieur Jacolliot did not explain how he accumulated his data; therefore, it is presented entirely upon his own authority. He referred to the Supreme Council of the Brahmans presided over by the Brahmatma, who had to have reached his eightieth year before he could hold this exalted office. The Chief Justice writes: "Residing in an immense palace, surrounded by twenty-one walls, the Brahmatma showed himself to the multitude only once a year, encompassed with such pomp and pageantry that his appearance impressed the imagination of all who saw him as though they had been in the presence of a God." \*

The same author added that the Brahmatma wore upon his tiara two crossed keys reminiscent of the insignia of the Roman Pontiff. These keys, in the case of the Great Brahman, were supposed to unlock the sanctuary of the Temple of Asgartha, in which was preserved, engraved upon a golden triangle, the ineffable words. At the death of a Brahmatma, his body was burned upon a golden tripod and his ashes secretly thrown into the Ganges. According to present belief, many temples and important shrines are now presided over by holy persons termed Brahmatmas. This seems to indicate that the central system of control has retired as the result of Mohammedan and European intrusion. Jacolliot attempted to parallel the Brahmanic Mysteries with the systems of the Jewish Cabalists and the Alexandrian Neoplatonists. He was profoundly impressed

---

\* See *Occult Science in India*.

by the occult phenomena which he saw while residing in Pondichery. Having seen the exhibitions of magic, he was inspired to examine the doctrines which made such remarkable occurrences possible. He summarized his investigation thus: "Our aim is merely to give an account of the philosophical and spiritualistic tenets of the Brahmans, as well as of the external phenomena and manifestations which are, according to them, the means whereby the Petres, or ancestral shades, demonstrate their existence and communicate with men."

It is not always wise to interpret one religio-philosophical system in the terms of another. In this case, however, it is valid to indicate the indebtedness of the Mediterranean and Aegean esoteric institutions to the Hindu system. At least traditionally, the Greeks, Egyptians, Persians, and Syrians acknowledged Eastern inspiration. That which cannot be directly discovered by examining the Hindu remains can be partly reconstructed from the systems grounded in Brahmanism. Eastern philosophy reached Europe and the Near East even before the campaign of Alexander the Great. India was the motherland of world religion, and those Adepts and initiates who carried the doctrine to distant places preserved the basic structure of the original revelation.

Centuries after the death of Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana resolved to become a Pythagorean. He voluntarily accepted the disciplines of the school and attempted in everyway possible to practice the Pythagorean life. He assumed the dress of the Brotherhood and bound himself with the vow of silence for five years. Apollonius gained distinction as a sage and is included among the self-initiated disciples of the Mysteries. In order to restore, if possible, the lost Pythagorean keys to the universal science, he made a journey to India, following as closely as he could the route previously taken by Pythagoras. While it is most unlikely that this man of Tyana ever revealed what he



learned in the East, a fragment of his account has been preserved.

The third book of *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, by Philostratus the Elder, describes the journey made by Apollonius and his faithful disciple, Damis, to the region beyond the Ganges River. Here the philosopher was received by the Brahmans. According to Damis, the Indian sages dwelt on a hill which rose above the surrounding plain as high as the Acropolis at Athens. A cloud surrounded this elevation, permitting the wise men to be visible or invisible as they chose. The vapors made it difficult to discover the path that led to the retreat of the holy scholars. When Apollonius reached them, he found eighteen mysterious, learned persons governed by Iarchas, who was seated on a lofty throne of black bronze inlaid with various designs of gold. The chairs of the other sages were likewise of bronze, but not so high and without golden ornaments. Apollonius presented his credentials including letters from the Indian king. The Brahmans addressed the philosopher by name and conversed with him in Greek.

