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ESOTERIC HINDUISM

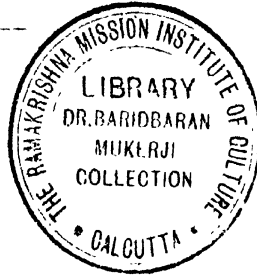
(IN TWO VOLUMES.)

BOOK I.

POPULAR HINDUISM.

"Better the rock-bound load, better the crawling earth-worm, better the blind cave-serpent, than the man without inquiry."—*Yoga Yasistha*.

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PRINTED AT THE ROYAL VICTORIA PRESS,
322, LINGHI CHETTY STREET, MADRAS.

**THIS VOLUME
IS DEDICATED TO**

Mrs. Annie Besant, J.C.S.

by the

COMPILER

in grateful recognition of her valuable services rendered

in the reconciliation of Hindu Religion with Western

Science and Philosophy.

P R E F A C E .

IT has been often remarked that we cannot place reliance on Western Translations of books on Hinduism, because the writers do not try to understand the true spirit of our writings, and chiefly because they write on the subject with bias. Their books teem not only with gross misrepresentations, but the authors very often indulge in strong, vile and objectionable language in criticising some Hindu Customs and want to make idiots and fools of our great ancestors, whose philosophy and religion are admired now throughout the civilized world. What is more surprising is that, when speaking of their own religion, they do not at all seem to be troubled with the absurdity of many of their own beliefs, which are against science and reason. This, we find to be the common fault of all Christian, especially Missionary, writers on Hinduism. It is useless to attempt to point out and answer the several misrepresentations and misinterpretations in these books. What is required is a thorough and complete vindication of Hinduism against these constant and cruel attacks. We cannot in this connection sufficiently express our obligations to the Theosophical Society which has, in its vast Literature extending over nearly quarter of a century, explained the esoteric significance of several Hindu beliefs and reconciled them with Science.* But such explanations

* Some are of the opinion that the esoteric interpretation of Hinduism is an afterthought due to the ingenuity of those who desire to reconcile Hinduism with Science. Draper says in his "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe":—"Gods, heroes, monsters and men might figure together without any outrage to probability when there was no astronomy, no geography, no rule of evidence, no standard of belief. But the downfall of such a system, was inevitable as soon as men began to deal with facts—as soon as history commenced to record, and philosophy to discuss. Yet not without reluctance was the faith of

are scattered here and there in their literature and we have not yet got as we would wish, a complete or exhaustive literature on this aspect of Hinduism, which alone can appeal to the good sense and reason of enlightened humanity. While leaving complete and exhaustive original works on the subject to better men, we at present have undertaken the humble task of collecting together and publishing the various explanations found in the Theosophical and Religious Literature of this country of the past 25 years—the period of recent religious revival. We cannot better commemorate the close of the eventful 19th Century, and the dawn of the new Century, than by vindicating the claims of Hinduism against foreign and unsympathetic attacks, and thus attempting to understand our true religion and philosophy. We have to admit painfully that we often see Hinduism through these tarnished spectacles * The sympathies of many an educated Hindu fresh from the College, are alienated by the study of such works, the only ones available to them. We think we cannot do better service to them and to our country than by collecting the explanations made of Hinduism in the light of science.

In the preparation of this work we are indebted to the following Authors and Works:—(1) Annie Besant's

so many centuries given up. The extinction of a religion is not the abrupt movement of a day, it is a secular process of many well-marked stages—the rise of doubt among the candid; the disapprobation of the conservative; the defence of ideas fast becoming obsolete by the well-meaning, who hope that allegory and new interpretations may give renewed probability to what is almost incredible; the struggle for the support of the ancient doctrine, by the conversion of what had been affirmed to be actual events into allegories under which the wisdom of ancient times had concealed many sacred and mysterious things. But it is apparent that a system which is forced to this necessity is fast hastening to its end." We cannot quite agree with the above view of Esoteric Hinduism, for we find that the esoteric explanation of Hinduism begins with the *Brahmanas* themselves—the oldest commentary of the Vedas.

* See "Murtum in Parvo or Morality, Religion, Sociology and Science"—a work on Exoteric Hinduism published in 1894.

Four Great Religions. (2) Swami Vivekananda's Lectures on Hinduism. (3) Max Muller's Six Systems of Indian Philosophy. (4) Sundaram Aiyar's Metaphysics of Theosophy. (5) Manilal Dvivedi's Logic of Common Sense. (6) Narayanasami Aiyar's Vasudeva Mananam. (7) Thibaut's Vedanta Sutras. (8) Dassier's Posthumous Humanity. (9) Manilal Dvivedi's Monism or Advaitism. (10) Rangachariar's Life and Teachings of Ramanuja. (11) Srinivasa Rao's Dvaita Catechism. (12) Madame Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine. (13) Max Muller's Upanishads. (14) Har Narain's Vedic Philosophy. (15) Madame Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled. (16) Annie Besant's Ancient and Modern Science. (17) Mahadeva Sastri's Vedanta Doctrine of Sankara Charya. (18) Suryanaraina Rao's Astrological Self-Instructor. (19) Jackson Davis' Philosophy of Death. (20) Olcott's Lectures. (21) Annie Besant's Ancient wisdom. (22) Works of Professor Crookes, (23) Zollner, (24) Wallace. (25) The Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society. (26) Theosophist. (27) Brahma Vadin. (28) Lucifer. (29) Theosophic Thinker. (30) Awakened India. (31) Light of the East. (32) Prasnottara. (33) Theosophic Gleaner. (34) Arya Bala Bodini. (35) Light of Truth. (36) Review of Reviews and several other works acknowledged in the body of the book.

ESOTERIC HINDUISM.

BOOK I.—POPULAR HINDUISM.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
INTRODUCTION ... ..	... 1—8
PART I.—MYTHOLOGY.	
SECTION.	
I. One is one	1
II. Universal Duality	5
III. Trinity in Unity	<i>ib.</i>
IV. Hindu Trinity	8
V. Three Steps of Vishnu	27
VI. Seshashayanam	31
VII. Avatars of Vishnu	37
VIII. Sri Krishna	47
IX. Dakshinamurti	<i>ib.</i>
X. Nataraja	53
XI. Chitra Gupta	55
XII. Arjuna and Bhishma	57
XIII. Bhima and Duryodhana	58
XIV. Elementals	60
XV. Asuras and Devas	61
XVI. Churning the Milk Ocean	62
XVII. Brahma's Incest	63
XVIII. Ramayana	<i>ib.</i>
XIX. Taraka War	70
XX. Rukmanikalyanam	71
XXI. Kuchalopakyanam	73
XXII. Markandeya Charitram	74
XXIII. Vedic Mythology in General	75

PART II.—CEREMONIES.

XXIV.	Gayatri	...	...	...	...	...	79
XXV.	Arghya	...	...	...	...	...	81
XXVI.	Prayer	...	...	...	...	...	87
XXVII.	Sandhyavandanam	...	...	...	...	...	90
XXVIII.	Yajna	...	...	...	...	...	100
XXIX.	Funeral ceremonies	...	...	...	...	...	103

PART III.—CASTE MARKS.

XXX.	Brahman Thread	...	...	...	...	104
XXXI.	Caste Marks	...	...	...	...	108

PART IV.—MAGIC.

XXXII.	Mesmeric and Mantraic Cures	...	...	111
XXXIII.	Five pointed star	...	...	112
XXXIV.	Curses	...	...	114
XXXV.	Omens	...	...	115
XXXVI.	Evil eye	...	...	115

PART V.—PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE.

XXXVII.	Places of Pilgrimage	...	...	...	117
XXXVIII.	Mother Ganga	...	...	...	121
XXXIX.	Dwaraka	...	...	...	123

PART VI.—TEMPLES AND FESTIVALS.

XL.	Temples	...	...	...	124
XLI.	Brahmotsavam	...	...	...	127
XLII.	Car Feast	...	...	...	130
XLIII.	Durga Puja	132
XLIV.	Deepavali	134

PART VII.—ASTROLOGY.

XLV.	Astrology	136
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PART VIII.—PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH.

XLVI.	Death	144
XLVII.	How we feel when we die	149

PART IX.—MAN AND UNIVERSE.

CLVIII.	Physics and Metaphysics	...	...	...	153
XLIX.	Involution and Evolution	...	...	...	154
L.	Origin of Man	...	...	...	155
LI.	Septenary Constitution of Man	...	...	...	<i>ib.</i>
LII.	Spirit and Matter	...	...	...	156
LIII.	Universe and Man	...	...	...	158
LIV.	Mother Lotus	...	...	...	164
LV.	Planes	...	...	...	<i>ib.</i>
LVI.	Universe	...	...	...	165
LVII.	Space	...	...	...	167
LVIII.	Hindu Chronology	...	...	...	172
LIX.	Sea-girt Continent	...	...	...	<i>ib.</i>
LX.	Sun drawn by horses	...	...	...	174
LXI.	Dwipas	...	...	...	175
LXII.	Varshas and Khandas	...	...	...	173



INTRODUCTION.

“Not only in what we call ordinary symbolism or outer form, but also in allegory, in fable, in that which is regarded as myth, and in that which is used as ceremony, there is the heart of spiritual truth, and from time to time, some one arises who is able to see the truth underneath the outer symbol of fable or ceremony and so bringing out the truth from the symbol, is able to strengthen man's belief in spiritual realities and re-assert in the midst of darkness the light of a happier time, so that from time to time, what is to be done is that when truth has been lost to the majority and when belief in it has largely disappeared, some one taking hold of the symbol shall explain it, then the reasonableness of the explanation recommends itself to the minds of men and they feel the evidence of the existence of truth, because it is brought out as it were from its hidden recesses; then faith grows up again and the belief is once more able to lift up its head because the unveiling justifies the reality of the symbol and they recognize the inner truth and so become convinced of the light which was hidden and which by the opening, as it were, of the lantern, is once more revealed to the world.”

SYMBOLISM in religions may be called a common language. By that it is meant that certain external forms are taken, which presented to the view of any one versed in the forms convey to the mind of that person a definite idea. So, in all ages men who have studied religions had a common language by which they could communicate with each other; so that no matter what might be the country of the person, no matter what might be the particular religion that exoterically surrounded him, when he came across the symbol, he recognized its meaning, and so had knowledge conveyed to him by his fellow initiates, which to him was as definite and as certain as though it had been conveyed in his own particular language of words. Now of the underlying unity of religions there can be no greater proof than the identity of religious symbols. The study of symbolism may constantly enable us to gain from the past knowledge that has slipped away in the present. So there is some great truth which conveys sustenance to our own thinking, and taking up some ancient scripture, we recognize under the garb of symbol, the truth which, in some other fashion, we have received. So taking the ancient books,

which were written by great sages, by divine instructors, we may find that they have hidden in these books secrets of spiritual knowledge, and that they have done it in order that the secrets might be preserved amongst all the changes and chances of life ; and that when a man has reached a certain stage of spiritual evolution, there might be here ready to his hand knowledge that he might acquire. Thus what has been carried through ages of darkness may once again appear for the enlightening of the world. Not only does symbol carry on truth from age to age, but it also acts as a constant witness for the existence of the truth. Sometimes it may be meant to hide it, but at other times it is meant that the hidden truth shall be brought out, so that the bringing out may re-establish man's belief in truth.

There is no commoner attack made upon India in the West than what is called an attack on its idolatry, and you will constantly find bitter jeers and scoffs uttered by people, who have been over here, who have seen idols and idol-worship and ceremonies performed to the idol, but who have never understood them—nay, who have never taken the trouble to try and understand them, nor even to ask the worshipper what to him is conveyed by such doings. These visitors, looking at the outside with the prejudice engendered by foreign feelings, go back to their own land, and then from many a platform speak of the poor Indians as heathen, given over to idolatry, who ought to be taught a more spiritual religion, and rescued from this degradation that presses on their minds and hearts. Now this question of idolatry is a very important one, because it turns on this most essential question—Shall there or shall there not be accommodation to Ignorance ? How may religion be made at once the teacher of the most degraded and also the object of reverence to the most highly instructed and the most aspiring minds ? It is a hard problem to deal with, for that which is fit for the education of the ignorant, is not fit for the philosopher, and for the highly evolved thinker. The symbolism that teaches the one is repellent to the other, and if you are going to say that religion shall be exactly the same for one and all, then there are only two possibilities before you. If

religion is to be one and the same for all, you must bring it to the limit of the very lowest intellect and of the least developed understanding; otherwise they will be shut out. If it is to be the same for all, the philosopher must come down to the level of the labourer or the child, and his noblest aspirations must find no grander vehicle than that which is capable of being grasped by the most thoughtless and the most uninstructed of the people. On the other hand, if religion is to be useful to all, then you must permit differences to come into it—differences of presentation, according to the mind that is to be met. You must have a religion philosophic for the philosopher, and childish for the child—not because thereby you would drag down religion, but in order that you may lift up the childish mind, and train it for the possibility of future evolution, which may raise it to the greatest height of religious thought. Now in the West a different method has been adopted. In the West it has been attempted to make religion so simple that the very lowest intellect can understand it. What has been the effect on religious thought in Europe of thus lowering the intellectual side of religion? Its effect has been that the intellect of the people has gone outside religion! You have a complete divorce between intellect and religion, and the greatest minds refuse any longer to accept a religion that outrages their highest aspirations and in which they can find no food for lofty spiritual emotions. That is the price which is paid for the dragging down of the divine ideal, so that it may be grasped by the most ignorant mind. In India you have the other plan. You have the recognition that men's minds are in different stages of evolution, that that which is true for the villager in his field is not true for the Brahman in his place of meditation. Both have rights in the religious world, and both have the possibility of the spirit more or less evolved, therefore each should be fed with the food suitable for its evolution. You should no more feed the baby in intellect with the food of the man than you should feed the baby in body with the food which is intended to support a man in his maturity. But that view means what is called idolatry; that means that you preserve the highest

spirituality at the price of being mis-judged by those who will not go underneath the outer sign of the idol. For the idol has different meanings according to the mind which the worshipper brings to it. The idol of the villager may be nothing more than some elemental form, to which he bows down, and to which he brings a drop of water or a flower, to which he strikes a bell. To the Brahman worship of such a deity would be degrading, but it means to that villager something that he is able to recognize and to worship; and the worshipping act on his part, the love and the faith that stir in him, will open out the way for spiritual life. If you give him the abstract thought of the Brahman, he would stand with open mouth, understand nothing of its meaning; and you will not stir in his heart the first faint throbbings of spiritual life. Let him have his idol which will be able to appeal to him, although it would be to you a degradation to worship it, and let the first quiver of spiritual life move within him. It will justify itself, it will begin his spiritual evolution, and, life after life, it will carry him onward to a higher, higher and still higher view of Deity, until the soul which began with the ringing of a bell before an elemental shall find its home at the lotus feet of Mahadeva, lost in the radiance that ever flows therefrom. That is what becomes possible when you realize that the soul is trained through many lives. If you have only one life, and then for ever after what is called Heaven, you must hurry everything on, otherwise, it is clear that when the soul gets to Heaven it will find itself in a perfectly incomprehensible position.

In order to show you how this idolatry may be used, let me take an image that will be familiar to you—the image of Mahadeva on Nandi, his vehicle, the Bull. Now in a town when a day of festival comes, the image of the God is placed on this his vehicle, and is drawn through the streets of the town. It will be seen by many men whose minds are in different stages of evolution; to them it will convey different kinds of ideas. Let us first take the Chandogya Upanishad and the meanings which are given in that. Brahman is spoken of as sitting on the Bull, but we take

the more familiar form of Mahadeva on Nandi. What does it mean, taking it from the popular standpoint? The sky is symbolised by the God, and the man who is called the theological worshipper, will simply see the outer image of the over-arching sky, which to him is a most effective symbol of greatness and grandeur; for, than the sky which has in itself the sun, the moon and the stars—what more impressive symbol can you possibly have, what which would convey to the limited mind the idea of infinity, of the boundless life which fills all space. So to him, if he has been taught something at least of the meaning of symbols, the God will stand for the over-arching sky; and the bull on which he rides will be the symbol of the world; and the four feet of the bull, each of them having a special name, will tell him something of the way in which the world or the universe moves. For one foot will be Agni or fire, another foot will be Vayu or the God of wind—the great breath, in higher parlance, of the Supreme; another foot will be the sun, as it shines giving light to the world; and the fourth foot will be the quarters or the divisions of the sky. So to his mind these would be conveyed by this symbol, if some one would explain to him the idea of the over-arching care of the Divine resting on the manifested world, and the sun, the fire, the wind, and the quarters in the sky, all symbolised in these feet of the bull that carry onward the God and so support and guide the life of the manifested universe. Then some of you will seek after a subtler explanation that will be given you, and this is called the intellectual worship. Then the God will be the mind in man, and the God riding on his vehicle will be the mind riding in the body. Then the feet of the bull will not have lost their significance, for one foot will be speech, another foot will be breath, another will be vision, and another will be the hearing. And then Sankaracharya teaches that as the four feet of the bull carry the animal wherever it desires to go, so does mind attain its objects through speech, breath, vision and hearing, which bring the body and the soul within it into contact with the outer and material universe. Thus by means of these feet of the bull, the senses of the man, there may be carried inwards to the soul the

knowledge which the soul has come into manifestation to seek. So you have your philosophic meaning of the idol as it passes through the streets, and it reminds you of the embodied soul. And there is yet a deeper meaning that you will not find thus plainly given, but which you may work out for yourself. Now let the God stand for the Divine itself, for the spirit that we seek, for the highest manifestation—call it Brahman, call it Siva, call it Vishnu, give it what name you will ; but recognize the one, the all, the indivisible, symbolised under this name and under this idol form. What then will mean the feet of the bull ? They will mean states of consciousness whereby the soul may climb upwards towards its Lord, so that foot after foot of the bull shall be state after state of the soul, by which it comes nearer and nearer the universal spirit, until at last it shall find it one with itself. One foot will be the waking state in which the soul lives and moves in its waking hours ; the next foot will mean the Swapna state, which in the soul is taken as a second step towards the divine ; the third foot will mean the Sushupti state, where one step more is taken towards the divinity ; and the last foot will mean the Turiya state, from which the soul passes onward into unity with God. So that the loftiest conception of the spiritual philosophy is brought to the developed mind when that symbol is seen. Thus you may take what is called the idol and find in it what you bring to it ; and if you have no spiritual life within you, which brings to it its real signification, you have no right to simply scoff at idolatry which is empty to you, because you are empty.