Apollonius remained with the sages about four months, and during his stay they accepted both himself and Damis into their secret rites. There were many discussions of philosophy, and when it came time for the travelers to depart, the Brahmans told Apollonius that in his own country men would believe him to be a god, not only after his death, but while still he lived. During one of their conversations, Apollonius asked Iarchas whether the number of the wise men was significant. Eighteen was not the square of any number, nor had it been held in certain dignity and honor by the Egyptians and Pythagoreans. To this question the head of the religious community made this curious answer: "We are neither slave to a number, nor is the number to us; but we Sages are counted according to our wisdom and virtue, and are more numerous at one time and fewer at another. I am told that my grandfather in his day was chosen to be one of twenty-seven Sages, of

whom he was the youngest of all; and that when he had reached his hundred and thirtieth year he was the only one left here, because none of his colleagues had survived, and no other qualified and philosophic mind existed in India. When the Egyptians congratulated him on being one of the most fortunate of men because he had occupied this throne alone for four years, he begged them to give over reproaching the Indians for the scarcity of their philosophers."

When Apollonius reached the Erythraean Sea, he returned the camels which Iarchas had loaned him for the journey home. With them, he sent this letter: "Apollonius to Iarchas and the other Sages, Greeting:

I came to you by land and you have presented me with the sea, and by sharing your wisdom with me you have enabled me to traverse the sky. Even among the Greeks I shall be mindful of these teachings, so that I will converse with you as if face to face, unless I shall have drunk from the cup of Tantalus in vain. Farewell, best of philosophers."

It is evident that Apollonius and his disciple never revealed the full account of their visit to the hill of the sages. Philostratus said that Apollonius wrote and spoke of the Brahmans enigmatically. There is a sentence twice repeated in which the philosopher summarized his experience beyond the Ganges: "I saw men dwelling on the earth and yet not on it, defended on all sides, yet without any defense, and yet possessed of nothing but what all possess." Philostratus believed that the traveler was referring to the numerous miracles and wonders which he beheld while residing among the Indian sages.

It is incorrect to assume that Brahmanism implies the worship of Brahma. Actually it means the acknowledgement of the authority of the Vedas and all that this acceptance suggests. There was a gradual drift away from the sacrificial and ritualistic aspects of the religion and toward a compound of theosophical speculations. These

are not actually Vedic, but are sustained by extensions of the older tradition. The compound of philosophical systems and mystical preoccupations is more correctly defined as Hinduism. Originally, Brahmanism included several systems of specialized philosophical and scientific knowledge. Just as the Mystery Schools of Greece and Egypt were the custodians of the secrets of medicine, architecture, statescraft, mathematics, astronomy, and music, the scholarly caste of India unfolded the essentials of a broad learning. One by one the sciences broke away from the temple system, and each recognized some ancient initiate as its peculiar patron.

It will be useful to mention a few of the rock-hewn temples associated with the Brahmanic Mysteries. They are scattered about India and are often found close to Buddhist or Jain sanctuaries. Two of the most famous are the cave temples of Ellora in the native state of Hyderabad and those on the island of Elephanta in the harbor of Bombay. There is much difficulty in determining the antiquity of these celebrated shrines. It is usual to date them between the 7th and 10th centuries of the Christian Era, but there is much to suggest a greater antiquity. It is possible that the present elaborate excavations and adornments represent more recent additions and are not the original work. There is a tradition that Pythagoras visited both Elephanta and Ellora, which were centers of Hindu culture as early as 600 B. C. The popular belief that the Brahman cave-temples were inspired by Buddhism is unreasonable. In any event, these caves unfold the essentials of ancient Hindu doctrine through their ornate symbolism. They were certainly used in rituals of initiation, and belonged to a period when these rites were still flourishing.

As opposed to the archaeological approach, there are native traditions about the Elephanta caves. According to one, they were excavated in a single night by the Pandavas, the five hero-brothers of the Mahabharata. Another version attributed them to the Kanara king, Bana-

sura, whose daughter dedicated herself to perpetual virginity and lived for many years on the island. A tradition, probably of Mohammedan origin, attributes the caves to Alexander the Great (Sikandar), whose name is associated with several works and monuments. Contrary to general opinion, the carvings at Elephanta were not mutilated by the Mohammedans and were intact in A. D. 1534 when the region passed into the hands of the Portuguese. These foreigners kept their cattle in the caverns during the rainy season, and went to considerable pains to destroy the carvings, even bringing artillery to make certain the work of demolition.

At the height of its glory, Brahmanism taught a majestic concept of universal processes. Disciplined by a profound knowledge of higher mathematics, the initiates explored many dimensions of the quantitative and qualitative universe. They held deep and learned theories about such abstractions as space, time, energy, mind, and matter. Like the members of other Esoteric Schools, they concealed their discoveries under elaborate emblems and figures. At the height of the philosophic period, the Vedic theology and the post-Vedic scientific method developed a cosmological and anthropological scheme of amazing profundity and integrity. As yet the Western world has been so lacking in appreciation and interest that it has failed to examine systematically the wisdom of the East.

### *Sankaracharya*

The great Dravidian Guru, Sankaracharya, has been called The Adept of Adepts. He is said to have been born in Malabar, about the end of the 7th or the beginning of the 8th century. Orientalists differ, and in spite of the firmness of their opinions it is probable that he flourished earlier than the approved date. The advent of this illustrious teacher coincided with the revival of Brahmanism after the decline of the Buddhistic reform. The Buddhists

made a valiant attempt to preach a doctrine of equality and fraternity, but their emphasis upon the responsibilities of the individual was not popular in a country long dominated by a caste system. Although much is made of the elaborate program by which the Brahmans regained their supremacy, the simple fact is that the majority of Hindus preferred to rest their spiritual destiny in the keeping of a sacerdotal class.

Sankaracharya was himself a strict Brahman and a great teacher of the Vedanta philosophy.\* He defended the Advaita doctrine of nondualism against the numerous schools that had denied or ignored the unity or identity of all beings. Sankaracharya has been described as "the great revivalist preacher," but, unfortunately, Brahmanism was no longer able to justify the full confidence of thoughtful persons. A religion once displaced or superseded can never regain its original sphere of influence. Buddhism had broadened the ethical convictions of the masses, and the result of the revival was a compromise and the appearance of a new sect. The Brahmans viewed Sankaracharya as an Avatar come to restate the Vedic doctrine, and the Buddhists looked upon him as a possible re-embodiment of Gautama Buddha returning to cleanse and unfold their own teachings.

There are several accounts of the birth and childhood of Sankara. All of these include strange and miraculous occurrences. In one version the father of the sage was named Sivaguru. He was a learned Brahman, and though married for many years was childless. At an advanced age he and his wife performed special ceremonies and practiced severe austerities before the lingam of the god Siva. Later, the deity appeared to them in a dream or vision. Siva, impressed by the sincerity of the elderly couple, inquired if they would prefer to have one son endowed with exceptional wisdom and virtue but of short

---

\* See *Hinduism*, by Monier-Williams.

life, or many sons lacking such qualities. The prospective parents decided to choose the heroic incarnation. Thus a son was born to them at the moment when the planets and constellations bestowed their most powerful influences.

Another version of the birth story follows the traditional form of the immaculate conception. Visista, the mother of the sage, worshipped before the Siva Linga in Kerala. In the form of his generative symbol, Siva overshadowed Visista, and she conceived a son. By this account, Sankara was actually descended from the deity. That symbolism is implied in both legends is apparent, for in the earlier record the father's name was Sivaguru, which means *a teacher of the Siva sect*. Sankara was, therefore, the personification or embodiment of the esoteric tradition associated with the cult of this deity. It is said that Sankara learned to read at the age of two years, and by his third birthday he was a profound student of the Puranas. He was born with strongly developed intuitive faculties and the power of internal vision. His mother had dedicated herself and her child to the service of the god, and she guided her son with reverent devotion. Sankara was equally attached to her, and several miracles which he performed were for her sake.

While still little more than an infant, Sankara attended the Vedic School and mastered the sciences of his day. He became a sannyasi, renounced the householder's life, and attached himself to the Guru Govinda, a Master whose teachers descended from the great Vyasa. The young mystic increased in fame until the reports reached the king of Kerala. This illustrious personage came with his retinue to invite Sankara to the royal court. The king also desired a son, and believed that Sankara could reveal to him the necessary ceremonies with which to propitiate the deity. The instruction given by the sannyasi on this occasion is still secretly taught.