So again you may take the Puranas, full of symbolism of the most complicated and difficult kind. We shall take one instance, that of the Maruts, the gods of the wind and the children of Rudra, the roarer signifying the tones and the force of the wind manifested in phenomenal shape. First of all that represents a fact in nature. It represents this fact that, behind every force in nature, there is an intelligence, that every natural phenomenon has an entity connected with it, so that in the plainest sense and the most obvious signification, these Maruts are entities that deal

with certain forms of manifestation in the phenomenal universe ; and if you understand them, their language and their powers, then the phenomena they control become subject to your knowledge. To no evolved spirit will the Maruts be objects of worship ; they will be powers that he controls by his own will ; no Rishi would worship the Maruts, he would command them ; but that does not alter the fact that they are real entities, that they have their real place in the Kosmos, that they are among the Devas, who are the spirit side of every physical phenomenon that you see ; and if you lose that fundamental truth of occultism, and if in studying the physical phenomena, you see the phenomena only and not the spirit that controls, then you are simply blinding yourselves to the real lessons of nature, and matter has achieved over spirit its last triumph, for not only does it conceal spirit from physical vision, but also it conceals it from the spirit that is in man. The Maruts then in their lowest signification are entities—entities connected with the atmospheric world, immediately connected with the protection of winds and under subjection to the trained and purified will in man. Then there is another signification, in which you find them no longer as those entities in the Kosmos, but in their character as the children of Rudra—that Rudra who once more is Siva and once the more Maha Yogi. What then can be the signification of the children of the Yogi, the children of the Virgin Ascetic ? They become then the passions of his nature, they symbolise the forces which he has mastered, and they become, from this standpoint, the enemies of man, striving at first against him ; and then going higher, still keeping this symbolism of the ascetic, those which were his children of the lower nature, the passions that he had to conquer ; they become the children of the higher nature, when the lower has been conquered by the purified will of the ascetic, in which all power resides, and by them he may work in the external universe. Then you come to the story in which Indra tries to destroy them, for the child is to be born who is to destroy Indra himself, and Indra in this sense is the lower manifestation of nature—the God of the sky, the bearer of the thunderbolt, sym-

bolising a manifested and physical Kosmos ; and as the child to be born shall destroy him (once again), the Marut, Indra casts forth his thunderbolt, and in the womb he shivers the embryo into seven pieces, which again are sub-divided seven-fold. It is the lower that has checked the development of the higher, and has turned into lower forms the forces that ought to have grown into the developed and purified will. And so, step by step bringing together all the different symbols that you may find scattered through the Puranas, you will find that this conception of the Maruts may be translated into most instructive suggestions which may guide you in your own transmutation of your lower forces into higher, and the change of Kama, that physically creates, into a desire which in the spirit is the source of all progress and the spring of all true life.

Symbol has thus the value of not only carrying on the truth, and of giving it to those who are wise, but also of impressing on the outer world the persistent reality of the spiritual truth ; and it is the knowledge of this which makes some lay stress on the preservation of ceremonies, even when they are not understood. In the minds of some, that seems folly and superstition. In the minds of some, that seems to be raising an obstacle in the way of progress. They only see the ceremony from the standpoint of the obstacle ; they do not realise the value that within that seeming obstacle may be enshrined. If the ceremonies whose meaning even has been lost,—lost for the present from the eyes of ordinary men, but not lost from the knowledge of spiritual sages, and not lost in its future power, when once more the truth that it hides is revealed—if the ceremonies had been entirely swept out of India, where should we find the arguments for the reaffirmation of spiritual truth to the Indian people ? But inasmuch as the ceremonies have remained and inasmuch as the symbols still exist, then, coming with knowledge, we can justify the ancient teaching even by these preserved symbols, and so can reach the hearts and minds of the people in a way that would be utterly impossible if the symbols had disappeared.—*Annie Besant's Lecture on Symbolism.*

POPULAR HINDUISM.

The narratives of the Doctrine are its cloak. The simple look only at the garment—that is, upon the narrative of the Doctrine; more they know not. The instructed however see not merely the cloak, but what the cloak covers.—*The Secret Doctrine.*

Myths are now proved to be fables, just in proportion as we misunderstand them; truths in proportion as they were once understood.—*Ibid.*

“The entire fabric of Hinduism is upreared upon an allegorical foundation, but the allegory having been misread, it has degenerated itself into a system of degrading superstition.”—*Manmatha Nath Dutt's "Vishnu Puranam."*

“The highly philosophical and scientific religion of Advaitism or Monism is the firm rock on which Indian society is based—and all the fantastic Pauranika myths, all the ridiculous ceremonies and rites, all the most uncivilized superstitious and customs are all but projections, sometimes deformed, sometimes distorted, but ever solid, of an edifice which derives support from this foundation’.”—*Manlal Derwent's "Monism or Advaitism."*

PART I.

§ I.—ONE IS ONE.*

One is a Unity and cannot be divided into two Ones. The One, if divided into two, gives two parts of the One. Each of these parts may assume a form differing from that of the other, according to the conditions by which it is surrounded; nevertheless, the two parts will essentially remain two parts of the original

* From Dr. F. Hartmann's contribution to *Lucifer*, Vol. II. Madame Blavatsky, the Editor of the journal, wrote with reference to this article, “Our differences in this excellent paper are simply in terms and expressions or form, not in ideas or thought.”

One. The universe, *i.e.*, the All is only One; it is impossible to conceive of two or more All in the absolute sense, and every part of the universe is therefore a part of the All, or a manifestation of the original one in a separate form, being an integral part thereof. The various forms of substance and activity in the All cannot be essentially and fundamentally different from each other; they can be nothing else but various aspects and functions of the indivisible aboriginal One: Matter in all its shapes, visible and invisible, and motion in all its forms, unconscious, conscious and self-conscious can be only two modes of manifestation of the originally unmanifested One; because One is One and cannot be divided into Two.

The original One or the Cause could not have come into existence out of nothing and without a Cause; and as it exists (as we see by its manifestations in Nature) it must therefore be *self-existent* having existed from all eternity by its own power. The One, being self-existent and indivisible cannot be divided and transformed into anything which does not exist. It cannot be annihilated by anything, because nothing exists but itself and its existence must therefore be without an end as it is without a beginning. The reason why the finite intellect of man cannot conceive of an eternal self-existent Cause, God or Law, is because man is not self-existent and self-existence is therefore beyond his experience and beyond his conception.

The original one, manifesting itself as *Substance* in all its shapes and *Power* in all its forms, cannot be essentially and fundamentally different from its own productions, which it must have produced from itself, and within itself, there being nothing else to produce it from. Nor could Matter and Motion continue to exist if the self-existent cause that enables them to continue to exist were to cease to be or to cease to stand in relation to and be active within them. The unmanifested One is therefore wherever and whenever it manifests itself a *Trinity of Causation, Substance and Power*.

§ 2.—UNIVERSAL DUALITY.*

We behold around us everywhere one all-pervading life. The life-principle may be said to pervade all matter ready to spring forth at any and at all points, whenever the necessary conditions are established. And all matter may be considered as waiting for the manifestation of life. Still in the ordinary acceptation of the term, no life dissociated from organisms is manifest to us. Not only is that so, but the last word of science as to the origin of life is biogenesis *i.e.* to say life created or transmitted from previous life.

Although Life in the larger sense is one, still in its manifestation it is always found dual in the material universe. Duality is a universal principle; without it, there could be no attraction, no affinity. Atomic polarity is the epitome of Cosmic duality. Observation and experience, fact and phenomena, reveal this law as everywhere existing and everywhere operating from atom to Sun and from Monera to Man. It is cosmic and universal. It divides the substance of the whole creation into spirit and matter, the one positive and the other negative, two poles of one substance. It again divides created processes into two planes, the subjective and the objective, and places over against the physical life of the body, the spiritual life of the soul.

§ 3.—TRINITY IN UNITY.†

Consciousness, perception and objectivity, the three aspects or categories of Being, or the seven aspects into which they may be divided, are not separate-isolated natures and their gradual unfolding does not constitute three different and distinct processes; all three are but phases, aspects or facets of the One Being in the evolution and involution of which consists the life of the universe.

When this Trinity in Unity is unfolded, expressed and

* From a contribution to the *Theosophist* Vol. X of Dr. J.D. Buck, "a pillar of the Theosophical Society in America."

† From the *Theosophist* Vol. XIII.

manifested, the Universe passes to Universal Day. When the Trinity in Unity coalesces, unites and is re-absorbed, Universal Day gives place to Universal Night. In this Universal Night, there are no separate existences, no separate lives, no separate attributes; time, space, subjectivity, objectivity are no longer; from the stand-point of our thought there is nothing, because nothing is separate from the eternal infinite All.

But behind this universal Being which alternately expresses itself in manifestation and reabsorbs itself into latency, there is another deeper mystery, so profound that human reason almost refuses to grasp it at all. This is the mystery of the Absolute.

As underneath the lump of metal that in the jeweller's hands takes many shapes, now melted to liquid, now hardened to solid, the mind conceives a certain quantity of gold, a quantity which remains unchanged and which the mind regards abstractly as unchanging and unchangeable, even though the lump be separated into many pieces or alloyed with other metals or even powdered to dust and scattered on the face of the earth; so behind this evolving and involving universal life, which alternately expands, and contracts in universal day and night, thought perceives the necessity of another universal being, the sum of the powers and forces of this, as the gold is the sum of the substance in the jeweller's hand and partaking neither in the evolution of this but remaining eternally changeless, motionless, attributeless, in the ever lasting mystery of absolute Being. The Abstract Unity, which contains within itself the potency of all life, but which has no life because it is all life; which contains within itself the potency of all consciousness, but has no consciousness, because it is the totality of consciousness, which contains within itself the potency of all good and beauty and truth but which is neither good, nor beautiful, nor true, because it is absolute good, beauty and truth; which contains within itself the potency of all motion, all sound, colour and sensation; which contains within itself the potency of all attributes, but is without attributes because it is the totality of all attributes; this is the absolute Parabrahm, the unknown and ever unknowable God.

Madame Blavatsky says in the *Secret Doctrine* that the Vedantins apply the term Mulaprakriti or the unmanifested primordial matter to Parabrahm, in contradistinction to the Manifested Universe of matter. The following two passages are also from the *Secret Doctrine* :—The One Being is the noumenon of all the noumena, which we know must underlie phenomena and give them whatever shadow of reality they possess, but which we have not the senses or the intellect to cognize at present. The tendency of modern thought is to recur to the archaic idea of a homogeneous basis for apparently widely different things—heterogeneity developed from homogeneity. Biologists are now searching for their homogeneous protoplasm and chemists for their protyle, while science is looking for the force of which electricity, magnetism, heat and so forth are the differentiations. The Secret Doctrine carries this idea into the region of metaphysics and postulates a “One Form of Existence” as the basis and source of all things. It is in its secondary stage the eternal cause and effect, omnipresent, yet abstract, the self-existent plastic essence and the root of all things, viewed in the same light as the Vedantin views his Parabrahm and Mulaprakriti, the One under two aspects.

The fundamental law in occult Philosophy, the central point from which all emerged, around and toward which all gravitates and upon which is hung the philosophy of the rest is the one homogeneous divine *substance-Principle*, the one radical cause. It is called substance-principle, for it becomes “substance” on the plane of the manifested Universe, an illusion while it remains in “principle” in the beginningless and endless, abstract, visible and invisible space. It is the Omnipresent Reality ; impersonal, because it contains all and everything. *Its impersonality is the fundamental conception of the system.* It is latent in every atom in the Universe and is the Universe itself. The Universe is the periodical manifestation of this unknown Absolute Essence *It is* best described as neither spirit nor matter, but both. Parabrahm and Mulaprakriti are one in reality, yet true in the Universal Conception of the manifested, even in the conception of the one Logos, its first manifestation, to which *It* appears from the objective

standpoint of the one Logos, as Mulaprakriti and not as Parabrahm, as its *veil* and not the one Reality, hidden behind, which is unconditioned and absolute.

§ 4.—THE HINDU TRINITY.*

To pave our way for a proper conception of the Trimooortis—Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, we shall first deal with

GOD

in consistency with our Hindu writers. The theory of God propounded by the Puranas is in no way in conflict with that of the Upanishads.

Now, the Upanishads postulate that this eternal principle is above all thought and speech. It is over this principle that the different religionists of the world super-impose many attributes. It is this principle that they fight about, which has produced manifold jarrings and disputes on this earth of ours. To put an end, as it were, to all these foolish wranglings, the Upanishads say it is Nirguna, Niranjana, Nirabhasa and so on, thus giving it only negative attributes. It is not even according to Herbert Spencer, "that universal and eternal energy from which all things proceed," for then the attributes of matter will have to be ascribed to that universal and non-dual principle. Energy is only Sakti in Sanscrit, and Sakti is but the phenomenal aspect of that principle in the primordial matter, Mulaprakriti. It is not the Absolute itself. But the Absolute of the Upanishads is that which is above all our present and future conceptions, in consistency with the epithets eternal, absolute and infinite, applied to it. This is the logical conclusion which the highest philosophers of the West have come to about God as formulated long ago by the East.

Such being the theory of God propounded by the Upanishads, what do the Puranas say on the subject? It is here that the moderns accuse our Puranas of the promulgation of personality about God, as also of the introduction of idolatry. It will be seen from

* From the *Theosophic Thinker* contributed by Mr. K. Narayanasami Aiyer.

several passages in the Puranas, (see the Vishnu Purana which is considered to be an authoritative work by the three sects in Southern India) that they inculcate the theory of non-personality and the non-anthropomorphic nature of God according to the Puranas.

If God were, according to the Puranas, impersonal and non-anthropomorphic, what is the meaning of the personal and other descriptions in the Puranas, attributed to God, such as, for instance, Narayana moving on the waters, Vishnu bestriding the serpent Adishesha, again bestriding Garuda, and again wearing some weapons, and similarly with reference to Siva, Brahma, and others? In the first place, as God *per se* is non-dual and impersonal, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra or others cannot be termed God; but they are only manifesting energies of God, just as the universe is said to be its manifestation, and hence are perishable. In the second place, the weapons, ornaments, vehicles, and actions, these Devas manifest should not be construed literally. That the Puranic writers of old did not wish that these symbols should be construed literally by the wise, is clear from some passages in the Vishnu Purana.

THE TRIMOORTI.

The universe is composed of the two eternal verities or principles—Purusha (spirit) and Prakriti (matter.) These inseparable twins acting upon one another, constitute this phenomenal universe. The former can be termed the intelligent aspect or pole of the Absolute, while the latter represents the other pole, *viz.*, the inert. But Prakriti or matter has got its Three aspects *viz.*, Satva, Rajas and Tamas. Hence Purusha has also got its Three aspects, which are termed Brahma, Vishnu and Siva or Rudra, since Purusha, acting as it does on its inseparable consort Prakriti, should also have the three differentiations.

In the Puranas Brahma is stated to create the world through Rajas; through Satva, Vishnu preserves the universe; Rudra destroys it through Tamas. What does this mean? To quote the words of Madame Blavatsky—“The fact is, that all the three ‘persons’ of the Trimurti are simply the three qualificative gunas or attributes of the universe of differentiated Purusha-Prakriti (spirit-matter), self-formative, self-preserving, and self-destroying,

for purposes of regeneration and perfectibility. This is the correct meaning, and it is shown in Brahma being made the personified embodiment of Rajoguna, the attribute or quality of activity, of desire for procreation, that desire owing to which the universe and everything in it is called into being; Vishnu is the embodied Satvaguna, that property of preservation arising from quietude and restful enjoyment, which characterises the intermediate period between the full growth and the beginning of decay; while Siva being embodied Tamoguna—which is the attribute of stagnancy and final decay—becomes of course the destroyer. This is as highly philosophical under its mask of anthropomorphism as it is unphilosophical and absurd to hold to and enforce on the world the dead letter of the original conception.”

Thus we find that the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are no other than the creative, preservative and destroying forces or powers of nature—not the inert automatic forces of the present day orthodox official science, but the intelligent ones which are called Saktis among the Hindus, for, is it not irrational and illogical to suppose the existence of self-creating, self-preserving and self-destroying forces without intelligence at the bottom? How can an inert object of itself move and create or do any other thing?

Now these Brahmie, Vaishnavic and Rudraic forces should not be supposed to be three different entities working in the Cosmos; but they are only the triune aspects of one and the same in matter, cosmic and segregate. Take for instance the human body or an atom. It is the Brahmie force that builds it up; the Vaishnavic that preserves it; and the Rudraic that destroys it. Why? To perfect each thing to a higher stage.

Suppose a person creates a certain thing, then preserves it and then destroys it. Here it is only one person fulfilling three different functions. So with the Trinity. All the three do exist at the same time in a thing but each one of them preponderates in it alternately to evolve it into the next higher stage. It is the one in three and the three in one. Therefore it is we find it stated in our Hindu works on the evolution of the cosmos arising from the original Satwa, Rajas and Tamas of Prakriti that the

triune sub-divisions of Satwa, Rajas and Tamas out of the primeval three, will go on to an infinite degree.

It will be clear from Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Bagavata Purana, Kalki Purana, Linga and other Puranas that there is only one principle which manifests itself in three aspects, and that these three are not personal beings. For, if they are personal beings, how can they be supposed to be non-different from another Being? In the face of these express texts, the whole of Southern India is replete with bitter feuds between the followers of Siva and those of Vishnu and between the several sub-divisions of each sect.

But what is the reason of the people ascribing personality to the Trinity? They are not without some grounds to rest such a belief upon. A literal acceptance of the Puranas which describe the Trinity as personal has brought them to this pass. But they overlook the express texts of the Puranas which go against such a conception. They overlook also the passages which indicate that the personal description of the Trinity has a symbolical meaning underlying it. Shall we be so uncharitable as to suppose that the great Rishi Vyasa who is the author of all the 18 Puranas treating of the three, Siva, Brahma and Vishnu as also the Brahma-Sutras, the quintessence of Hindu philosophy, blew hot and cold in the same breath by maintaining in one Purana that Vishnu is supreme, and in another that Siva is supreme, and thus brought about endless discord amongst men? Let us poor men of the world bear the burden of the fault upon our own shoulders and proceed to explain the symbolic nature of the Trinity.

NARAYANA.

Before proceeding to explain the nature of the first of the Trinity, let us enter into that from which Brahma starts at the beginning of a creation. In the closing night and at the twilight of time, Narayana or Janardhana or Mahesvara or Parama Siva or Alinga according to the different Puranas finds himself sleeping on the great waters in a recumbent posture, and after soliloquizing within himself "Whence am I &c," and moving on the waters, he generates, out of his navel, Brahma seated on a full blown lotus, which is connected with the navel by a long lotus stalk.

Now, our ancient Hindu writers maintained that this world has its alternate long periods of activity and repose, which they termed the days and nights of Brahma equal in duration to one another. In the night of creation, all the universe is in its sleeping stage or Pralaya, when Purusha and Prakriti are in their latent state absorbed in the one Fount of Omniscience. The vast expanse of waters represents the eternal space or Mula-Prakriti and Narayana represents Purusha. These were then in their unmanifested state which can be called the Purusha-Prakriti stage. Narayana means literally, moving on the waters, and Janardana means the adored of mankind. Maheswara is the great Lord. Alinga is that which is without Linga or symbol, *viz.*, forms. These words do but signify the Purusha or the sum totality of all souls in their unmanifested stage. The clock having struck for creation to soon begin, the great Lord at the twilight of time, *viz.*, on the eve of creation, agitates the waters of space, since it is only through action that things can be created, and evolves out of himself Brahma.