Although the horoscope of Sankara indicated an exalted destiny, it also warned of an early death. When one

of the Rishis said that the boy would die at the age of thirty-two years, the young man was determined to devote himself entirely to the life of asceticism. He remained for some time in the hermitage of Govinda, and was ordered by his Master to make a pilgrimage to Benares. It was on this journey that Padmapada became his pupil. On the banks of the Ganges, Sankara told Padmapada to walk across the river and join him. The faithful student immediately obeyed, and wherever he set his foot upon the surface of the river a lotus flower appeared to sustain him. The name *Padmapada* means *lotus foot*.

As he journeyed about, Sankara debated and discoursed with famous teachers. Always he answered their most difficult questions and refuted their errors. It was reported that to try his learning, Vyasa himself assumed the form of an ascetic and tested the youthful sage with the most abstract and difficult inquiries. Again Sankara was victorious, for even the powers of the Rishis could not prevail against his wisdom. If Vyasa had found no way of discomfiting the young sannyasi, the goddess Sarasvati was not so easily defeated. She entered into the contest in the form of the beautiful wife of a celebrated scholar with whom Sankara was debating. She requested the privilege of examining the wisdom of Sankara, and then questioned him on the subject of mortal love. For the first and only time the sannyasi had no answer; yet how could wisdom be complete if one of life's most intimate and inevitable mysteries was not solved?

To meet this emergency, Sankara called upon the secret sciences of Indian philosophy. He came upon the body of King Amaraka, who had recently died, and by the power of will caused his consciousness to enter the corpse. Amakara seemingly revived and returned to his kingdom. By this device Sankara temporarily assumed the life of the householder and experienced all family relationships. In due time King Amaraka passed again into the sleep of death, and Sankara returned to his own body

which had been guarded by his disciples. He then went back to Sarasvati and answered her question.

Soon afterwards he knew by the power of Yoga that his mother was departing from this life. He hastened to her and gave her all that he could of love and understanding. After her death he broke the rules and observances of the Indian ascetic, who is not supposed to have any contact with the deceased. Sankara cremated his mother's body by releasing from his right hand a tremendous tongue of flame. Those who stood ready to condemn him for disobeying the traditional rules were silenced by this miracle. After his duties to his mother had been completed, Sankara continued to journey about the land and came finally to the Temple of Sarada in Kashmir. Here the priests forbade him entrance and subjected him to a severe examination. But at last when they were satisfied and he stood within the sanctuary, the goddess Sarasvati testified to his holiness and the completeness of his wisdom. He then mounted the seat of omniscience in the heart of the temple. This account relates to one of the degrees of his initiation.

It was in the city of Kanchi that Sankara entered the thirty-second year of his life and knew that he had come to the end of his incarnation. By the highest science of Yoga he seated himself and caused his physical body to be absorbed into the more subtle vehicles. These, in turn, he disintegrated, attaining identity with pure reason. The pilgrimage of his consciousness continued until he experienced identity with the consciousness-intelligence which pervades the universal form. He was buried and not cremated, for so pure and holy a body did not require the purification by fire.\* Anandagiri definitely states that Sankara absorbed his physical body and also that the remains of the sage were placed in a tomb. By absorption is undoubtedly meant the withdrawing of the physical prin-

---

\* See *The Story of Oriental Philosophy*, by L. Adams Beck.



principle of energy and not the actual disappearance of the body remains. The apparent contradiction is due to the obscurity of the wording.

Mme. Blavatsky, quoting from the Esoteric Commentaries, differentiated between Gautama and Buddha. After the Nirvana, Buddha returned to the universal consciousness, but Gautama, the human ego, attempted further incarnations. Blavatsky writes: "A few centuries later Buddha tried one more incarnation, it is said, in \* \* \*, and again fifty years subsequent to the death of this Adept, in one whose name is given as Tiani-Tsang. No details, no further information or explanations are given." \* The further incarnations of Buddha are listed as Sankara, who died at thirty-two, \* \* \*, who died at thirty-three, two not named or indicated, and Tsong-Kapa, the great Lamaist reformer. Blavatsky speculates that Tiani-Tsang may be Apollonius of Tyana.

As is always the case with the stories of the Adepts, there are numerous inconsistencies in the biographies of Sankara. In spite of the reference to his death, there is the report that he retired to an ascetic's cave in the Trans-Himalayan region. He forbade his disciples and students to accompany him and disappeared forever from the sight of the profane. He is among those included in the Brotherhood of Shambhala and continues to keep his vows of service to humanity. He lives in the doctrine he taught, which can be summarized in one of his statements: "The supreme spirit is real; the world is unreal; the individual self is only the supreme self, and no other."

As a philosopher, Sankara approached one of the most difficult abstractions which can confront the mind of the truth seeker: If there exists a Supreme Being, omniscient, omnipresent, and omniactive, and therefore completely limitless, how can a creation composed entirely of limited creatures be explained? In substance, how and why does

---

\* See *The Secret Doctrine*.

perfection produce only imperfection? Sankara solved this apparently irreconcilable conflict between noumenon and phenomenon by introducing the principle of maya, or illusion. The mind confuses subject and object, the knower and the knowable, and, by imposing the qualities of one upon the other, brings into existence both the cause of doubt and the evidence which sustains the uncertainty. The sage objectified the confusion under the terms *we* and *you*. These terms cannot be used interchangeably. It is not proper to say "we are you," or "you are we." It is also false to transfer the attributes of *we* to *you*, or vice versa. *We* or *I* exist as that which knows or as the state of knowing; it can never be that which is known. Thus *knowing* is subject, and the *known* is the object.

Schopenhauer's *Wille* and *Vorstellung* correspond to the world as subject and the world as object. In Sankara's teaching, the nature of the not-self, or object, can be determined by examination and the testimonies of the faculties and sense perceptions, but the substance of the self, or object-knower, can be discovered only by internal experience. "In conclusion," writes Max Mueller, "Sankara sums up by saying that all that is founded on this wrong transference or assumption, all in fact that we can know and believe to be true, whether in science, or ordinary philosophy, or law, or anything else, belongs to the realm of Avidya or Nescience, and that it is the aim of the Vedanta Philosophy to dispel that Nescience, and to replace it by Vidya, or true knowledge."\*

It naturally followed that Sankara recognized a distinction between esoteric and exoteric learning. The secret discipline was a systematic unfoldment of consciousness toward identity with unconditioned Being. The profane schools of education were satisfied to attain an intellectual concept of the object universe. They sought to perfect wisdom by imposing unexperienced qualities, called *defini-*

---

\* See *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy*.

tions, upon objects and by forcing the knower to condition or restrict its own universality. Accepting the self and the not-self as one results in the greater being burdened with the attributes of the lesser, at least on the plane of mind. A man says: "I am sick," or "I am old," or "I am afraid." His very statement is untrue, for *I* is unchangeable and exists in perpetual detachment from action. It is the not-self, the exterior personality, which is subject to various misfortunes. The man should say: "My body is sick," or "My body is old," or "My mind is afraid." The moment the fact is acceptable, the path of enlightenment is revealed.

### *The Gurus*

For thousands of years the religious disciplines of the Hindus have been in the keeping of spiritual teachers. The Indian sects venerate ancient sages and philosophers as the founders of schools and systems. The old teachings descended through the disciples of the original teachers. These disciples, in turn, gathered devout followers whom they instructed. When the disciples attained illumination, they were recognized as Masters of the sect and as the spiritual sons and heroes of the early sages. Only those who had been faithful disciples of recognized Gurus were entitled to teach the esoteric disciplines. In this way the streams of Eastern wisdom flowed down through time, and now sanctify with their living waters the modern saints of India. Occasionally, as reported in the histories of the various Orders, a Guru gained unusual distinction for his gifts and powers. He was then regarded as peculiarly overshadowed or inspired either by one of the deities or by the spirit of a celebrated ancient Rishi.

While it is probable that much of the old wisdom was lost or obscured through the long centuries of descent, it may be accepted without unreasonable doubts that the modern Gurus of India are the custodians of the wisdom

teachings of the ancient Aryas. It is usual to think of these Hindu religious philosophers merely as teachers, but this is not correct. They more closely resemble the classical Greek philosophers, who formed their schools and became fathers in learning to all their students. The Indian disciple is obligated to obey and serve only his teacher. Earthly ties are of secondary importance, but ethical and moral obligations are respected. In the older times, at least, it would have been considered sheer audacity for any truth seeker to enter upon the religious life without the guidance of a qualified Guru. The selection of a teacher might be determined by the reputation of the Master or by the natural sympathy which the student might feel for a certain venerable person. Sometimes a miraculous incident or the horoscope indicated the proper choice.