In the waters of space, Narayana is said to rest in the folds of Adishesha, the serpent with its seven-headed hood over the Lord's head. A synonym of Adishesha is Ananta. Ananta is that which is without end, and represents eternal time. Then what is the rationale of the applicability of the symbol serpent to time? So long as the universe is in its slumbering stage, no fluctuation exists in the one homogeneous space. But on the eve of creation, agitation is set up in it and its equilibrium is disturbed by Narayana, the abstract Motion, who as stated before, represents Purusha and is said to move in that space.

Now this Motion is rhythmical. This is corroborated by modern science. Herbert Spencer in his "First Principles" has a chapter on the 'Rhythm of motion.' Therein he proves the prevalence of this kind of motion, all throughout nature as known. He also proves therein that this rhythm is not merely simple but compound, composed of triple or quadruple rhythms at the same time. But our ancients maintained that this rhythm is originally septenary in its nature, as will be evident from the seven-headed hood of the original serpent, all the other rhythms or motion

being but sub-divisions of the primeval septenary one. The higher three rhythms have passed the notice of our English philosophers as in other departments of knowledge, since they are subtle in their nature, and can be likened to the three principles Atma, Buddhi and Manas of the septenary classification.

Time is but the relation of sequence. In the homogeneous space the conception of time, *viz.*, the relation of sequence arises only when this rhythm of motion is caused. Hence rhythm of motion is but time itself. This rhythm being zigzag or annular according to Herbert Spencer, how can we best symbolise it? Serpent alone is the most befitting symbol on this plane of our present perception to denote the spiral motion existing throughout the cosmos. There is one other fitting reason why the serpent should stand for time. When two forces are at right angles to one another, and have a certain ratio, then it is said that circular rhythms are caused. Hence time which is infinite in its true nature, revolves in a circle being subject to two forces, one tending towards the Absolute and the other towards Manifestation, acting as the centripetal and centrifugal forces in nature (which are called in Sanscrit Avarana and Ikshepa Saktis). Every year returns with its ever-recurring cycles of spring, summer, autumn and winter. Day is followed by night and *vice versa*, and so on. Hence the circular annular serpent depicted with its tail in its mouth to denote the ever recurrent cycles of time.

Narayana, though *per se*, above all time, has to be conditioned by it when he represents the transition stage from the unmanifested to the manifested state. Hence it is we find in the pictures, the serpent overshadowing Him with its hood over Him. So that, Narayana represents, when he brings out Brahma from his navel, the transition stage of the universe from Avyakta (the unmanifested state) to Vyakta (the manifested one).

BRAHMA.

Coming to Brahma, we find that it comes from the root Brahm, to expand. At the period of creation, this power begins to expand for work. How does he evolve or rise from Narayana? It is peculiar to find that he arises from the navel of Narayana.

Why not arise, as in ordinary processes, from the womb or from the mind or *vak* (speech) of Rishis as stated in our books? Why should the navel be pitched upon as the starting-point of the universe from its unmanifested to its manifested state? At the outset, it may be stated that the universe issues from the subjective state to the objective, not through the ordinary process but in some mysterious manner. In the navel of man's body is located a mysterious Sakti or force called Kundalini, which has the power when mastered by a great spiritual personage, of creating or undoing things at will. Carrying this analogy to the universe, we find it has also this Sakti in its navel. This force in the navel projects a lotus-like form, world. Moreover it is the umbilical vesicle in the navel that forms the connecting link between the offspring within and the ether without, and imparts by osmosis the extraneous influence to the child within, in its initial stages in the womb. Again as Narayana is then sexless this mode of evolution is given out to differentiate it from the ordinary one. Now the lotus represents the objective universe on matter, and Brahma is the Rajapurusha of Narayana who fructifies it in order to bring the objective universe into order and form. Previously, the unmanifested universe was represented by the all-expansive waters of infinite space, whereas here the objective universe, being conditioned, is represented by the lotus, a limited symbol. Moreover the Sanscrit word for lotus is Kamala, which means also Akas or space. In the cosmogonies of different religions, the symbol of a lotus or an egg is given to the objective universe of forms. These two symbols play a great part in our Hindu cosmogony.

To have the nearest approach to the conception of an infinite universe the conditioned symbol of a spherical or an oval form is the best, for expand such a form mentally in all directions, and no mathematical point will be excluded from its sweep. The different layers of the lotus petals, higher and lower, represent the different worlds, gross and subtle and on the Karnika (pericarp) within the lotus, reigns the Rajo Purusha, Brahma creating the world through Rajas or red color to represent the Kamic (passionate) tendency through which all things are generated. This Brahma has faces.

It is stated that these four faces represent the four rounds, which humanity has undergone in this day of Brahma. Of course the four Vedas stand for the sounds or rhythmic vibrations which have been developed during these four Rounds.

It is here that Narayana or Brahma becomes sexual. Brahma has a wife called Saraswati. In Yoga Vasishta she is styled Lila. It is this consort of his, that plays all the *lila* or sport in this universe and brings it to action. To prove that these characters ought not to be construed in their dead-letter sense, there is a chapter in the Vishnu Purana devoted to the actions of Vishnu and Lakshmi. It is indubitably shown therein that Vishnu and Lakshmi are no other than the two aspects or pairs, positive and negative, or the abstract and the concrete, which go to produce action in this universe. If Vak (speech) is Lakshmi, then its meaning is Vishnu. If Dharma is Vishnu, then good deeds are Lakshmi, Vishnu is Siva and Lakshmi is Gouri. The Puranic writers are non-sectarian in their character. It is only in the manifested stage that differentiations of pairs set in.

The long lotus-stalk connecting the navel of Narayana with the lotus on which Brahma is seated is the line of medium through which the influence from the higher world is radiated to the lower. One higher world is connected at the time of evolution with another of a lower state through a thin golden line as it were. But in involution, the lower worlds merge into the higher through this line and then this line disappears, and Pralaya (or deluge) ensues.

Thus we find that the one Narayana Principle through his Rajo-guna as Brahma brings into formation the lotus of the objective universe with its stalk issuing from the root of the navel in the mud of himself (Narayana, who issues subjectively in the one universal water of space, *viz.*, Mulaprakriti).

VISHNU.

This second "person" of the Trinity should not be confounded with the non-dual Maha-Vishnu or Narayana, who is also termed Vishnu.

After the one expansive power, *viz.*, Brahma was born or had brought all things to manifestation and done its work, the Vaishnavic power pervades everywhere to preserve created objects, the word Vishnu coming, as it does, from *vis*, to pervade. In other words, the Vaishnavic power which was commingled with the former began to predominate when the predominance of the former ceased and was no longer required for work. Similarly with reference to all objects in the world. While the Brahmic force is latent during the preservative stage so far as the whole universe in totality is concerned, it may be active so far as a part of that universe is considered; for instance, a body may be created newly and then Brahmic force predominates in it.

In the invocation addressed to Vishnu in the very first chapter of the Vishnu Purana, no appendages are given him. It is stated merely that it is the one on whom is super-imposed creation, preservation and destruction through the three gunas, &c. But some epithets only are bestowed on him. In the second chapter where he is described as one with Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, his rest on the couch of Adishesha comes in, to do his work as Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. Here he is represented as both single and manifold. The fourth chapter invests him with the ornaments Sankha (conch), Chackra (discus), Mace and sword with Adishesha as bed. Then in other chapters he comes on his vehicle Garuda &c. These differences are greatly significant and point to the different stages of evolution. In the first stage, it represents the world in its unmanifested stage of Pralaya. No vehicles or ornaments do exist in that state. The terms Vasudeva, Viswabhavana, Hrishikesa and others are applied to him. The first word simply means the effulgent one, abiding in all. The second word means the creator of the universe or the cause of the existence of all things. The third word signifies the lord of the senses. So we see these are merely epithets to describe the indescribable. That, Narayana moving on the waters on the couch of Adishesha represents the transition stage of the world from the unmanifested to the manifested, has been already explained.

Coming to the third, this is the Vishnu of the period called

Pratisarga or secondary creation. This refers to our solar system after a day of Brahma. All life germs or primordial elements having been evolved by Brahma during the primary period stated in the Puranas, form or Rupa creations have to go on on earth during this period. Here we find the symbols suited to the end in view. Referring to the Vishnu Purana we find that Sanka or conch represents the lower or subtle Akas. The Tanmatra or the rudimentary property of Akas is sound which sound is given out by conch. Hence the applicability of the conception of lower Akas or that from which the five subtle elements arise, to the symbol conch.¹⁷ The discus or Chakra stands for the mind or reasoning faculty. This is called Antahkarana or the impure or lower mind. According to Hindus, this faculty evolved in man at a late stage in the scale of evolution. Originally there was intuition in him in full display, which guided him then and when he advanced further and further into the region of desires, his intuition became obscured by them, and then he had to depend upon the ratiocinative process for his guidance, which is now the case with the majority of mankind. Hence it is, we find that Vishnu appears with the symbol of mind in a lower stage of evolution. Now mind, or as it is technically called Chitta flits through the laws of association of ideas and this can best be represented by a wheel or discus which rotates or flies faster than winds. The mace stands for Buddhi. The sword stands for Gnana (spiritual wisdom) sheathed in the scabbard of Agnana. As remarked above, Adishesha represents time. The Strivatsa mark, which is a black point on the breast of Vishnu represents the original homogeneous atom or Mulaprakriti out of which the universe arises. The Koustubha gem, radiant as it is, stands for the Purushas or souls. The bow Saranga typifies the organs of sense and the shafts, the organs of action. Vishnu wears the necklace Vajrayanti composed of the five precious gems of 5 colors, ruby, sapphire, emerald, &c., to denote the five Tanmatras, out of which the five elements arose. Thus much for the third stage.

The fourth stage is where Vishnu appears seated on a Garuda or eagle with all the above symbols. The Vishnu Purana makes

Garuda the father of Jatayu. In the Ramayana, Jatayu says "It is 60,000 years since I was born &c." Thus Jatayu stands for a cycle of 60,000 years. The derivative meaning of Jatayu is accumulated life. Hence Garuda should stand for a greater cycle of time. It may be a symbol for a Manvanteric period.

Besides these Vishnus, there are others who figure in the Puranas when a race or tribe of men do flourish. They may be called racial or tribal Vishnus. Next come the Avatars of Vishnu.

SIVA.

In this third "person" of the Trinity, we have more difficulties to encounter, for the word used to represent this third person is Siva, the derivation of which remains a mystery.

In the aspect of Siva, he is not only the destroying power of nature as well as of all objects in the world, but he is also represented as the great patron of the Yogis—the Maha Yogi, the great ascetic in whom is centred the highest perfection of austere penance and abstract meditation by which the most unlimited powers are obtained, marvels and miracles are worked, the highest spiritual knowledge is acquired and union with the great spirit of the Universe is eventually gained. Now the symbols with which Siva is represented in the Puranas can be applied to both these aspects of Siva and explained from both the stand points. In the former case the whole universe is destroyed in its present form to develop to a higher stage; and in the latter the lower mind or passions are destroyed and the real or higher ego in man reaches the Nirvanic seat through Yoga.

There are two kinds of symbols to represent Siva. The first is the Linga with which Mahadeva is represented in the Sukla Yajur Veda; the second is the personal form he is invested with, with one face and four hands, or with five faces and ten hands wearing all the necessary implements of destruction. These are the two symbols with which he is represented in our Sivite temples. The Mula Vighraha or the immovable image of Siva is represented by a Linga unlike the Mula Vighraha in Vishnu temples which has a human figure only. But the Utsava Vighraha, or the idol carried about in procession, is of human form. In the

temples he is represented with one face and four hands wearing all the above kinds of instruments. The first, *viz.*, Linga, is the most mysterious symbol of all. Only he can understand its true and many-sided significance, who is an occultist. He will then know that it is not a phallic symbol, but that it is one containing all the principles in man with which the powers of nature can be wielded. The word Linga means a symbol only. The Linga Purana states that the primitive Linga is a pillar of radiance in which Maheswara is present. Incarnating first as a pillar of radiance, it takes by and by a distinct form of Linga in it with the increase of all the dross of earthly enjoyments. But with the gradual spiritual experience, all the rubbishes are disposed of in the Linga, and then the untarnished Jyotis is again resumed and that in a higher stage. Upon this Linga is inscribed the word Om, and the Vedas are said to proceed from it. When this Linga is fully permeated with the vibrations or utterances of Om it is able to shake off all its dross from it and appear as the full spotless light. In the same Purana is recorded a contest between Vishnu and Brahma who, in the interval of a creation, fight for supremacy when the Linga suddenly springs up between them. Thereupon Brahma flies up as a Hamsa (Sivan) towards the head of the Linga to cross it, and Vishnu goes down as a (Varaha) boar to its bottom to wade through to the other side; but none succeeds to find out his termination. This means firstly, that while the Rudraic or any other power is in the ascendant, the other powers cannot gauge its depth or height; secondly, that inasmuch as Brahma is to succeed Siva for fresh creation, the former rises up to the head of the symbol while Vishnu goes down, since he had already finished his work.

In the above story when the Linga appeared as a pillar of radiance, a Rishi appears on the spot and explains to them that the sound which arose in the pillar of radiance was no other than the sacred Om composed of A, U, and M standing for Beeji (seed fructifer), Yoni (womb), and Beeja (seed) or Siva, Vishnu and Brahma respectively. Instead of understanding properly the significance of these words, a phallic significance has been attached to

them. Even supposing it can be, it can be attributed not to the Linga but to the Pranava (Om) in it. To say that Pranava is phallic in its significance is absurd, since it is only a word or Sabda.

As to the formation of this symbol, man is represented by a five-pointed star and the universe by two triangles interlaced. Revolve these two figures round, with the apex of the upper triangle and one of the apices of the lower triangle fixed, and then we have a perfect Linga in the former case; and in the latter, a Linga with its bottom pointed perhaps in the earth and thus invisible as in our Hindu Sivite temples. Moreover, if a person should sit with his legs crossed, then such a position, if photographed, will resemble a Linga.

• Now coming to Siva in his personal representation, to begin with, it may be stated that Siva, wherever he is represented, is always connected with the destructive agency only. When he destroys the world, he dilates himself into seven suns and burns the whole universe. Vishnu is stated to assume the form of Rudra to effect this. In connection with man, he is said to hover over crematoriums with his Ganas or hosts. Being a destructive agency, he is naturally associated with burning-grounds, with skulls in his hand and saturated with blood and other things. But when he destroys many Asuras as in the Puranas, he plays the part of a yogi also. The Asuras represent here the passions which bar the progress of an individual and which have to be crucified in one, before he reaches the higher state.

With reference to Siva in his human delineations, with one face only, it represents his generic character of a destroyer. But when he is represented with five faces, then it is we find him shining with his ten hands, three eyes, and the Moon and the Ganga on his head. As regards the Ganga, the different books give versions which differ in their minor details. But on the whole, they agree; the difference in their minor details, is owing to the different periods during which they occurred. In some places, the incidents refer to the evolution of the universe; in others, to the evolution of earth and such like.

According to the ancient Hindus, the evolution of the cosmos, the earth, human body &c.—all proceed on parallel lines. If the evolution of the cosmos in all its details is known, then that of the earth, and others also can be inferred therefrom by applying the above principle to the earth, *mutatis mutandis*. Vishnu Purana gives a description of Ganga which is rather comprehensive enough. "From that third region of atmosphere (or Sivaloka) or the seat of Vishnu proceeds the stream that washes away all sin, the (celestial) river Ganga, embrowned with the unguents of the nymphs of heaven who have sported in her waters. Having her source in the nail of the great toe of Vishnu's left foot, Dhruva receives her and sustains her day and night devoutly on her head; and thence the seven Rishis practise Pranayama in her waters wreathing their braided locks with her waves. The orb of the moon encompassed by her accumulated current, derives augmented lustre from her contact. Falling as she issues from the moon, she alights on the summit of Meru and thence flows to the four quarters of the earth for its purification. The Sita, Alakananda, Chakshu and Bhadra are four branches of but one river, divided according to the region towards which it proceeds. The southern branch that is known as Alakananda was borne affectionately by Mahadeva upon his head for more than 100 (divine) years and issuing from his matted locks raised to heaven the sinful sons of Sagara by washing their ashes." In another place in the same Purana, it is stated that the current Sita flows to the west of Meru and Bhadra to the north to it. The southern branch, Alakananda is said to divide itself into 7 rivers and flow into the southern ocean. Here is the division completely analogous to that given in the theosophical literature. The one becomes three and out of the fourth arises the seven. According to the Hindu Spiritual Astronomy, all the Solar systems rotate round Dhruva, the Polar star which in turn rotates round Vishnu, the spiritual sun of all. So that, he who is at the centre of all the formative worlds and preserves the same is the Vishnavic power in the seat or loka called Vaikunta. Of course this Vishnavic power has in itself the other powers, the Brahmic and Rudraic which manifest

themselves at their allotted periods. Now just as water serves to cement the things of this world, so also the waters of Ganga or the subtle magnetic and watery currents serve the same purpose in the universe. The whole universe as well as earth are, according to the Hindus, of an oval form which is symbolized by an egg or lotus. The central axis of the earth or the universe they termed Meru, Meru passing from the higher spiritual centre of Vishnu down to Dhruva, then to the sphere of the 7 Rishis or the Great Bear, to the lunar orb and lastly to the north pole of the earth, which is its northern Meru where it diverges into 4 currents. Thus it is given out that even the earth receives the benefit of this current in order that it may be preserved. Here it is that Mahadeva receives her in his tresses of hair in order that, after the preservative stage of earth is passed, and destruction ensues, Siva may draw her to his tresses and keep her latent with him in order that she may be handed on again to Vishnu in the next cycle as will appear from the Siva Purnas. As Siva is himself an embodiment of all suns, he being said to dilate himself into many suns at the period of deluge, he wears, after Pralaya, the moon also in his head, as it is but a reflection of the sun and is considered by the Hindus to be the opposite aspect of the sun. Ganga can be said to be the one Fohatic power which running through the core of all organisms links them all in one chain of existence. In man the spinal column is the Meru through which this current runs.

The five faces represent the five Races humanity has undergone. With every race of mankind, just as there is a Vishnu to preserve it, so there is a Siva to destroy it. In addition to the two eyes which men ordinarily have, there is yet another eye in him of which he is quite oblivious. Originally as mankind arose from a spiritual state, they had then this eye only which is situated in the Pineal gland or Sahasrara. But in the symbolic representations of Siva, we see in the middle of his forehead an opening made with red flames issuing out of it. This should not be thought of as the third eye itself which is the eye of omniscience, for it is only the opening through which the third eye acts and manifests itself in the external world. But gradually as mankind

became more and more immersed in sexual pleasures, this eye became more atrophied and then the present two eyes opened. Thus man has now become quite oblivious of even the existence of this eye. This third eye and the genital organs being as it were the two scales in the body, one of the two has to "kick the beam" when the other grows heavy. One of the two has to become defunct in order that the other may play its full part. Now that the procreative organ in man has its full play in him, we are not able to witness the existence or the manifested action of the higher organ, *viz.*, the third eye in the generality of mankind. Therefore it is we find that in the transition period of Ravana, there existed in his ranks Rakshasas with one eye, two eyes and three eyes. As regards the weapons in his hands those on his right hands are Sula (the trident), Khadga (sword), Parasu (axe) and Vatavani (the deluge fire). The fifth hand is the Abhaya hand (or the refuge-giving hand). The left hands wear Naga (serpents), Vajra (diamond), Pasa (Noose), Ghanta (spiritual sound or Nada), Ankusa (elephant-goad). That many of these are instruments of destruction is clear. But from the Yogic standpoint, all of them symbolize the different trials which a neophyte has to undergo. For instance, Pasa is like a cross on which all the human passions have to be crucified before the Yogi passes through the straight gate, the narrow circle that widens into an infinite one as soon as the inner man has passed the threshold. Ghanta or Nada is the spiritual sound which a Yogi has to hear in his progress. As regards the other weapons, the following explanations seem reasonable. Sula or the trident is represented as one long rod branching off into three separate elongations as its end like a fork with its three prongs. The original Satva, Rajas and Tamas of Prakriti have each their own infinite sub-divisions of a triune nature like themselves. Thus the original Tamas of Rudra has also its sub-divisions of Rajas, Satva and Tamas. Hence it will be clear that even Siva who is the destroying power, has in itself the potency of creating, preserving and destroying things through its sub-divisions of Satva, Rajas and Tamas in order that after Pralaya or the Universal Cataclysm is over, he may hand on the

power of creation to Brahma through Narayana for the build-up of a fresh universe. Being thus a metaphysical concept of a universal nature, these three divisions are found prevalent in all departments of nature, such as food and others. Thus the sword and axe are the instruments through which Agnana or our lower nature or passions are controlled ; the former tending to the permanent eradication of all evils and the latter, to the temporary eradication of some only as can be inferred from the use of the above two instruments. Vataavagni is that ferocious fire which swallows up all things at the end of time. The fifth hand with its upraised palm evinces His readiness and willingness to offer an asylum to those who surrender themselves up to him and to him alone.

Then going to the left hand, we have first serpent and Vajra or the diamond weapon. The serpent, besides symbolising time as in the case of Adishesha, also stands for the poison ejected by it ' which is no other than' his Tamasic aspect. This poison has to be transmuted into a nectar by those who reach unto him. In the case of highly developed individuals, poison too if taken within by them does not hurt them and becomes one conducive to their progress. The fifth hand on the left side is the Varada or the boon-giving hand. In it, figures the elephant-goad. This perhaps stands for the pains and ordeals which a person has to undergo through performing Tapas for a long time ; and when the ordeals are safely gone through, there He is ready to grant any boon which the weary disciple has been long craving for.

The Nandi or bull, the vehicle of Siva, is the Om inscribed on the Linga as stated before. It is he or it that takes all Yogis to the divine seat of Siva. Hence it is he is posted in the front of the sanctuary of Siva. Without its aid, no Yogi will be able to attain the Nirvanic seat. Again, according to the Skandha Purana, Dharmadevata (or the Divine Law) also stands for the bull.

Siva's two sons are Ganesa and Kartikeya or Subrahmaniya. Both these seem to represent the Pravritti (worldly) and Nivritti (non-worldly or spiritual) aspects of man. The former is called Ganesa, since he is the Lord or commander of the Ganas, who are Siva's attendants. He represents wisdom. Therefore he relin-

quishes all idea of marriage and devotes himself solely to spiritual pursuits. He removes all the obstacles to those who invoke his aid in the spiritual path. He is always the commander of the heavenly hosts under his father to put down all the Asuras, viz., passions in man. His head is that of an elephant or he is Gajamukha. Gaja is literally sound, and hence, it applies to the totality of Nivritti egos. All egos of the Nivritti state have to be absorbed in Nirvana or Pralaya through him unto Siva. All the appendages of this God, such as Pasa, &c., point to this same construction only. His vehicle is Mushika or mouse. Mushika is from a root meaning to steal. Hence he is the appropriator of all. Next coming to his brother Subrahmanya, he is said to be Kartikeya, the God of war. He is born out of the sweat of Siva and Earth. He is the foster son of Krithika or the six stars of the Pleiades. He is represented as of red color and going in for wedlock, which shows that he is identical with Mars and the generative principle of nature. He represents the Pravritti path or the totality of those egos who go in for the worldly path. His vehicle is the peacock, the color of which is dark-blue, which can be identified with the higher *manas*.

Going into the origin of these two brothers we find it very mystic. It is said in Skanda Purana, that Pranava took the dual forms of a he-elephant and a she-elephant, and mating together generated Ganesa. The other was born out of the sweat of Siva and preserved in Ganga.

Having given some of the aspects of Siva we shall now refer to the next term applied to him. Rudra is from a root meaning to weep. As he makes all creatures weep at the end of time by creating all sorts of terror, he is so called. In this sense Rudra is a synonym of Siva. But Rudra is applied in other senses in Vishnu Purana. When the first mention of him is made, Brahma becomes incensed with Munis, Sanaka and others for not creating any progeny. So he knits his eyebrows to a point, when from his forehead springs Rudra-Ardhanari or half-male and half-female. Having been ordered by Brahma to separate his two natures he becomes two-fold. His male being he divided into 11 forms, some agreeable and

some hideous, and his female being he multiplied manifold of different complexions. These are called Maruts in some Puranas. Here Rudra represents that stage of humanity and universe which were originally a-sexual and then bi-sexual. They may also represent the races of men which had different complexions. In enumerating the Devas, we generally count 8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, &c. In Brihadaranya Upanishad, when a question is put as to who these 33 Devas or crores of Devas are, a reply is made, wherein the 11 Rudras are explained as meaning the ten Pranas with Manas as the eleventh. Clearly this can be applicable to an ego only. Besides, Rudras as Devas can also be applied to the developed entities of egos or elementals in their nascent stage of evolution. In another chapter of Vishnu Purana, Rudra is used in quite a different sense. Here the Tamasic aspect of creation is dwelt upon. Brahma purposing to create at the beginning of a Kalpa a son, who will be like himself, a youth of a red-blue (Nila-lohita) complexion appeared running about with a low cry. Brahma when he beheld him thus afflicted, said to him, why dost thou weep? Give me a name, replied the boy; Rudra be thy name, rejoined the grandfather of all creatures, be composed, desist from tears. But thus addressed, the boy still wept seven times and Brahma therefore gave him seven other denominations, and to these 8 persons he gave regions, wives and children. The eight manifestations then are named Rudra, Bhava, Sarva, Isana, Pasupati, Bhima, Ugra and Mahadeva, which names were given to them by their great progenitor. He also assigned to them their respective stations, the sun, water, earth, Vayu, Agni, Akas, the Hota (Ministrant Brahman) and the moon, for these are their several forms. Then the text gives out his 8 wives and their issues, among whom figure Saturn, Mercury and other planets. It is evident from the elements to which the 8 Rudras are attached that the Rudras herein mentioned are no other than the vivifying powers of the elements, &c., and that the sources of the material composition of the planets is herein disclosed.

Conclusion.

It will thus be seen that though we find seeming incongruities in our books, such as the Upanishads and the Puranas, yet, if we try to understand the key by which the fundamental canon of interpretation can be known, then we shall be able to travel on the path of Puranas and other Hindu books smoothly and without much misgiving. It is this invaluable aid that Madame Blavatsky has given us, in her monumental work, "The Secret Doctrine," which has unearthed the many truths underlying the grotesque and fantastic stories contained in our spiritual books. It is only by giving a better and a more rational interpretation of our sacred literature that the claims of our archaic religion can be vindicated and progress can be made in it. Our ancient writers having written our books in a double language, so as to suit the higher and the lower minds, the latter will be pleased finding in them stories to their taste, and the former metaphysical truths underlying the same, and this seems to have been the policy of almost all the religious writers of the world.

§ 5.—THE THREE STEPS OF VISHNU.*

It is often found that the same truths in all the religions of the ancients, are more or less mutilated, disfigured and disguised under various garbs of expression. When these are divested of the time-gathered incrustations, the different versions of the statement, which were at first sight contradictory, self-incriminating, and ludicrously absurd, disclose the same eternal truth, which sustains a grand superstructure of the wisdom, wit and genius of several persons in whom the spark of intuition has been kept shining.

The fable of the "Three steps of Vishnu" of the Bhagavatha Purana discloses such a story. Foreigners have often made short work of the Puranas by their explanations, which are often tinged with their prejudice and proclivities. And these stories are made

* From the "Theosophist" Vol. XIX.

by them to yield caricatures of truth. Mrs. Annie Besant's statement that "a religion can only be understood by sympathy, a religion can only be expounded by the speaker placing himself, for the time being, in the heart of that religion and showing it forth as it would appear to its most devoted and learned adherents," is couched in a language at once most simple, chaste and polished, and impregnated with a most salutary advice that deserves the most careful attention of every lover of truth—and pre-eminently religious truth.

Before attempting to explain the "Three steps of Vishnu" we shall give a summary of the story of Vamana Avatar, the incarnation of Vishnu into Vama, as related in the Sri Bhagavata Purana, one of the eighteen Puranas of the Hindus, each Purana being, as Madame Blavatsky writes, a "written emblem."

Vishnu is said to have assumed the forms of many avatars on many occasions, to preserve peace on earth, when virtue was endangered by evil-minded men. According to his own statement in Bhagavadgita, he would be born in every age for the purpose of re-establishing Dharma or justice. Of these, ten are considered the most important. Vamana Avatar is one of these ten.

The story of Vamana Avatar is briefly as follows:—

Once upon a time, a king of Danavas, named Bali Chakravarti was reigning supreme on the earth. He was a mighty emperor, whose prowess was never challenged by any. All the Devas found him unbearable and unconquerable. Hence the Devas prayed Vishnu, who was pre-eminently called Danavantaka (destroyer of Danavas or Rakshasas), to save them from fear of Bali. Vishnu, the merciful, and protector of good souls and devotees, granted their prayer and promised to extricate them from misery. On the dispersion of the Devas, Vishnu, the Kalarupa (the manifestation of time or simply duration of time) was born in the womb of Aditi, the mother of gods, in the form of Vamana, a dwarf, with all the paraphernalia of Vishnu. In the form of a Brahmin, he approached Bali when he was performing a great sacrifice, and asked him for charity. Bali, whose reputation as a charitable monarch was world-known, was pleased with the Brah-

man, and questioned him as to what he desired. Vamana desired three steps of land, or land measuring three steps with his own foot. The monarch granted his request. But to his great dismay and wonder, Vamana assumed a terrific form with three legs, and measured the sky with one foot, and the earth with a second, and asked Bali to show land whereon he might place his third foot. Bali bowed his head and desired him to place the third foot on his own head. Vamana placed his foot on Bali's head and passed him down to patala—underground. This is the skeleton of the story, divested of all details. In exoteric writings, much confusion has been purposely mixed with the accounts connected with Danavas or Rakshasas. These Rakshasas are popularly known as demons. As shown in the *Secret Doctrine* and elsewhere, these Danavas were first called Asuras and Devas or Suras. In the Vedas, these two classes of entities, before they were split into two and placed under two different categories, were called Suras, good entities. The Asuras were so-called by their wicked actions. (A + Sura, not Sura). The original meaning was simply perverted in after-ages, that is, Vedic and post-Vedic periods. Hence the Theosophists contend that Asuras are not demons, but highly developed men, that understand the most recondite natural laws, but work with selfish motives, which degrades them to the level of Mantrikas—black Magicians. The fact that Bali was engaged in a great sacrifice (one of the Vedic rituals) is sufficient to support our contention.

Now, Antahkarana has been, exoterically, divided into four, viz., Buddhi, Manas, Chittam and Ahankaram. To throw some light on the esoterism of the story, Ahankaram is Bali Chakravarti—Ahankaram is egotism. He is called Bali, which means powerful. He was engaged in a sacrifice, which means in other words Ahankaram was satisfying other senses by enjoyments. It is laid down in the Sastras that at the time of a dinner, no guest should be denied a meal. Basing on this principle, Vamana (the over-soul) was introduced to Bali, at a time when he could not refuse to make a gift. Ahankara establishes itself well in the *Jagrat* or wakeful condition, though his reign extends over *Swapna* (dreamy) and *Sushupti* (sleepy) conditions. To overpower

Bali, Vamana asked him the gift of "Three steps" of land, which Bali granted. The three steps are merely the three conditions of consciousness. When Vamana first measured the land, with one of his feet, Bali resigned his sovereignty over it, and thus he was ultimately passed down to Patala. Ahankara was driven first from Jagrat to dreamy, and then to sushupti condition. In the sushupti or sleepy condition Ahankaram has no power, and hence yielded to Vamana, the monad in the Turiya state. Ahankara, being pervaded now with satvika or purity, became a great bhakta or devotee of Vishnu; and hence Vinshunu is said to have been watching at the threshold of Bali's house.

The "Three steps" are, in another sense, the three lokas, Bhu, Bhur and Swar lokas. Vishnu pervades these three regions. In the Upanishads and elsewhere, several statements referring to this point have been found, more or less in somewhat strange and often veiled forms. And it requires much intuition before one can trace them to their original source. The three conditions of consciousness play a great part in many a story in our sacred literature, since there are no phenomena beyond this; and a thorough comprehension of these conditions releases us from the bonds of matter.

Vishnu is born of Aditi to save Indra. Indra is the Rajah or King of Indryas or senses. Indra is mind. When Ahankara or impure mind threatens the pure mind with corruption and destruction, the Eswara or the ray of Eswara descends to rescue the pure mind, as the pure mind is ever ready to save the lower mind on condition of subjecting itself to discipline and guidance.

The "Three steps" may also be interpreted as three forms of Vach; they are Pasyanti, Madhyama and Vykhari; the fourth Para being inscrutable and incomprehensible in our present state of knowledge. The fourth Para is the synthesis of all the four forms of Vach, just as Vamana is the synthesis of the three feet or the turiya condition of consciousness.

In discussing of Vach, Madame Blavatsky says that "it is this *trinity*, that is meant by the 'three steps of Vishnu'; which means (Vishnu being considered as the Infinite in exoterism),

that from Parabrahm issued Mulaprakriti, Purusha (the Logos) and Prakriti ; these form (with itself) the synthesis of Vach."

In whatever way we express it, the idea is the same. The same actor appears on the stage under various garbs (of expression). A careful observation may at once disclose the identity, notwithstanding the studied attempts on the part of the actor to defeat all detection. The four states of consciousness—Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti and Turiya—the last being the synthesis of all, have four presiding deities. These may be interpreted as the "three steps of Vishnu."

§ 6.—SESHASHAYANAM.*

We cannot sufficiently describe the glory of this conception the poetry of the ocean of milk, the imagination of the mind that could have originally conceived it ; and the grandeur of the idea underlying it cannot be sufficiently done justice to here.

Our ancient fathers, however poor they might have been, in ball-dresses, arm-chairs and steam-ships, have endowed us with the rich legacy of a silver rock, a gold mountain, a milky ocean, a heavenly river, a generous cow, a liberal tree, a white elephant, a heavenly father, and a rich philosophy. We have, fortunately, down below, the Himalayas, the Ganges, &c., &c. In this grand group comes the milky sea.

Ranganatha sleeps on the milky sea. He is the lord of the stage. The stage is the stage of the world, of the cosmos, or better still, of the body and the senses.

The real inner meaning of this milky sea can only be learnt after approaching the guru. It is a practical affair, but there is no mystery in it. There is no attempt at organizing any esoteric society. To give a glimpse as far as words will permit, the real milky sea is found out when the consciousness of the body is lost ; next, that of the mind ; and next, the idea of vacant space, which is a great hindrance in practical realization. And the worlds of Sun, Moon and Colors have all to be left behind, then comes the

* From the "Awakened India," Vol. I.

real milky sea. The sweetness of sugar can only be described as far as words will allow, and not shown; and no reader will get angry if it is said that sugar is sweet; so, no reader will get offended for saying, that the real milky sea is glorious, when seen; that it is, to be as exact as words will permit, the sweet undisturbed nectar—like calmness, that knows not the distinction of caste and creed, of life and death, of freedom and slavery, of form and no form, devoid of character and name, the calmness, divine and perfect that silently pervades all and plays 'hide and seek' with the ignorant, the serenity that is light, that is grace, that is the ineffable, the effulgent *turiya* state (this fourth state as differentiated from the three stages of waking, dreaming and sleeping) which is beyond the Maddered-Monkey like mind, the highest of the high, which knows not union and separation, or attachment, which knows not coming and going, which is far and near, which is firm like a rock, which fades not, which is beyond the five elements, which is beyond even the consciousness of enjoyment, which is neither one or two, which is above the prating tongue and the wandering mind, and which is an ocean of full, undisturbed ecstasy; that is the real sea of milk. It requires the grace of God and the blessings of the real guru to discover that sea, it is a treasure far beyond the reach of the ambitious, the wicked, the avaricious and the selfish, which is ever a secret refusing to unfold itself to the heart that falters or is false. 'Knock and it shall be opened, seek and ye shall find.'

"From morn to eve and from eve to dewy morn
That which envelopes all the fourteen worlds;
The five elements, and ever shines in all;
During the sleep in which all being lost,
That which remains unlost, that consciousness,
Is called the I or self, and *Sesha* forms;
Its inner light is *Vishnu* great, the Lord,
The love, the light, the *sat*, the bliss and strength."

Here is *Sesha* described, but why the form of the huge serpent? The reason is, that the serpent has been selected, not the other snakes, by the common consent of humanity, as an object of worship in all countries alike. The outspread hood of the serpent,

its fine ear for music which men can never rival, with the fabled gem on its head, its glossy and altogether beautiful appearance, its faculty of hearing with the eyes, its comparative innocence when not disturbed and its real or reputed allegiance to mantras and oaths—which we may call serpent-honesty, its intelligence and aptitude, when trained, to besmear human eyes with eye-salve, to mark the human face with sandal &c. gently and cautiously, and several other fine qualities in it, might have contributed to the universal worship accorded to it. Few countries have been free from the serpent fetichism. Among the Hindus it has been raised to the rank of an ornament to the Lord Iswara, symbolising the intelligent human consciousness.

Even a higher honor was in store for it; traditions assert that there are five-headed serpents, more beautiful and harmless, and having a beautiful Nagaratna (a precious gem of most wonderful virtues) and wandering in the forests like the *Rishis*. If five-headed serpents are possible here, why not a thousand shining gems in the beautiful sea of milk, especially if it would serve as a grand and true symbol? The serpent represents the consciousness, and consciousness is above, below and everywhere—where is it and where is it not? It is in the star above, in the stone below, in the waters that flow, in man, in animal, plant and stone. This consciousness 'sleeps in the plant, dreams in the animal and wakes in man.' The sun is the same all over the earth; the dead stone like an ignorant man receives that light, but in its dull way; the waters shine in the light, but reflect it not; mirrors, like blessed souls, not merely shine themselves, but also make others shine. This *Sesha* then, which is everywhere, manifest or unmanifest, is symbolised by that beautiful serpent. Besides, its infinite coils and its huge beauty represent the infinity of that consciousness, its omnipresence and the eternity of that splendour. This consciousness is the *Sesha* beyond all name and form—beyond time, space and causality, (*Sesha* means what remains when all else is lost, the undying, the infinite and eternal). It is on the milky sea necessarily; for until the heavenly calm of the inner soul is realized, the beauty of the universal consciousness cannot be seen.