Disciples did not feel that obedience to their teacher was a difficult or odious task. Early in their courses of study they were taught that obedience strengthened and liberated the inner consciousness. It might well be that today's student would become tomorrow's teacher. No one had the right to ask obedience who had not himself learned to obey. It was the duty of the Guru to examine into the hearts and minds of his chelas. If he discovered in one traces of pride or arrogance, or in another indications of selfishness or worldliness, these negative tendencies had to be overcome. The mind that was bound to its own conceits was unfit for works of holiness. If, on the other hand, the Master noted that a certain disciple was deficient in the courage of conviction, this weakness required correction. Life with the Guru was daily contact with practical religious experience. The chelas watched and listened and benefited according to their individual capacities.

A promising student was given encouragement and special assistance. He was advanced as rapidly as his merits deserved. In some cases the disciple excelled his Master. If this occurred, the teacher was well-satisfied. Such ex-

cellence, however, did not interfere with the Master-disciple relationship. As long as he lived, the student respected his teacher, considering that lack of such reverence was an offense against truth. Often the disciple remained with the Guru until his death, and was then inspired to form a circle of his own. Sometimes, however, advanced students were required by their teachers to become instructors and were sent out into the world with the blessing and protection of the Guru.

While the term *Master* is applied generally to all recognized Gurus and saintly ascetics, there are many grades of these spiritual teachers. Some are but humble transmitters of the tradition, and others have already attained to the powers of the fabled Rishis. Among themselves, the holy men know which are the more enlightened. The Gurus venerate the great Masters of their sects, even as they themselves are honored by their disciples. Throughout India the old secrets of human regeneration are guarded by these heroic saints, who stand ever ready to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, to protect the integrity of the esoteric doctrine. Under no condition will the Gurus reveal the mysteries of the faith to any who will not accept the path of discipleship. Wisdom must be earned, and those unwilling to live the life can never know the teaching.

The system includes, therefore, the twofold approach. The Guru is both the Prajapati and the Kumara, and he is required to bestow both attributes upon his chelas. Although instruction emphasizes the unfoldment of internal powers of consciousness, there are also many practical considerations. The Guru directs the activities of his students into fields of social usefulness. If the disciple shows the necessary qualifications, he is encouraged to equip himself for a learned profession, as law or medicine. He is required to be a good citizen and to fulfill all the normal responsibilities of living. In whatever field of service he selects, usually with the Guru's assistance, he is expected to use his mystical knowledge. His standard of conduct is

guided by his religious convictions. If the chela is specially fitted to become a religious teacher, he must learn how to guide and direct persons of all classes and degrees of development.

In "The Maharashtra Saints and Their Teachings," Krishnarao Venkatesh Gajendragadkar, Professor of Philosophy, H. P. T. College, Naski, Bombay, writes of the Eastern holy men: "Saints are the citizens of the City of God. They know no limitations of time and space. They live for eternity and in eternity. Their affections are not constrained by the consideration of provinces or nations. They live and work for the good of humanity. Though they apparently speak different languages, the thoughts expressed by them are essentially the same, since the subject-matter of their thought and discourse is the same, the God-head. . . . There is no monopoly or privilege in the realm of spiritual wisdom. The saints are the righteous fruits of the intellectual and moral progress of the world and are born for its enlightenment."\*

As previously mentioned, Deity, at the beginning of the cycle of creation, caused the Prajapatis and Kumaras to emanate from his own being by the exercise of will and Yoga. As the Supreme Lord passed from the state of solitary self-existence, by the extension of his own consciousness, to the condition of becoming the cause and sustainer of phenomenal diversity, his objective powers awoke and were embodied as the Prajapatis. Through them he brought forth the cosmos out of chaos, and established the laws which were to govern the material universe. These laws, unfolding and descending through time and place, produced the lawgivers, the great sages, and the hero-kings. In this way the wisdom of God was manifested in the growth of the Tree of Knowledge, with its roots in Brahma. The philosophical systems cultured the mentality of those creatures endowed with mind that they might know, and

---

\* If for the word *saint* is understood *initiated sages and mystics*, the definition is clear.

through knowledge might attain mastery over the phenomenal sphere and the materials of which it is composed.