Vishnu, the great God, sleeps upon the smooth glossy bed of the serpent-black; it is a wonderful sleep however; for, it is sleep without its darkness, it is the sleep, not of ignorance and dullness, but a sleep of light—a knowing sleep as it has been called. The idea is that God pervades all the universe, 'the atom, the roaring sea, the mountain-chains and all' but is Himself like the sun, unstained by the war of the world. The sleeping means filling the above, the below, the middle as the Uttara Gita says; and as the posture is a lying one without north or east or south or west. He fills the world 'from the tip of the nail to the top of the head.' No clouds can pollute Him, no sin can attach to Him, no grief can enter into Him.

Though I am the Lord of the Creation, as I work without attachment, no action clings to me, said Sri Krishna. So, the great Lord of the Universe is in knowing sleep, as the sun, to compare small things with great, though he inspires a multitude of actions, is yet himself free from them. But then this abstract God, the inner light of consciousness, the Atman, pervades the whole universe, and is everything, even the illusion of phenomena included; and now descending to the phenomenal platform, we find creation is real, and the same abstract Brahman is our Father in Heaven, our punisher and rewarder. Ranganatha, as we have already seen, means the Lord of the stage, and in the beautiful conception of the milky sea is treasured up the whole range of philosophy, as "Homer in a nutshell." From the abstract Atman to the personal God, the Father and Creator, the whole range is involved in it; for what are Vishnu's ornaments?—the Kaustubha gem in his broad breast, the Srivatsa mark on his forehead, the conch-shell, the bow and the discus in his hands; Vajrayanti, composed of five precious gems, pearl, ruby, emerald, sapphire and diamond, which adorns his breast. He has a rich store of powerful shafts and a bright sword called Achyuta. For an authoritative explanation of these symbols, we have great pleasure in referring the reader to Vishnu Purana—Book I, Chapter 22.

The Kaustubha gem beautifully represents the pure and everlasting soul of the world. The Pradhana being the chief principle

of things, is very well placed as the *Srivatsa* mark on the forehead of the Lord. Intellect is the faculty that shelters us against the arrows in the war of life and is therefore fittingly compared to the mace (*Gada*). Even our egotism, the delusive habitual self, which divides itself into the elements, the organs of sense and all their numerous progeny, is very well represented as *Isa's* conch-shell and bow; the former makes noise, and creation being due to vibration, the conch-shell represents the great function of creation; the bow very well represents the organs of sense; for, like the latter, they go in search of things, and are the faculties of grasping like the bow. But both the conch-shell and the bow (that is, creation and enjoyment—the whole world is described as the Lord's *lila* or sport) must have their basis on *Ahamkara* (egotism), the primary delusion of self. As *Narada* beautifully said to *Sanatkumara*, "If there be I, then there must be you. There then begins the mischief. If there be I and you, then there must be all the world." The discus (*chakra*) symbolises the mind, which shames the speed of the winds and the swiftness of the lightning. The universe composed of five elements is a beautiful ornament—the neck-lace *Vaijayanti*—to *Vishnu* the Protector, for nothing better expresses His grandeur and glory, who rules day and night though sleeping, this vast infinite and apparently conglomerate household of suns, moons and stars, and clouds and winds and waters.

The sharp faculties of action and perception are very well likened to the shafts which fly from the bow of the senses and intellect. Wisdom is a veritable sword, which fells down the grand tree of *Aswatha*, which changes every moment (*Aswatha* means that which is not next moment) and is at the same time eternal, because *Maya* or delusion is eternal, which has its roots in that supreme Lord *Narayana* who is sounding his conch-shell of creation. The *Vedas* are the leaves of this tree, because they shelter the tree from the sun and other things. The intellect forms the branches from the main trunk, and *Ahamkara* (*Egoism*) the five elements; and the deceitful organs of sense are its branches, and the senses are holes in it. Virtue and vice are its flowers; and joy and grief are its fruits. It is the tree on

which all souls live. (For a fuller explanation refer to Gita XV, 1, 2 and 3, and the elaborate commentaries on the same by Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa and Sridhara ; and Katha Upanishad, II, 6, 1.)

As Madhva has beautifully said, this grand tree of Samsara, which has its branches in Heaven, Earth and everywhere, should be bravely felled down by the sword of wisdom—Achyuta of Narayana. This sword however is most often concealed in the scabbard of ignorance ; and we people are therefore going round the tree, instead of felling it down ; but even this ignorance is nothing but Narayana, for the Vedas proclaim that it is merely a sport, a lila of Hrishikesa.

Wilson, referring to this grand symbol in his translation of the Vishnu Purana, Book I, Chapter 22, which we strongly recommend our readers to see, says, “ We have in the text a representation of one mode of dhyana or contemplation, in which the thoughts are more readily concentrated by being addressed to a sensible emblem, instead of an abstract truth. Thus the Yogin here says to himself : ‘ I meditate upon the jewel on Vishnu’s brow, as the soul of the world, and upon the gem on his breast as the first principle of things ; and so on ; and thus, through a perceptible substance, proceed to an imperceptible idea.” Lakshmi of course represents the pomp, the luxuriance of the world, the Lord’s glory or Vibhuti, as it is termed, the Great never-ending festival of illusory existence (Maya as it is called). She sits near the feet, *i.e.*, the Avidya pada, *i.e.*, the sphere of ignorance, for ignorance is the mother of creation and the world.

That the Seshasayana symbol is no mere idolatry is further attested by the following extract from Vishnu Purana—Book I, Chapter XXII. “ The Supreme eternal Hari is time, with its divisions of seconds, minutes, days, months, seasons and years. He is the ‘ seven worlds, . . . First born before all the first-born ; the supporter of all beings, himself self-sustained, who exists in manifold forms, as Gods, men, and animals and is thence the sovereign Lord of all, eternal ; whose shape is all visible things ; who is without shape or form ; who is celebrated, in the Vedanta, as the four Vedas, inspired history and sacred science.

The Vedas, and their divisions religious manuals and poems, &c. are the body of the mighty Vishnu. I am Hari, all that I behold is Hari. Cause and effect are from none other than Him. The man who knows these truths shall never again experience the afflictions of worldly existence."

§ 7.—AVATARS OF VISHNU.

(1)*

In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna says, "whenever there is decline of Dharma, and rise of Adharma, I create myself" (come down as an Avatara).

Everything which favors the progress of the ego towards its ultimate destination, the Reality, the secondless one, constitutes Dharma. Whatever retards its progress is therefore Adharma. The cycle of the universe consists of two parts, evolution and involution. The first is the progress from subtle to gross, the second from gross to subtle.

Take a machine in motion for illustration. Any obstacle in the regular motion of the machine will impede its progress. Such impediment constitutes the nature of Adharma. But so long as the obstacle is not sufficiently strong to altogether stop the motion of the machine, there is still, so to say, preponderance of Dharma over Adharma. The motion though slowed will still go on. But if the obstacle be strong enough to threaten the complete stoppage of the motion, the impulse of activity at the source which generates the motion, is put on the strain which has reached its highest limit, and a rupture is the result, scattering the obstructing elements. This rupturing force represents the Avatara impulse and is just sufficient to relieve the strain and set the machine going. The same thing will happen, whenever and wherever complete stoppage is threatened, *i.e.*, Adharma is in the ascendant, and further progress becomes impossible.

* From the *Theosophist*, Vol. XX.

The ego from its highest point of starting when it was one with the Brahman, to its arrival at the point of utmost grossness, has passed through ten chief planes. Three of these planes (if planes they can be called when still there is no manifestation, even potential) are beyond the highest point of potential manifestation and corresponding to the individual self as such in its subtlest state of potentiality. There are seven stages each succeeding one grosser and more differentiated than the one preceding it. The ego will have to pass through seven similar planes again and through three more planes beyond the highest point. The difference between the ego that had started at the beginning and the one that now arrives at the end is, that the former was ignorant and without any experience, while the latter is wise and full of experience. Before it had started it was one with the Absolute. When it has finished the cycle, it knows itself and has realized its unity with it.

The Universe as a whole follows the same course as the individual ego.

The first Avatara of Vishnu takes place on the grossest plane of physical existence, the mineral state or the plane of dead matter of the Universe, corresponding to the Sthula Sarira of the individual. The impulse which the Avatara on this plane supplies, suffices to take the ego to the highest point of this grossest plane, and the lowest point of the plane immediately above it.

This is the Matsya Avatara. It is Vishnu incarnating on the plane of grossest matter. Whether considered in relation to the entire Universe or to the individual ego, or to any one particular plane of the Universe or the ego, which admits of the same ten fold division between its highest and lowest points, the Matsya Avatara forces the progress along the tenth or the grossest plane, and thus re-establishes Dharma which had declined.

The plane immediately above the grossest physical plane, is the vegetable plane of the Universe, and Linga Sharira—the subtle physical body with Prana—of the individual. The impulse supplied by Matsya Avatara, enables the ego to reach the lowest

point of the Linga Sarira plane, where it is exhausted. The ego manifests some activity at this point, but this activity is powerless to penetrate the grossness which obtains on this plane. The position of the ego so far as its further progress is concerned is similar to what it was at the lowest point of the Sthula Sarira plane, except the manifestation of some activity. The grossness of this Linga Sarira plane being too much to be overcome by the activity of the ego, the Dharma of this plane is on the decline, and Adharma is in the ascendant. A second Avatara becomes necessary. It comes as Kurma Avatara of Vishnu. It must be noted that this Avatara impulse comes from Vishnu, travels all the way and goes back again to Him. The Matsya Avatara impulse which gets exhausted at the highest point of the physical and grossest plane is weaker than the Kurma Avatara impulse which extends beyond the utmost limit of the former.

The Kurma Avatara impulse pushes the ego onwards along the Linga Sarira plane to its highest point where it gets exhausted. The next plane is the animal plane of the Universe, and the plane of desire or kama plane of the individual. So far as the ego arrived here is concerned, Dharma is on the decline and Adharma in the ascendant. This necessitates the 3rd Avatara, the Varaha. The impulse which it supplies carries the ego through the plane of animal desires which drive the senses toward their objects.

Every Avatara from Matsya upwards has wider and more extensive range than the one preceding it. The Varaha Avatara impulse is thus stronger than the two preceding it. It ensures the progress of the ego till it arrives at the lowest point of the plane above, which is the plane of humanity, of the Universe, and of lower or Kama Manas of the individual, and where the Varaha Avatara impulse gets exhausted.

The plane of Lower Manas is the plane of emotions and passions which have a tendency to drag the ego towards the plane of desire or Kama. So far as the ego is concerned, it has not the strength to overcome the grossness with which it is encumbered at the lowest point of Lower Manas. Whenever and on whatever plane the grossness prevents the ego from further progress, rela-

tively to that plane Dharma is on the decline and Adharma in the ascendant, and a fresh Avatara becomes necessary.

The next or 4th Avatara is Nrisimha, Man-Lion—a lion among humanity, because stronger than humanity as a whole, whose progress it helps. Prahlada represents the ego surrounded by evil influences having a tendency to retard its progress. The Nrisimha Avatara impulse gets exhausted when it reaches the plane of the Higher or Budhi-Manas, the plane of impressions in their subtlest state. Prahlada was liberated by Nrisimha from the evil surroundings, but the ego still persisted.

The next Avatara is Vamana. Bali, the strong, is egotism, the sense of individuality. Bali was engaged in performing a Yagna. The Yagna was the sacrifice by the ego of all impressions in the form of emotions, passions, desires and all material possessions, in short everything which existed on the planes below that of Budhi-Manas. The individuality that has arrived at this stage has ceased to feel attachment for all these, but the sense of individuality is still there. This was the position of Arjuna when in the middle between the two armies he sat listening to the soul-stirring words of Sri Krishna. This strong sense of individuality retards the further progress of the ego, and the Nrisimha impulse has lost its force entirely at the lowest point of Buddhi-Manas. For further progress, *i. e.*, for the establishment of Dharma which is on the decline, another Avatara becomes necessary and Vishnu incarnates as Vamana. The three-steps-measure of earth which Vamana begged from Bali represents the three sub-planes of this Budhi-Manas plane. These three sub-planes, included between the lowest point of the Budhi-Manas plane, where Bali was engaged in Yagna, and its highest point, are the three stages of grossness which the activity manifested as subtlest impression at the highest point, assumes in its course towards the lowest point of Budhi-Manas plane. These three stages commencing from the grossest and lowest are, the impression stage, the activity stage, and the potentiality stage. These three stages of grossness are, it must be remembered, relatively to the plane of impressions which the Budhi-Manas plane represents. Vamana began to

measure the earth from the lowest point and at the third step planted his foot at the highest point, the head of Bali. The allegory simply means that the Vamana Avatara impulse pushes forward the re-incarnating ego along the Buddhi-Manas plane and stops at its highest point, standing a guard there, as it were.

The Buddhi-Manas plane is the plane of subtlest potential impressions which expands into the whole objective Universe. Thus Vamana is described as having measured by his three steps, the three worlds, meaning the entire Universe.

Above the Buddhi-Manas plane is the Buddhi plane, the plane of activity as such. The Vamana Avatara impulse gets exhausted at its lowest point, and all further progress is at a standstill. Dharma is on the decline and Adharma in the ascendant. There comes help from Vishnu as Parashurama Avatara. The plane of activity is pre-eminently Rajasic—the guna which characterizes the Kshatriyas, the second of the four Varnas or castes. The Parashurama impulse in traversing the plane, carries forward the ego as far as the highest point of the plane of activity, the point which forms the furthestmost limit to which it can go. Parashurama is credited in the Puranas to have rendered the earth Kshatriyaless twenty-one times. Now this plane of actual activity, like any other plane, admits of three sub-planes corresponding to the three stages of grossness between its highest and lowest points. On each sub-plane there is septenary development, thus dividing the whole plane of activity into 21 stages. The progress of the Parashurama impulse means liberation of the ego from activity, and its onward progress. This is metaphorically expressed as killing Kshatriyas (activity) stage after stage, as the impulse proceeds on its course. During his whole career till he arrives at the highest point of the activity plane, Parashurama renders the plane Kshatriyaless, twenty-one times in all.

Above the plane of actual activity is that of latency of activity or potentiality at the lowermost point of which the Parashurama impulse has all its force spent, and a fresh impulse is needed and comes in the form of Rama Avatara.

This impulse extends as far as the highest point of the plane of potentiality. The ten-fold differentiation, consisting of the upper triad and the lower quaternary with its septenary development, mentioned above, into which the evolution of the Universe goes on, applies to each plane, sub-plane and division. The plane of potentiality has its corresponding ten-fold differentiation. It is, so to say, the potentiality of the entire Universe and of everything in it. It is the plane of the subtlest individual self with its Káрана Sarira or the Universal Soul, known as Ishwara or Maya Vishishta Brahma. The 'I-ness' in its subtlest state first makes its appearance on this plane. The 'I' (aham) as manifesting on this plane, has its ten heads represented by the highest points of the ten sub-planes into which this plane of potentiality differentiates. The Rama Avatara impulse extending to the highest point of this plane, by overcoming the potential activities on all the ten sub-planes, is described as Rama killing the ten-headed Ravana, the symbol of Ahankara. The individual self beyond all potential differentiation is free from all sense of individuality and distinction as "I" and "thou."

The Rama Avatara impulse takes the individual self as far as the highest point of the plane of potentiality where it is exhausted. It represents the converging point of the various paths. The individual self has arrived at the end of its path and is fit for initiation, which means its progress beyond the plane of potentiality. This farther progress requires a fresh impulse which comes in the form of Krishna Avatara. It takes the individuality to the centre of the Universe, the one Reality beyond all activity potential or possible. The Krishna Avatara impulse helps the now Selfless ego to cross the Mulaprakriti or Maya with its double aspect, the Sesha of the Puranas, and reaches as far as the commencement of the Great Breath. The individual Self that was in one with Sri Krishna Himself beyond Maya. There is the Centre, the one Reality, with Maya and its results, but no longer identifying Itself with them. The once individual Self is, so to say, in the Universe but not of it. It is the Centre because there is a circumference. The Krishna Avatara impulse thus reaches the

Centre of the Universe, the one Reality which is essentially non-distinct from the secondless one. It is called the one reality because it is as it were surrounded by Maya forming the circumference. He is the whole Universe, the whole Universe is He. He is the one All, the Sacchidananda Swarupa.

It will be seen that Krishna Avatara impulse is the only one which spreads over the entire Universe from Centre to Circumference and back to Centre. This Avatara is therefore called Púrna Avatara. The rest which have their impulse exhausted before they reach back to what is called the Centre are called Amsha-Avataras. To reach the Centre, Nirvana, this Centre is, so to say, Parabrahma individualized; the Universe giving rise to the appearance of individualization as the Centre.

The Krishna Avatara impulse stops at the Centre. But the position as Centre is not the ultimate one. A fresh impulse (if impulse it can be called where there is no semblance of activity, actual, potential or possible) arrives in the form of Buddha Avatara. This impulse leads the Centre, as Centre, to the Centre as potential; *i.e.*, centre without the manifestation of circumference; the one Reality viewed independently of Its double aspect, the Maya. It represents the infinite expanse of wisdom; Infinite but with a potential idea of limitation, of which the centre is every where, and circumference nowhere.

The last that comes is the Kalki Avatara. Its impulse extends beyond Infinite Wisdom, into the Unnamable, Infinite, Absolute, the Parabrahma of Aryan philosophy. The ego that was, has attained to Paranirvana.

Krishna Avatara, it will be seen, is called Púrna Avatara because it is the acme of perfection, the one Reality, the one All. The last two Avataras lead to the realization of the One All, as the Absolute, the unnamable, the "neti, neti," of the Aryan Philosophy. To attempt to speak of them is to name the unnamable, to fathom the Infinite.

Krishna Avatara impulse leads to the Sachchidananda Swarupa, Buddha Avatara impulse to the Chidanand Aspect (Infinite Wisdom and Bliss) of the Sachchidananda Swarupa, and Kalki Avatara

leads through the Ananda aspect to the Supreme Peace, best expressed by silence, beyond all namable Sat, Chit and Ananda, the source and causeless cause of everything that was, is, or will ever be.

II.*

We find the ten mythical Avatars of Vishnu recorded in the following progression :—

1. Matsya-Avatar : as a fish. It will also be his tenth and last Avatar, at the end of the Kali-yug.
2. Kurma-Avatar : as a tortoise.
3. Varaha : as a boar.
4. Nara-sing : as a man-lion ; last animal stage.
5. Vamuna : as a dwarf, first step towards the human form.
6. Parashurama ; as a hero, but yet an imperfect man.
7. Rama-Chandra ; as the hero of Ramayana. Physically a perfect man ; his next of Kin, friend and ally Hanouma, the monkey-god. The monkey endowed with speech.
8. Krishna-Avatar : the son of the Virgin Devaki, one formed by God, or rather by the manifested Deity Vishnu.
9. Gautama-Buddha or Sakya-muni (The Buddhists reject this doctrine of their Buddha being an incarnation of Vishnu.)
10. This Avatar has not yet occurred. It is expected in the future. When Vishnu appears for the last time he will come as a Saviour. According to the opinion of some Brahmans he will appear himself under the form of the horse Kalki. Others maintain that he will be mounting it. This horse is the envelope of the spirit of evil, and Vishnu will mount it, invisible to all, till it has conquered it for the last time.

In this diagram of Avatars, we see traced the gradual evolution and transformations of all species out of the ante-silurian mud of Darwin and the ilus of Sanchoniathon and Berosus. Beginning with the Azoic time, corresponding to the ilus in which Brahma implants the creative germ, we pass through the Palæozoic and Mesozoic times, covered by the first and second incarnations as the fish and tortoise ; and the Cenozoic, which is embraced by the in-

* From Isis Unveiled, Vol II.

carnations in the animal and semi-human forms of the boar and man-lion ; and we come to the fifth and crowning geological period, designated as the "era of mind, or age of man," whose symbol in the Hindu Mythology is the dwarf—the first attempt of nature at the creation of man. In this diagram we should follow the main idea—not judge the degree of knowledge of the ancient philosophers by the literal acceptance of the popular form in which it is presented to us in the grand epical poem of Maha-Bharata and its chapter the Bagavatgita.

III*

In the Hindu Mythology the principal gods are three in number—I. Brahma, the Creator ; II. Vishnu, the preserver ; and III. Maheswar, the destroyer. The Creator Brahma must not be confounded with Brahma, who is superior to these three, or the Causeless Cause, the Para Brahma of Shastras.

Brahma, the Creator, after finishing the creation, has not much to do, and so long as the Creation is to last, the destroyer Maheswar has no work, but it is otherwise with the preserver, Vishnu. He cannot remain idle, or cease to work so long as the creation is to be preserved and maintained intact. So in the Mythological books is found a great deal of literature—devoted to Vishnu and his doings and incarnations. Even in the Bagavatgita it is to be read that Vishnu informed Arjun that whenever truth is clouded and untruth spreads on earth, Vishnu has the necessity to incarnate himself for the protection of saints and destruction of evil-doers in every age. These incarnations are ten in number, of which nine already appeared, and the tenth is prophesied at the end of this Kali age.

The Avatara stories might seem absurd and illogical but there is no doubt that the Puranas contain some absolute truths, which, according to ancient practice, are expressed esoterically as stories, but if the key is once secured which would explain them, their meanings are fully realized, and the truth understood and followed. One fact, however, becomes apparent from the stories even

* From the Theosophic Thinker, Vol. III.

to a cursory observer that these incarnations or Avatars follow the law of evolution. In the first incarnation the god appeared as Matsya, because there was then only one element, water, and when the second element appeared as earth, god assumed the shape of tortoise, or an amphibious creature which can reside in both the elements. Then when the 3rd element, air, was formed, whose quality is scent, the form of Boar, which has the strong sense of smell, was taken. When fire, the fourth element, appeared, which is the same as intelligence, the shape assumed was that of an intelligent lion, which is to kill the prey in such a way as not to spill any blood on earth. And in the fifth incarnation, the Dwarf is said to have taken hold of all the Akasa with his feet, thus showing the appearance of the fifth element, the ether.

The bodies assumed also became denser and denser and more complex at each successive incarnation, thus showing the descent of spirit in grosser matter which is to be evolved again gradually to higher and purer state as will be shown in the later incarnations.

The last incarnation was that of Buddha, whose followers now number nearly a third of the whole population of the world.

The tenth incarnation is expected to come at the end of this Kali age. It is prophesied that the shape would be of a man riding on a horse. Then he is to collect all the true believers and rescue them from the hands of infidels, who, it is said, would oppress them, and so these infidels would be killed.

It will be seen that from the fifth incarnation all the shapes are human, thereby proving clearly that in evolution a superior being cannot revert to something below its ranks; and so in re-incarnation there cannot be retrogression. As in the physical plane gradual development from the simple to complex and higher forms of life is seen; so in the nine incarnations, from that of a fish to Buddha, gradual development is the result, and likewise in the mental plane the great improvement is seen to take place gradually from the life led by Parashurama in the jungles to that of Ramachandra in his wanderings and nomadic life, and then settling down in kingdoms and Principalities and cultivation in Krishna and Balarama. In the spiritual plane similarly the same

development is seen from the anger or the prevalence of Tamasa in Parashuram to the mixture of Tamasa and Rajasa in Rama of Dasaratha and of Tamasa, Rajasa and Satwa in Krishna, to the full display of Satwic qualities in the last incarnation of Buddha.

§ 8.—SRI KRISHNA.*

Sree Krishna represents the universal Atma within the seventh psychic centre situated in the crown of the head called *sahasradala pudma*; the melody of his flute is the mystic sound of the Pranava which the Yogi hears during samadhi. Brindaban with its thousand forests represents the human head with the *sahasradala pudma*. The sixteen hundred petals of the Manas chakra, a psychic centre situated just below the sahasradala, represent the sixteen hundred damsels of Krishna. The spiritual ambrosia called Amrita in Yoga philosophy is Krishna's love. Radhica, the chief beloved of Krishna, with her eight companions represents the Para Prakriti. Chandrabali another beloved of Krishna with her eight companions represents the Apra Prakriti. It should be remarked here that the very names of the eight companions of Chandrabali signify in Sanskrit the evil passions of the mind; while the names of the eight companions of Radhika signify the virtuous attributes of man. This fact supports the theory that the love of Krishna is an allegorical representation of the spiritual drama which is being acted daily in the sahasradala pudma. Again if we look to the root of the word Krishna, we find that it is derived from the Sanskrit, Kri, all, and Na, Atma, which mean the Atma of all.

§ 9. DAKSHINAMURTHI.†

Dakshinamurthi is Mahadeva himself. He is the Lord of the Yogis. He gets the name of Dakshinamurthi because he is facing the south. If instead of facing the south, he face the North, He

* From the Light of the East, Vol. I.

† From the Theosophist, Vols. XVII and XVIII.

will not be in touch with the disciples. He will be in a plane of thought from which speech and mind must recoil in utter helplessness. He will be one with the highest Brahma, but the Lord has chosen to face the South in order that he may aid those who want aid. In ancient thought North and South represent the two opposite poles of spirit and matter. North is where the Meru is situated and Devas perform their function for the good of nature. South is where the Asuras and Rakshasas live. Puranic tradition points out that Mount Mainaka serves to prevent these dark powers from coming out to the surface of the earth. In the human body the North pole is the crown of the head with its power of generating spiritual energy. The south pole is the sole of the feet. Now on these lines it is plain that a man who transfers his thought-energy to higher and higher planes of Nature is in a certain sense travelling northwards. Dakshinamurti is on the outermost confines of spiritual thought. He is as it were on the verge of a critical state. To face the North from there, is to reach out into absolute thought and lose consciousness of all left in the rear. Dakshinamurti being an embodiment of compassion, has chosen to face the pole of Maya and thus be able to do work for mankind. He is hence called Dakshinamurti or the figure facing the South.

A red figure is under the foot of the Lord. Apparently the figure is kept pressed on the ground as an object that deserves no better treatment. It is a Rakshasa figure and the face of it has a sinister look. It is a symbol of the lower Kamic energies that wage war on mankind. The red color is appropriate. It is the Kamic matrix of nature. When the red thickens, it becomes the play-ground of Rakshasa. The figure reclines on a serpent which is a many-sided symbol. The serpent held by the figure must of course represent all that is base and all that is cruel in the double-tongued race. The serpent held in the hands of the Rakshasa can only symbolize cruelty, vengeance and the like, the dark traits of a serpent's character. The idea of the Lord pressing under the foot the red Rakshas means that he is far above the loves and hate that actuate mankind.

It is said that once in a former Yuga the Gurudeva performed the most vigorous Tapas. He was alone and seated under a tree. The laws of cosmic evolution had not yet called upon him to espouse the sacred daughter of the Mighty Mount, for the good of all. The Lord was hence in the rigor of celibate Tapas. While he was engaged thus, many Rishis came unto him to learn the truth. They questioned him about it but the Lord was silent. They questioned him again and He was silent. They questioned him for the third time and the Lord returned silence as the fit answer to the question. The Rishis however understood the meaning of the silence, and their minds became enlightened. They of course learnt that the truth was above all speech and could be sensed only by silent meditation working itself above the reach of form and name. Since that time Dakshinamurti is called Muni or the silent Lord.

Dakshinamurti is sitting at the root of a tree and some state it is a banyan tree. The man in the jungle is a familiar eastern expression for one who is unattached to the world and is possessed of complete Vairaghya. Life at the root of a tree means living away from the haunts of man and their bad auric emanations. The object of such seclusion is to secure perfect tranquillity of heart and mind, without which spiritual vision and wisdom cannot possibly exist.

The tree at the root of which the Lord is engaged in Dhyana or breathless contemplation, is the Samsaric tree. In Eastern symbolism, a tree often stands for samsara or the manifested world above and below, birth and death. As a tree is one in its trunk, many in its branches and numberless in its leaves, likewise is the samsara. The tree must be conceived as existing upside down. The trunk and the roots are the spiritual lokas on high. The branches form the Antariksham or place where the life from the spiritual world breaks out into notes and metres. The leaves are the names and forms. Now it will be seen that though our loka Guru is a perfect Sanyasi, he is still at the root of the samsaric tree. He is on a plane of life from which a force set in motion serves to benefit the whole tree or the whole manifested universe.

A force set in motion by an adept may benefit a branch of the tree or in other words a nation, but the force generated by the highest guru benefits the whole of Nature.

What does the moon on the head of the guru represent ?

In cosmic evolution every Septenary that we can mention is a manifestation of the two principles named as the moon and the sun, the two manifesting poles of one central fire, the emanations of the Absolute. That fire is an energy which works on a septenary basis and cannot be identified with one single principle. Taking the theosophical septenary, the highest two principles, Atma and Buddhi, represent the Sun and Soma, the Vishnu and Siva &c.

The moon on the head is what is called Maha-Buddhi or the great Buddhi. It is the fountain of all Buddhic Tejas in the Universe. A ray from this fountain is the informing intelligential power in each man. The Sahasrara Padma or the lotus tank of magic waters on the top of the head, is where the ray is most powerful. The magic waters thrill with the life of the ray, and he who is able to carry all his thought-energy to that vivifying ray is for the time being, omniscient. He is a drinker of the true Soma.

It must not be thought that the guru is only for the Yogis in quest of the lotus tank, and not for the creatures caught in the web of ignorance. The Lord is not only Chandra-Sekhara (bearer of the moon on the head) but also Gangadhara. He bears the Ganges. The one river that supports the three lokas by her nourishing power starts from the hairy curls on our Lord's head.

The Ganges is an important symbol. Ganges represents the current of evolutionary energy in the three lokas.

We thus see that from one side of Dakshinamurti's head emanate the Buddhic rays that supply the intelligential factors of the cosmos and from the other side emanates the stream of life, the mother of all bhutas in the three Lokas.

One great peculiarity that Dakshinamurti has, and that distinguishes him from all other devas is, the third eye. The third eye is an eye of spiritual fire. It presides over wisdom.

In one hand of Dakshinamurti is what is called Chinmudra *i.e.*, a circle formed by the tips of the thumb and the forefinger being joined. In another hand is a rosary of Rudraksha beads for purposes of Japa. In the third hand is a Vina *i.e.*, the musical instrument fitted with seven strings. In the fourth hand is a book. Chinmudra is a symbol of intelligence or the spiritual wisdom that is capable of being developed by man. How is spiritual wisdom to be acquired? The answer is the process which is symbolized by the tip of the forefinger joined to the thumb. The five fingers of the hand represent the sevenfold powers of nature, or the seven fires. The thumb represents the three higher, the three in one. The fingers stand for the four lower. Liberation from *Maya* or the acquisition of spiritual wisdom is a process of transferring all functioning energy to the three higher fires, or establishing one's existence in the Atma-Buddhi-Manasic world. The higher three now become the four, and the lower four become the three. This is symbolized by the forefinger being joined to the thumb and forming the Chinmudra.

The silent meditative look of the Lord calls upon all devotees to practice measureless patience and perseverance, and so let us be patient and persevering in the painful process of turning up the downward pointing lotus of the heart and making it bloom heavenwards.

There is an explanation of Chinmudra in the light of the great Upanishad expression—"That thou art." According to the Vedantic explanation, the thumb stands for That or Brahman or Atma. The forefinger is *thou*, since it is universally recognized as the pointing finger. The process of forming the Mudra is the realization of the oneness of the individual ego with Atma. The Lord points out that each individual ego is a ray of the Absolute Purusha, and it can realize its oneness with the All, only by a complete estrangement from the three lower planes, the domain of Avidya, and union with the three higher, the three that ever remain as the one.

The rosary of Rudraksha beads is an important symbol indicating the way in which a Yogic devotee deals with the power of

speech. What is meant by the Lord of Silent Contemplation holding out the rosary before the eyes of his devotee ?

This brings us to that aspect of Japa-Yajna that most concerns a true Yogi. The word Mantra is a compound of *man* and *tra*, and means that which protects thought or that which makes it possible for thought to grow in us. A great Mantra or Maha-mantra has this effect. When properly used it has the effect of equilibrating the psychic nature of the reciter. It introduces a calm that no words can express,—a calm in which alone the spiritual soul can grow. This tranquillity, this peace, can be obtained only by a man seeking it, and struggling to raise himself above the world of Kama, the world of struggle. To such a struggler, a Maha-mantra will be a great help. Of all such Maha-mantras the Gayatri is said to be the mightiest. The recitation of this mighty Mantra is sure to purify the inner nature of the reciter and elevate it to the plane of the eternal.

The two instructions contained in the symbols of Chin-mudra and rosary are for the growth of the spiritual soul. They are guides for a Yogi travelling from the mire of earth to the elixir in heaven. But it must be remembered that a Yogi is able to rise, only because he is anxious to work for those left behind. The Yogi must expand his heart and feel for those who still remain in ignorance. He must work, work, work perseveringly, until the manifested nature accomplishes its destinies. This is an important truth which Dakshinamurthi wants to impress on the mind of the devotee. How ?

Let the reader think deeply on the vina or lyre in one of the hands of the Lord. The ancient philosophers looked upon the course of evolution as a grand piece of music. The laws which govern cycles, sub-cycles and Yugas, which accentuate in their progress the development of the various principles in the Cosmos correspond to one grand piece of music ; and so there is much in the statement that Nature sings. Sarasvati is the consort of Brahma and she holds a lyre in her hand. Brahma generates the ideas that work out as the world and Sarasvati generates the notes of life that, combined with the ideas, carry on the stream of evo-

lution from stage to stage. Brahma and Sarasvati are both one and differ only as to aspects. The one is the mind and the other is the speech.

The Lord who holds the lyre before the eyes of the devotee, wants to impress on his mind the necessity of working to aid the course of evolution and to get the purpose accomplished, for which all this has been set on foot.

Coming now to the book in the hand of the Lord, we have to state that the meaning is evident. No devotee of the Deva can go up without doing his utmost towards the enlightenment of humanity. The Guru is the one lamp of wisdom in the universe, and He will not shed his rays on a devotee who will not, in his turn, pass on the light, to teach and elevate others.

§ 10.—NATARAJA.*

The inner meaning of the Hindu symbols is often very grand and poetic, and to enter into and understand it, will certainly be a privilege to those who are striving to realize for themselves the truths of philosophy; for these symbols were devised simply as helps to the imagination, and many men have employed them with advantage. The meanings of these symbols differ, of course, according to the standpoint adopted, and the highest, *viz.*, the Vedantic will be the one from which we shall study them.

Nataraja means the Lord of the stage. The idea is that the world is a stage, a puppet-show, which presents the vision of life and activity through the power of the all-pervading Atman or God, the unseen Lord of the stage. But for the inner Atman all the world would be mere Jada (inert or dead).

The Atman or Self being the real teacher of the human mind, Nataraja is meant to represent the Teacher or Guru. One of the functions of the Guru and perhaps the most important is to be what he teaches—to enforce his teaching by example. It is this idea that is the keynote to the Nataraja symbol.

* From the "Awakened India," Vol. I.

The little drum in one of the right hands is meant to express the idea that God or Guru holds the cause of all the world, *i.e.*, sound in his hand, in other words, all the world is in his hand, to be folded or unfolded at his own will. To the gnani or wise man, the world exists only if he chooses and not otherwise. The deer on one side is the mind, because the latter leaps and jumps from one thing to another as wildly as that animal. The Atman is far beyond the reach of the deer-like mind, and so the deer is placed near the legs. Nataraja wears the skin of a tiger, which he himself slew. Ahankara or egoism is that tiger, it is beastly and ferocious and fiercely fights when attacked, but it has to be killed, and Nataraja the guru alone can kill it. On his head he wears the Ganges, *i.e.*, Chit Sakti or wisdom, which is most cool and refreshing and the moon which represents the ethereal light and blissfulness of the Atman. One foot is planted over and crushes the giant Miyalaka, *i.e.*, Maha Maya, the endless illusion, which is the cause of birth and death, while the other foot is raised upward and represents the *turiya* state, which is beyond, above the three states of waking, dream, and dreamless sleep, and leaves behind, the mind, Maya and the world. The second right hand representing the idea of peace indicates the blessed calmness, which is the glorious privilege of wisdom. In one of the left hands is held Agni (fire), *i.e.*, the guru brings in the Jotis of the Atman itself to attest the truth of his teaching. The idea is that the truth of the guru's teaching can only be fully understood in practical realization, in experience (Anubhava). The place of the dance, the theatre, is Tillaivanam, *i.e.*, the body (of the individual as well as of the Cosmos) spoken of as Vanam or forest, on account of the multitude of its components. The platform in that theatre is the cremation ground, *i.e.*, the place where all passions and the names and forms that constitute the vision of the world have been burnt away—pure consciousness—devoid of attachment to anything outside and devoid of illusion.

The above are some of the leading features of the Nataraja symbol. The guru teaches that Maya—illusion—should be crushed down, that the world should become subject to us and not we to

the world, that the deer-like mind should be left behind and Ahankara (egoism) be destroyed, and that man should ascend to the regions of pure, unconditioned consciousness, free from passion and free from deception, and enjoy the calmness which is his birth-right, the bliss, the light and the truth that form the self. Viewed in the light of this inner meaning, the image of Nataraja is no more a meaningless idol, a piece of stone or copper, but a symbol of the highest teaching, an object that can inspire and elevate.