Thus the Prajapatis were the sons of will, but simultaneously the self-existent Lord released through the experience of realization the virgin Kumaras, who were the sons of Yoga. After the Creator became aware of the diversity which he had engendered and in which, to a degree, he was submerged, he restated his own identity in the midst of his manifestations. This restatement was possible because the divine nature contains within itself the seven potencies of the experience of conscious identity. The Kumaras, therefore, became embodied in the paths which lead from the world back to participation in the universal overself. These are the ways of redemption, which begin with regeneration and end in illumination. The Kumaras were not the fathers of progeny, but remained as the seven ascetics, who simply waited to be known through spiritual apperception. Although the Kumaras had no direct offspring, they were, like the Gurus, spiritual fathers. They were chosen and accepted as the chelas choose and select their Masters. In this way they came to be known as the spirit-parents of the saints. The Prajapatis incarnated to become sages, but the Kumaras did not so incarnate; they overshadowed those who sought them and operated from the invisible plane of consciousness.

In the human evolutionary pattern, the Prajapatis therefore represented wisdom by tradition, and the Kumaras, wisdom by mystical experience. There is one law for the world, and another law for the self. These do not conflict, but should be interpreted as a polarization of the principle of law. The code for the world is to expand toward universal sovereignty through knowledge. The code for the self is to ascend through self-mastery to participation in the substance of truth. In the Guru system, the disciple is taught to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which

are God's." The proportions and dimensions of the two-fold doctrine must be recognized and accepted. Physical knowledge alone can never discover truth; spiritual knowledge alone can never fulfill the purpose for the evolutionary process. As man exhales and inhales breath in order to live, he must likewise both objectify and subjectify to fulfill his destiny.

The esoteric system in Asia emphasizes the unfoldment of those internal faculty-resources which remain, like the Kumaras, unwilling to create progeny until they can generate on their own plane. Truth as reality per se cannot be embodied or manifested on the level of material forms and institutions. Those who seek it must rise through discipline to a sympathetic state of acceptance. This hazardous journey inward and upward is concealed beneath the symbolism of the chela climbing the narrow and tortuous path that leads to the remote ashrama of his spiritual Master. Although contact with Western cultural systems has profoundly influenced Hindu thinking, no amount of Occidental materialistic conditioning has undermined the Easterner's faith in the Guru system. To quote again from Dr. Gajendragadkar:

"The aspirant must be initiated into the mysteries of spiritual life only by a master who has realized God. It is only a burning lamp that can light other lamps. Initiation forms the first step in spiritual life. In this respect the parents or other relatives are of no use; nor is God to be realized merely by strenuous independent thinking, or by mastering various sciences. Enlightenment is impossible without a *guru* (master). Sciences, contemplation and devotion and various practices are of no avail without his grace." \*

The learned doctor's reference to lighting one lamp from another is reminiscent of certain Rosicrucian teachings. The passing on of the lamp means *the perpetuating*

---

\* See *Cultural Heritage of India*.



*of living truth.* To such of their disciples as trim their lamps and provide the necessary fuel, the Gurus give the flame of their spiritual intensity. The teacher always objectifies or impersonates the overself, which is the Jadad Guru. As the disciple unfolds his spiritual resources, he advances within the mystical Orders until he is overshadowed by one of the rays of the esoteric Hierarchy. By this is meant that he releases the powers of the Kumaras which are locked within his own higher nature. He is then sanctified or sainted by his own overself and becomes the servant and disciple of the Supreme Lord. The elaborate descriptions of the Rishis, who reappear later as the Buddhist Arhats, are unlocked by this same key.