§ 11.—CHITRAGUPTA.*

This personage is well-known to all Aryas, as the Chief Secretary to Yama Raja, God of Death. It is believed by all orthodox Hindus that this officer is a necrologist, and keeps regular detailed and minute accounts of all the actions of every individual. It is also the common belief that, after death, every individual is taken before this officer for examination and judgment. After going over the personal accounts of each man, this officer decides his fate and rewards or punishes according to his actions during life. He sends sinners to Hell, where they undergo all sorts of punishments and trials. No action whatever, whether good or evil, ever escapes his notice. He is perfectly impartial, and gives everybody his just due. There is also a general belief that Chitragupta has no connection or control over pure and virtuous men. Such men never open accounts with him, so no entry in his ledger is made for them. Their accounts are kept and adjusted by higher authorities and in a different way.

But what is the real or esoteric meaning of this Chitragupta? The name is composed of two sanskrit words Chitra, picture, and Gupta, secret, that is, secret pictures. But we must go a little deeper for the real meaning.

This correct and accurate necrologist is no person, and nothing whatever but the Astral Light, a form of the akasa or life-principle, by which we are surrounded and linked together, or in

* From the Theosophist, Vol. VI.

other words, the magnetic aura of every being. Every minutest action is duly and indelibly impressed on this Astral Light, the moment it is performed. Even our thoughts are imprinted on it. This is the infallible account book of our so-called Chitragupta. By continuous magnetic emanations we continually fill up this account book with fresh debits and credits, and no one can expect to see his accounts properly balanced and closed, till both the debits and the credits are on a par. By our actions during life-time, we create our own Hell and Heaven, rewards and punishments, pains and pleasures. We are the creators of our own happiness and miseries. We can liberate ourselves from this worldly bondage, by pure and unselfish actions. There is no second or third party anywhere, either in the objective or subjective worlds, to punish or reward us, or interfere in any way with our Karma. Physical death is no death at all. It is simply the opening of a new chapter and the beginning of fresh trials to be undergone, till we complete our earthly career. Births and deaths are mere effects of our own Karma. If we put our fingers into the fire, they are sure to be burnt. We should therefore always remember this Chitragupta, and try to keep our ledger folio quite clean.

The scientific rationale of this Chitragupta is not generally understood. Enlightened people generally, out of sheer ignorance, laugh at the very idea of Chitragupta and his accounts. The orthodox Hindus believe, on blind faith, in the existence of this officer and his functions and shudder to commit any crime out of fear of Hell and of the punishments thereof. It may be remarked that every assertion of our shastras, which appears quite inconsistent or irrelevant will invariably be found to veil a deep, esoteric meaning, if sincerely and properly analysed.

§ 12—ARJUNA AND BHISMA.*

The word Arjuna denotes the monad tenanted the human tabernacle. But it should be borne in mind that the term Arjuna is not interchangeable with every monad dwelling in a human tabernacle. To that monad alone who is endowed with Vishada (*i.e.* the craving for emancipation) the word Arjuna will apply.

“It is an eternal law that through Vishada alone one obtains Sat Guru (true teacher). Through this teacher true knowledge is imparted. Through this true knowledge man obtains emancipation. So long as Vishada is not originated, so long man does not obtain Sat Guru. So long as man does not obtain Sat Guru, so long true knowledge is not received. There is no happiness greater than Vishada in this universe.”

The above quotation, a dictum of Krishna, goes to prove that the term Arjuna does not signify every human monad but one imbued with Vishada. This being so, the Arjuna of the Gita means a man imbued with Vishada, and not a historical character as is generally supposed to be the case.

To what does the term Bhishma of the Bhagavad Gita apply?

If Arjuna and Bhishma were historical personages related in blood as great-uncle and great-nephew, it would be a momentous question for consideration as to what help does the homicide of a great-uncle render to a great-nephew treading the path of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Upasana, with Moksha as the end in view, directed and guided by a guru incarnated as Sri Krishna himself. If Bhishma of the Bhagavad Gita was a personality, if Arjuna was a personality bent on emancipation, and if as such he received spiritual teaching, from Sri Krishna; if, after having received and digested the divine teaching, Arjuna fought a battle in the popular sense of the term, and therein slew his great-uncle and other kindred, he must have done it with some end in view, and the teaching of Sri Krishna must have been imparted to enable him to accomplish that end. What this end was, is patent on the very face of the Gita. It was nothing but Moksha. If this be so, the

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XVII.

battle, and therein the human slaughter consequent on the teaching of Sri Krishna, are the means to that end. This is an absurdity pure and simple. Therefore the Arjuna and Bhishma of the Bhagavad Gita are not historical characters. The word Bhishma signifies Kama or extreme selfishness.

§ XIII.—BHIMA AND DURYODHANA.*

The word Bhima refers to one made strong by Vidya, which is qualified as imbued with very great strength. Sri Krishna says :— “ Where knowledge is not, there the good Karma is undoubtedly not. Man with good Karma and purified heart becomes a candidate for emancipation. Through knowledge the mundane desire of man is killed out. Therefore knowledge exceeds all earthly bliss.” This dictum of Sri Krishna demonstrates beyond all manner of doubt that knowledge (Vidya) alone originates good Karma. As long as knowledge is not gained, so long discrimination does not originate. Without discrimination the heart is not purified. It is through knowledge that the heart is purified, discrimination is engendered, thought-control is brought about, renunciation is effected and desire is killed out.

The term Duryodhana signifies *Manas* or the instrument by which are cognized the impressions of the objects of sense made on the external organs. What is meant here is the Manas of man and of no other monad. Its subjugation is a paramount or inevitable duty and is beset with difficulty. Manas plays a very important part in the enthrallment and liberation of the monad. Where there has come into play the faculty of discriminating good from evil, where there is heard the voice of conscience, and where there has been awakened the craving for emancipation, there the Manas is fully aroused into activity and is as a consequence found difficult to be restrained and controlled.

The legitimate function of Manas is to supply food, gathered from the external world through the organs of sense, to Ahankara and thereby promote individualism and separateness and put on

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XVIII.

the monad fresh fetters of bondage. The monad is originally free and as such has an inherent tendency for liberation. The non-subjugation of Manas impedes the progress of the monad towards emancipation. Therefore the subjugation of Manas is the paramount duty.

In the human Upadhi the monad is capacitated for Moksha. To think of emancipation and to work for its attainment is the highest duty of man. Anything that imperils or even tends to imperil his progress towards Moksha must be checked and controlled. Manas in man is the most perilous element in this connection. It should therefore be subjugated.

For the reasons set forth above, the term Duryodhana of the Bhagavad Gita means the Manas in man whose subjugation is beset with difficulty.

Dhritarashtra is the word with which begins the esteemed work entitled the Bhagavad Gita. The general belief is that the word as used in the Gita is the name of a historical personage. This historical belief permeates all the translations of the Gita that have hitherto been made in the English language. But no solid grounds are even given, showing the reason why a poem which expounds the highest spiritual truth should form part of an epic poem said to be "devoted mainly to the deeds of rival princes who fought for an earthly kingdom." To say that the Mahabharata is a record of the deeds of two rival princes who fought for an earthly kingdom, and was composed by Vyasa, admittedly a Maharshi, and that the Gita is an episode in that historical record, is nothing but a hopeless paradox. The Rishis who revealed religion to the Hindus and imparted to them the system which by its observance makes of man a God, were not so be-maddened as to waste their time in recording deeds of princes shedding blood for worldly gain.

Let us divest the Lord's Song of the absurdities that people have suffered to gather round it, and see what meaning the word in question bears, as interpreted in the light of common sense, by Initiates of the ancient as well as of the modern times.

Dhritarashtra is a term applicable to that Moha which is the root of all this manifested Cosmos. It is this Moha which brings the Jiva into the world. It is through this Moha that the enthrallment of the Jiva is caused in the world. It is this Moha, to which the term Dhritarashtra applies. Therefore the term Dhritarashtra signifies Maya or Illusion alone. So long as Dhritarashtra is not subdued, there is no chance for deliverance.

The sacred literature of the Hindus has had a very thick veil thrown over it by the Hindus, misguided by selfishness; some of the commentaries by Rishis have been interpolated; false ones have been substituted; genuine works are kept in the back ground; there exists even now a vast treasure buried deep in selfishness, and it is possible to recover it if measures adequate to the recovery be adopted by those interested in the well-being of their country and of humanity at large.

§ XIV.—ELEMENTALS.*

(OR YAKSHAS, DAKSHAS, PISACHAS, APSARAS, DEVAS, &C.)

There are seven planes of existence for living beings. The elementals are the denizens of these planes having more or less finer incasements. They are semi-intelligent forces of nature. They are semi-intelligent, for they have no will, but simply guided by certain definite Cosmic laws. They are forces in the higher state or states of matter which we are not able to cognize with our present senses. The advance of modern science has rendered probable the fact that there are higher states of matter than gas, though it does not know anything about such higher ones. If there are higher states of matter, then those worlds cannot be mere voids but should have forces in them as we have forces in our physical plane.

* From the Prasnotara.

§ XV.—ASURAS AND DEVAS.*

Metaphysically, Asuras and Devas typify the two opposite poles of creation, the Asuras preceding Devas in creation. Then when these terms were applied to humanity, Asuras were applied to the egos of man which are really spiritual in their nature but active in their tendencies; but the word Devas stands for either egos like ourselves, who have already progressed from the state we are, into a very high spiritual state, when they are in a passive state, or those semi-intelligent entities which are in a passive stage lower than ourselves awaiting their own future time to run through evolution, and yet occupying the spiritual planes. Further on, during the Puranic period, we see the word Asuras used as a term of reproach which use of the term did not exist before. How came this degradation of the term? In some stories we find the Asuras fighting for the extirpation of religious ceremonies as shams and reaching Moksha without their aid. Of course to a real *gnani* these ceremonies are so many obstacles to their progress and utterly worthless so far as they are concerned. But the Puranic writers in giving out the higher truths wanted to emphasise upon the proper performance of rituals in the case of those majority of people who are not *gnanis*. How are they to do it in the face of those passages which treated of men reaching Moksha by dashing off all rituals. The best way is to treat those men as Asuras or Non-Suras mischievously inclined. There are also some other reasons such as condemning men as Asuras, should they misconduct themselves, and keeping them in check. This idea has been wafted over to the West where also we find the same tendency of degrading Satan to hell, when in fact he and his compeers represent the egos of humanity hurled from a spiritual state down to the material in their natural course of development and evolution. Thus we see that we shall have to be very careful to find out in what sense a term is used in a contest, in our spiritual works, and then only shall we be able to descry truly the meaning of the text. Otherwise we shall be lost

* From the Theosophic Thinker, Vol. I.

in a wilderness of terms, facts, &c. We have but given some of the meanings attached to these terms. But Madame Blavatsky has stated that there is a seven-fold interpretation of these, of which she has but turned the key twice or thrice.

§ XVI.—CHURNING THE MILK OCEAN.*

In speaking of the genesis of the elements, Sir William Crookes takes protyle as a starting-point, which is really Vayu in its form on this physical plane—Prithivi Vayu—and out of that builds one atom after another, making all the chemical elements to be bodies aggregated together by the action of a positive and a negative force. If you had read your Vishnu Purana, with your brain, and not merely with your eyes through modern spectacles, you might have learnt that theory of Sir William Crookes, long, long before he gave it. He has drawn a picture, and that picture shows an immovable axis, and around it a spiral coil, and at points in that coil are atoms of the chemical elements, generated by that coil which represents a swinging and cooling force. That spiral is in the great ocean of protyle or primeval matter, and as that spiral goes round and round the immovable axis, it generates chemical elements one after another, and so brings into existence the materials out of which the world is to be formed. That is the dry scientific statement summarised from his own address. But I have read in an ancient book of a mountain—which is the emblem of stability, of an axis round which everything is to revolve—thrown into a mighty ocean; and I have read of a great serpent turned round that mountain in spiral coils; on the one side the Suras are pulling, and on the other side the Asuras are equally busy. Between the two—the positive and negative of Modern Science—evolution is started and the serpent spiral begins to turn and turn round that axis. They call the axis Mount Mandara, and they call the spiral coil the serpent Vasuki, while the axis rests on Hari as a pivot; they call the positive and the negative forces, the Gods and Demons; and their churning of the ocean gives rise to the materials of the Universe.

* From Annie Besant on Ancient and Modern Science (1898).

§ XVII.—BRAHMA'S INCEST.*

The allegory in the Satapatha Brahmana is, that Brahma, as the father of men, performed the work of procreation by incestuous intercourse with his own daughter Vach, also called Sandhya (twilight) and Satarupa (the hundred-formed) is incessantly thrown into the teeth of the Brahmans, as condemning their detestable false religion. There is certainly a cosmic, not a physiological meaning attached to the Indian allegory. Since Vach is a permutation of Aditi and Mulaprakriti (Chaos) and Brahma a permutation of Narayana, the spirit of God entering into and fructifying nature, therefore there is nothing phallic in the conception at all.

§ XVIII.—RAMAYANA.†

In order to make out the real significance of this incarnation of Vishnu, viz., Rama, we should know its relationship with its previous Avatars. Thrice seven times did Parasurama fight with the Kshatriyas and rout them. At last Kartha-Virya-Arjuna, who is no other than the ego in its *kamic* state was killed. In this state the ego full of *kama* fumes, had not the well-marked differentiations of the Higher and the Lower minds.

The whole mind was one confused mass then, the Higher and the Lower minds being latent in that stage. As we see in the Ramayana, even the Higher mind in its latent condition was enveloped with the Rakshasas and Yakshas till near Ayodhya or the Atmic state. But the one result of the conflict of the mind in its Kshatriya or Kamic stage was that it contracted a sense of individuality in the Parasurama war. The ego in its incipient stage had no Ahankara and it is only through its fight with Kama in this world that the idea of 'I' concretes itself in man.

After the ego in which the sense of individuality had developed itself, became fit for progress in a higher state and was therefore destroyed phenomenally to acquire higher experiences,

* From the Secret Doctrine. † From the Theosophic Thinker, Vol. II.

what do we see in the Ramayana? In it, we find the dual mind represented by India and Lankha, which stand for the Higher and Lower minds respectively. The two are at first not connected by a bridge. The sea or mere space separates them at first, and it is only when Rama goes to Lankha to rescue Sita, that a bridge is constructed. That is to say, so long as man has *kamic* tendencies alone in him, there will be nothing for the Higher mind to receive from the Lower. But if a person gets the better of them partially at least and tries to look up in the spiritual direction, a path of communication will be created between the Higher and the Lower minds so that the spiritual tendencies of actions from the Lower are transmitted to the Higher. And hence it is, a bridge is constructed by Nala, who is stated to be the son of Visvakarma, the heavenly architect.

The word Lankha comes from Lak, to obtain *viz.*, that from which spirit is obtained. The principal characters in it are Vibishana, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Surpanakha. The Ahankaric fort of the Lower mind is said to be tripartite in its nature through Satwa, Rajas and Tamas. Tamas is yet subdivided into two, *viz.*, Avarana Sakti and Vikshepa Sakti. They are the centripetal and the centrifugal forces respectively, one converging towards the centre, and another diverging from it. Kumbhakarna is said to be ever dormant and sleeping, and hence represents Avarana Sakti, sleeping in the centre. Surpanaka stands for Vikshepa Sakti or the evolutionary power. Applying this Sakti to the Lower Mind we find it is through this Sakti in our mind that at first a yearning for spirituality arises. Being an evolutionary power, she roams everywhere at will, and at last comes to Panchavati Kshetra, where she falls in love with Rama, the spirit, but is discomfited in her attempts by Lakshmana, who disfigures her nose. It will be impossible for this Tamasic aspect in us which arises at first, to encompass Atma, since the mind will have to become pure Satwa itself and then divesting itself of even that, will have to merge into Atma, the spirit. Being foiled in her endeavours, she goes and reports all about her disfigurement to Ravana, her brother, who represents the Rajasic Ahankara.

All the ten organs of sense and actions are on his head and he is completely under their sway, because so much in love with them. Hence he is represented with ten heads standing for these organs.

The Rajasic aspect of the mind will not be able of itself to meet Atma ; hence it invokes the power of Illusion to aid it in its endeavours to secure Sita or Buddhi (or intuition) within its fort by making Illusion lure away Atma to a distance. This Illusion is symbolised by Mārīcha. He is the son of Tataka or Taraki and was flung into the seas by Rama in Viswamitra Yaga at Siddhasrama, having been cursed by Agastya into a Rakshasa from a Yakshsa. Then Vibhishana, the other brother, represents the Satwic mind. He is the last of the brothers as Satwa arose only in this stage, Rajas and Tamas having been in existence in the previous stages. Vibhishana is literally that which caused much fear before. That which in conjunction with the other brothers caused great fear has now become as quite as a lamb. After Sita was taken away by Ravana and lodged in the fort of Ahankara, there arises a commotion and split among the brothers in the Ahankaric fort through the introduction of Sita or Gnana-agni within it ; and as soon as Vibhishana hears of Rama's arrival on the other side of Lanka, he goes over to Rama's camp along with his kindred of Satwa. The person who ministered to the consolation of Sita while in Asokha garden is Vibhishana's daughter only. The Lower mind in its aspiration for spirituality divides itself into four aspects, all the four aspects being necessary for its progress. The expansive or Vikshepa power of Tamas which arises out of and cannot exist in the absence of Avarana Sakti tries to get at Atma and visits him and his wife Buddhi at Panchavati, the fifth seat, being not able to go higher up. In other words the "I" which arose in man through desires, tries to enjoy them in all the worlds of the five elements. There it falls in love with Rama and being but a brute material force gets a rebuff with the disfigurement of the nose. Through this Sakti, the Rajas aspect of the mind gets information of Sita the wife of Atma and gets hold of her in the guise of an ascetic. Renunciation partial if not complete is the

only means through which Buddhi or intuition can be mastered. And when Buddhi really does alight in the Ahankaric mind through our Rajasic efforts, all the aspects of mind except Satwa will be abolished. Thus it is, Vibishana the Satwic mind, alone survives to tell the tale.

Turning to the higher realm of Atma, whenever Vishnu incarnates on earth for the good of mankind, all his subsidiary powers do also incarnate. We can therefore identify all the characters, that occur in the Ramayana with some or other of the spiritual forces of Vishnu or Nature. Thus, Bharata, Satrugna and Lakshmana are the incarnations of discus, conch and Adishesha. Vishnu Purana states in clear terms that they are Purusha, Prakriti and kala or cosmic ideation, cosmic substance and time. In modern phraseology they are consciousness, space and time, the three ultimates into which all things in the Universe can be resolved.

Time is inseparable from the absolute ; and hence we find that Lakshmana is the inseparable attendant upon Rama, whether at home or in exile, whether sleeping or waking &c. Sita parts for some time at least from Rama but Lakshmana never. Similarly are Bharata and Satrugna inseparable ; cosmic ideation and cosmic substance being but the two facets or modes of the absolute, can never be separated. Destroy the one, and the other also disappears. Bharata conducts the regality not directly himself, but through the sandals of Rama, being himself in Nandigram (Nandi standing for Om or Sabdabrahman). Cosmic Ideation cannot rule in the realm of the Absolute which is Asabda Brahman, in other words it is Ayodhya, one that cannot be made war against.