Western civilization must ultimately embrace at least the spirit of the Guru system. New forms and terms to describe the method of instruction will change the outer appearance, but the principle involved is immutable. Knowledge must be ensouled, or both the knowledge and the knower perish together. Regardless of schooling and formal instruction, the Kumaras refuse to create. Without their participation, learning is merely the accumulation of phenomenal information preserved in the memory. The lamp is there, also the wick and the oil, but there is no flame. No matter how beautiful or perfect the lamp of the mind becomes, it is useless if it cannot give light. The esoteric tradition ensouls or possesses knowledge, but can never be possessed by the mind. The Guru raises knowledge from the dead so that it becomes "the first-born of them that sleep." As the dedicated instrument of the Hierarchy, the one who is learned becomes the one who understands. The Kumaras can therefore be said to bestow understanding from within; that is, from themselves. This is a high secret of alchemy, for consciousness is the great transforming and transmuting agent.

It should not be assumed that all the Gurus of India have attained conscious union with the overself. Spiritual unfoldment is measured by degrees of enlightenment.

Some have gone far; others have traveled but a little way. Each, however, has a degree of insight and can open the door to a worthy disciple. Once the essential principles are known, the dedicated student proceeds according to his own capacities. As he advances, he becomes more internally aware of the eternal standard of values. Once the lamp is lighted, the eye of the soul abides in the light. The chela is better able to recognize and discriminate, and he experiences the Guru hierarchy. The seeker searches for that which he needs, and if his little light shines brightly, he will find what he seeks. The higher teachers can only be known and recognized by those who have developed the necessary internal perceptive powers.

The search always involves a series of acceptances. Truth is not required or demanded, but is known by a gentle receptivity disciplined by wisdom. The Prajapatis advance wisdom to its reasonable and possible end, and then the Kumaras carry on the program of inner growth. Adeptship in the East is also a term covering a wide range of spiritual accomplishment. It is applicable to those who have accomplished a synthesis of the mind-and-heart doctrine. The Adepts are not necessarily all-knowing; they are Self-knowing. They have experienced what may not be put into words. The materialist measures wisdom in the extent of things learned and remembered. The mystic measures wisdom in the terms of experience of Self. This Self is Deity in the sense of Vishnu, the Pervader. Union (Yoga) with the Pervader as universal consciousness is the fullness of wisdom; it is the personal experience of the divine will. It is the apperception of that which is eternally true, and not the possession of worldly wisdom or that vast mass of data which has no meaning outside the sphere of phenomena.

The Eastern Adept demonstrates essential wisdom by the use of powers latent in the average human being. He is not a Lord over Nature, but a servant of the universal purpose. Jesus said: "He that would be the greatest among

you, let him be the servant of all." The Adept is the servant of the All. He is greater because in him all self-motivations on the level of the personality have been overcome by the motivation of the Supreme Self. This again is in the spirit of Sri Sankaracharya and therefore represents mystical Hinduism. The Gurus are in the same way the servants of the Adepts, but throughout the Hierarchy the term *servant* is to be understood not as a word implying a *menial* or a *bondsman*, but in the sense of a *priest serving his altar*. The teachers do not merely obey the members of a metaphysical aristocracy; they serve the divine plan as it is revealed by those having greater internal apperception. Principles are served, and the personalities through whom these principles are revealed are respected.

There are many schools in India presided over by sanctified Masters. Each group is a miniature of the great College of the Adepts. The small groups are like cells in a larger body. Altogether they form a spiritual-physical organism, and through this body circulates the consciousness-energies of the Dhyān Chohans. There is no part or member of this wonderful body which can exist if separated from the general circulation. Even though in the material world the sects may seem to differ, they are reconciled in the consciousness of the Adepts who control them. Confusion is apparent rather than real and exists only on the level or plane of spiritual ignorance. As the disciple advances along the Middle Road, he comes to the reconciliation of all differences in the experience of union.

PB-3957-1  
5-11





118794

BF  
1999  
H312  
pt.1

118794

Hall, Manly Palmer  
The adepts in the  
eastern esoteric tradition

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
0C9 '72	Tim Dunkin
0C26 '72	h h DSA

Hall  
The adepts...pt.1

**THEOLOGY LIBRARY**  
**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT**  
**CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA**



PRINTED IN U.S.A.