Hence it is that an Amsa however slight of Vishnu carries on the reign with Bharata remaining in Nandigram during the 14 years' exile of Rama. Unlike Ravana, Dasaratha has his ten organs of the body under control. Going to the next passage of Rama to Mithila where he marries Sita, all the stages through which he passes are very suggestive. It is Rishi Viswamitra that conducts him to Sita's realm. About the different stages through which Rama passed from Ayodhya to Mithila and the different Rishis, whom Rama met with here as well as after his exile, there

are explanations to offer. Viswamitra stands for the Buddhi Principle, while Sita also stands for the same. This merely means that among the septenary Rishis, who have their allotted functions to perform, Viswamitra stands in analogy to the Buddhi Principle, while Sita stands for the Bhuddi, 6th Principle, which mankind has to reach up to in its respective progress. As regards the Rishis who appear in Ramayana, they appear in different places and for proper reasons. Viswamitra stands for Buddhi and Vasishta for Kama-Prana. Prana pertains to the sun and hence it is that Vasishta is the guru of the Solar Dynasty. Representing as he does the Buddhi principle, Viswamitra guides Atma from its seat of Ayodhya to the seat of Buddhi or Sita in Mithila. These two Cities have their respective analogies of centres in our head and heart. In the passage of Rama to Mithila, the seven stages from Atmic Centre to Bhuddic Centre in our brain are marked. The first country they passed through is Ananga, called so because Kama in trying to disturb Siva's meditations was burnt up there and left without any Anga or parts of the body. This is the Arupa, the 6th state of Buddhi. Then comes the junction of the Ganges and Sarayu with the sound heard at a distance by Rama. From the Manasa pool follows the river Sarayu first into Ayodhya and then into the Ganges which means that the 7th principle is colored or discolored according to the nature of the Manasic pool or the mind. Then come Malada and Karusha which terms mean nothing but impurities. This seat is nothing but that of the impure mind. It is in this seat that a Yaksha woman Tataka or otherwise called Taraka was killed by Rama. When Kama reigns rampant in the mind as in the previous Avatar, even the path from Bhuddhi to Atma in the higher man is blocked up by these Yakshas living in the 4th stage from Buddhi to Atma. And unless these are destroyed, the path is inaccessible. Taraka is that which tends to Moksha or release as without her Moksha is impossible. Her son is Marichi, the Illusion. It is from this highest stage leading from Buddhi (Sita) to Atma (of Ayodya) that the Illusion or Maya is bred, and from the next lower is flung over the seas. Then comes the Yaga of Viswamitra in Siddha-

srama. With the Yaga, Maricha and Subahu interfere, the latter being killed by Rama and the former thrown over the seas to join with Ravana and take the form of a deer and beguile Rama with an illusion, since, it is said that it is spirit itself that gets into Maya or illusion in order to get out of it. The Yaga shows clearly desires and hence is the third stage of Kama.

Passing over certain incidents and coming to Kishkinda, it can be identified with the heart plexus. Here the story is this. Vali having driven away Sugriva, his brother, along with Hanuman and others for Sugriva's misconduct, was reigning over Kishkinda, while Sugriva and others took refuge in Rishya Mukha which Vali dared not approach on account of the curse of Matanga Rishi. While Sugriva and others were living in great trepidation, Rama came hard by the river Pampa and saw Hanuman and others. He forms a compact with Sugriva and kills Vali and installs Sugriva on the throne. Now Vali representing Indra or passions, and Sugriva, the Sun or Jnana, Vali reigned triumphant in the heart when Kama was prevalent. But when the spirit begins to dominate in the heart, passions which hitherto held sway over it are killed and the Sun of Jnana is installed over the kingdom in their stead. This is the reason why Rama instead of allying himself with Vali to recover Sita, destroys him. Passions serve as Vampires in us to destroy our power. So Vali whenever he goes to attack his opponent vampirizes half of his adversary's energy and attracts it to himself. His wife Tara represents a disciple who wishes to cross the Samsara; and hence after the death of her husband, leagues herself with Sugriva.

After Sugriva was installed on the throne, messengers are sent in all directions in search of Sita, and Hanuman with Angada at the head and other chief characters such as Jambuvan, &c., start towards the south in search of Sita.

After they emerged out of the darkness of Swayamprabha, she leads them blind-folded into light, and then they meet Sampathi the vulture. Sampathi is represented by him to be the elder brother of Jatayu. Jatayu is met by Rama in Panchavati. Then Rama goes to Janasthana where he meets Jatayu. Jatayu repre-

sents a cycle of 60,000 years. He is coeval with Dasaratha. But Sampathi represents a longer time *viz.*, a Manvantara or time lesser than that, but exceeding 60,000 years. Hence we find that all these characters appearing in different stages show but the serial stages in the progress.

There are other characters which have not been explained. For instance the destruction of Viradha and Kabandha, the former appearing as soon as the Dandaka forest is reached, and the latter turning up in Panchavati, do but represent the obstacles in the progress of the ego, and conduce to its progress, as we find that the former was a Gandharva and the latter a Danava, cursed into their present states. With their destruction they obtain heaven. All these represent the stages in the progress of the higher ego. But the Rakshasas such as Dushana, &c., who are allied to Ravana, are the hosts of the lower mind, and hence do not attain heaven. Again, if we read the description of the Sun in Vishnu Purana and others, then it will be evident why Agastya turns up just before Panchavati is reached the second time and so on.

Then turning to the actions of Hanuman, we find that he goes into Lanka, and having found Sita and shown her the ring, returns to Rama and burns Lanka with his tail. This is nothing but the first stage of Gnana, when Prana, as it were, surges the impurities of the lower mind in order to pave the way for the illumination of spirit in the Ahankaric fort. Going into the war itself, it will land us into a volume if we enter into a detailed explanation.

Taking the book as it stands, we find there are seven chapters including the Uttara-Kandam. Here the 4th or connecting link is Kishkinda, the heart. Just as among the principles or plexuses, the fourth connects the higher with the lower, so also this chapter cements the first three with the last three. It is only with the reinforcement of all good energies in the heart and the destruction of the evil ones, that progress ensues. The seven Kandams, are Bala (youth), Ayodhya (Oude), Aranya (Forest), Kishkinda (), Sundara (lovely), Yuddha (war) and Uttara (the latter portion). These seven can be interpreted in various

ways according to the different standpoints from which we look at them. But it may be stated that in the different stages of the progress of the ego, this story refers to that stage after Kama envelopes it and intuition is about to develop.

In this article we have not dealt with the subject exhaustively. We have but touched upon its main outlines only. If each student will work out for himself, in the light of the Upanishads and others, as well as with these few hints now thrown out, all the characters, rivers, mountains, &c., that he meets with in the Ramayana, then a flood of light will be thrown upon them and he will find that the Ramayana is not a mere story and that it will be beneficial to him in the way of finding out the nature and the number of the enemies in himself who will have to be subjugated ere he is a Jivanmukta. To Yogis working clairvoyantly within all the characters herein disclosed are so many landmarks.

§ XIX.—TARAKA WAR.*

In the Mythology of the earliest Vedic Aryans as in the later Puranic narratives, mention is made of Budha, the wise, one learned in the Secret Wisdom and who is the planet Mercury. As a myth he is the son of Tara the wife of Brihaspati, the god-coloured and of Soma the (male) Moon who carries this new Helen of the Hindu Sidereal Kingdom away from her husband, which causes a great strife and war in Swarga (Heaven). The episode brings on a battle between the gods and the Asuras. King Soma finds allies in Usavas (Venus), the leader of the Danavas, and the gods are led by Indra and Rudra who side with Brihaspati. The latter is helped by Sankara (Siva) who, having had for his Guru Brahaspati's father Angiras, befriends his son. Both Indra and Rudra fight—one in defence of Brihaspati (Jupiter), the other in support of the ever-thundering Rudra Sankara. During this war, he is deserted by his body-guard, the storm-gods (Maruts).

* From the Secret Doctrine.

The story is very suggestive in some of its details.

The presiding genius or regent of the planet Jupiter is *Brihaspati*, the wronged husband. He is the instructor or spiritual guru of the gods, who are the representatives of the procreative powers. In the *Rig Veda*, he is called *Brahmanaspati*, a name meaning "the deity in whom the action of the worshipped upon the gods is personified." Hence he represents the materialization of the Divine Grace, so to say, by means of ritual and ceremonies, or the exoteric worship.

Tara—his wife—is on the other hand the personification of the powers of one of initiated into *Gupta Vidya* (secret knowledge).

Soma is the Moon astronomically but in mystical phraseology it is also the name of the sacred beverage drunk by the Brahmins and the Initiates during their mysteries and sacrificial rites.

Soma was never given in the days of old to the non-initiated Brahmin—the simple *grihasta* or priest of exoteric ritual. Thus *Brihaspati*, guru of the gods though he was still represented the dead-letter form of worship. It is *Tara*, his wife, the symbol of one who though wedded to dogmatic worship, longs for true wisdom, who is shown as initiated into his mysteries by king *Soma*, the giver of that Wisdom, *Soma* is thus made to carry her away in the allegory. The result of this is the birth of *Budha*, Esoteric Wisdom. He is represented as so beautiful, that even the husband, though well aware that *Budha* is not the progeny of his dead-letter worship—claims the new-born as his son, the fruit of his ritualistic and meaningless forms. Such is, in brief, one of the meanings of the allegory.

§ XX.—*RUKMANI KALYANAM*.*

(AN EPISODE FROM *BAGAVATAM*.)

There lived a king *Bhismaka*, by name, ruler of *Kundina* in *Vidarba*. He had five sons of which the eldest, *Rukmi* by name was a spotless person. The last and the most beloved of the lot was a daughter *Rukmani* by name.

* From the *Light of the East*, Vol. III.

Esoterically, in this stainless human frame, the person who by a study of the Vedas and Vedantas, experiences the state of *Aham Brahmasmi*, I am Brahm; carefully scrutinizes the deeper recesses of the soul and becomes a terror to the ignorant and the charlatan. The five sons are the five excrementitious products and the daughter—*Brahmavidya*. The *Agnana* or ignorance which assumes the form of the five excrementitious products and the increaser of *Satyaguna* in the human constitution and *Brahmagnana*, the dispeller of such *Satyaguna*, as both are born in the mind, the latter became the sister of the former. Those ignorant excrementitious products became the five brothers of *Rukmani* (*i.e.*, *Brahmavidya*). Moreover, ignorance was born first and by careful initiation was dispelled by *Brahmagnana* born afterwards; hence the former became the elder brother and the latter his younger sister.

The five excrementitious products are:—(1) *Anava Mala*—Where *Satyaguna* preponderates although at times the thought of 'I am Brahm' is presented to the mind to be soon forgotten. (2) *Karmika Mala*—in which a person gives a deaf ear to the Vedantic teachings of his best gurus. (3) *Mayika Mala*—in which the thought about Brahm does not strike the mind at all. (4) *Mayaya Mala*—where the mind is led to the performance of sinful deeds of whatever kind and (5) *Thirotkana Mala*—in which a person after knowing all about Parabrahm is led to the belief that there is something other than that Being and in consequence suffers eternal damnation and undergoes a series of rebirths.

While all the relatives of *Rukmani* were holding consultations with the wise about giving her in marriage to *Krishna*, the pudding-headed *Rukmi* came to a different conclusion and wanted her to be given to *Sisupala*.

This signifies that while all *Brahmagnanis* were thinking of giving *Brahmavidya* to *Parabrahm* (*Krishna*) and were diving deep into the matter, the *Jivahunkara* (egoism) thought of giving this *Brahmavidya* to the ignorant and the useless, as it was not able to draw the distinction between the mortal and the immortal.

Sri Krishna married *Rukmani* (*Lakshmi*), a woman best adapted to his tastes, possessing an extreme sense of honor, capa-

ble of making others extremely rich, honored by her relatives and in turn honoring them, of good character, capable of removing immense poverty and wearing the best jewels and putting on the best clothes. By such a marriage Krishna obtained an everlasting fame.

§ XXI.—KUCHALOPAKYANAM.*

Kuchóla (Chela means a cloth) is the man that sifts and winnows the Agnana or ignorance that surrounds the Brahma-vetta. He is Govinda's friend *i.e.*, one who centred his mind on Parabrahma, or one who subdued all the Indriyas and therefore the friend of all Brahvittavarishtas. He and his wife (Brahma-vidya), though wholly immersed in the wide sea of this miserable Samsar, were spending their days with their minds unattached to these troubles. Once upon a time, Brahmavidya, the wife, said to her husband, O Lord! While the fire of Samsar scorches us, we generally cool it by the showers of our Bignana. In order that we might not any longer be troubled by such misery, perform Brahmanishta, which arose with you along with the appearance of this mortal coil, and elevate us from the ocean of this misery—the misery in which we have lost all knowledge of the self, of Parabrahma and trouble ourselves with mere Nama and Rupa, with youth, manhood, and old age, with Satwa, Raja and Tama Gunas, with drawing a distinction between the rich and the poor, &c., &c.—raise us up I say from the ocean of such misery by making us forget this knowledge by a knowledge of Parabrahma. She approached her husband and said that Sri Krishna, Parabrahma is at present at Kusasthali *i.e.*, Hrithaya Kamala, while all the Brahmavettas (Yadavas) are adoring him. And if you go and visit him at the place he will give you eternal riches, *i.e.*, Moksha, unfettered by any sorrow. Kuchela then thinks “How can I enter the gates of Dwaraka? That is, how can I concentrate my attention on the Hridayakamala which glows

* From the Light of the East. Vol. V.

between the Sun, Moon and Āgni? How can I see that Pundari Kaksha who dwells in the Hridaya Kamala?" So thinking he attained eternity (Brahmīsthiti) by his Nirvikalpanishṭa and attained eminence by his Vairagya as Mahakartha, Mahabhokta and Mahatyagi.

§ XXII.—MARKANDEYA CHARITRAM.

The Purana says that the sage Markandeya was first destined to live a very short life; but that by devotion to God—to Siva according to some Puranas, to Vishnu, according to others—he overcame Yama, God of Death, who came on the appointed day to take away his life and began to drag him by means of his bands of rope.

According to the Dakshinamurti Upanishad* which is said to belong to the Black Yajur-Veda, Markandeya takes the place of Viveka or wisdom; Yama, of moha or delusion; ropes, of the absence of enquiry; and fear, of the duality. This is one of the many instances where a minor Upanishad affords an esoteric interpretation of a Puranic allegory.

The following passage occurs in the above Upanishad:—"In the mighty lamp of wisdom, overflowing with the oil of Vairagya (indifference to worldly objects) and furnished with the wick of Bhakti (faith) one should kindle the light of knowledge and see. Then the darkness of delusion being dispelled, (Siva) Himself becomes manifested. With a view to dispel the utter darkness, the devotee should produce fire, making Vairagya the lower Arani (stick) and knowledge the upper one; and then Siva will exhibit to his view the hidden Reality. Dwelling in the devotee as his own very self with His inherent bliss He revives Viveka or discriminative wisdom hitherto overpowered with delusion and oppressed by duality for want of proper enquiry into truth. Thus Siva showing Himself in all His bliss, has restored to life the son Mrikandu, hitherto oppressed with the fear of Yama, the latter dragging him with the bands of rope tied around his body."

* See translation in Mahadeva Sastri's Vedanta Doctrine of Sri Sankara Charya.

§ XXIII.—VEDIC MYTHOLOGY IN GENERAL.

The Puranic mythologies often relate to the history of intellectual and spiritual development in India and to the different phases of a spiritual life with a reference to the recognised schools of Indian philosophy. To illustrate our point we shall take up two short mythologies related to Vedas.

Daksha is one of the sons of Brahma. Manu gave his youngest daughter Prasuti in marriage to him. Prasuti is one of the daughters of Swayambhwa the first Manu, the other two daughters being Akuti and Devaluti.

Akuti was wedded to Ruchi. Both the words literally mean desire. They had one son Yajna (law of the universe) and one daughter Dakshayani (the sacrifice necessary to conform to the law of the Universe). The couple represent that school of life which follows nature in her onward course and knows no other standard of duty. The brother married the sister and their offspring were the twelve gods of contentment known as the Sushitha gods. They were the gods of the first Manvantaric cycle. In the first Manvantara people were content with their lot and were not troubled with the scruples of after-generations.

The second daughter Devahuti is an embodiment of Divine spirit. She was given in marriage to Kardama (matter). This couple represent the Marga or path that ignores or rather avoids social life and confines itself to the evolution of individuals. All the different forms of occultism are included in the school. These different forms are represented according to some by seven and according to others by nine Rishis and include the Sankhya system and even Buddhism (for Ravana of the Golden Kingdom of Maya or Prakriti is son of Pulastya one of the seven Rishis.) The son of Kardama by Devahuti was an aspect of the Logos incarnated as Kapila the founder of the Sankhya philosophy. The daughters were nine and were given in marriage to the nine Rishis, Marichi, Atri, Angirus, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasishtha, Atharvan, Bhrigu.

Prasutu (literally meaning procreative energy) the third daughter of Manu, was wedded to Theksha or the able. The couple represent the schools of philosophy guiding the daily life of man, his relations with the outer world and his duties to others as well as himself. Brahminism in its highest as well as in its lowest form may be another name for this system. Theksha begot 16 daughters by Prasuti. Of these 13 were given in marriage to Dharma or Religion. They were—Sradha (Faith), Maitri (Friendliness), Daya (kindness), Santi (peace), Tusti (contentment), Pusti (development), Kriya (deeds), Unnati (progress), Buddhi (intellect), Madha (genius), Titiksha (toleration), Lajja (shame) and Murti (incarnation). Murti begot Nara-Narayan (Krishna-Arjuna) and Bagavathgith, Jiva-Isvar of the Vedanta philosophy).

Svaha the fourteenth daughter of Deksha was given in marriage to Agni or sacrificial fire. This pair represent Vedic Yajna.

Svadha the 15th daughter was given to the Pitris and the marriage is symbolical of Pitri-Yajna or offerings to Pitris.

The last daughter Sati was taken for his wife by Siva. Sati is that which at least in man is the counterpart, the reflex, of the Absolute entity in creation. Siva is that aspect of the Logos which is realized within himself when a person attains gnana or Brahavidya—the one all-pervading Reality from which all actions proceed, and to which all actions are directed—the essence of all Yajnas, and the embodiment of evolution itself. To Yajna, no human performance, no offerings, are complete without Siva. The touch of Siva takes away the taint of selfishness from human actions. Vedic sacrifices offered to the gods do not lead to Mukti, or freedom from the necessity of re-births. Veda Vyasa therefore gave a death-blow to the Vedic rites. But the Brahmanical system was so much wedded to the Vedic rites that the evolution was not pleasant to the Brahmanas. It effected at first a wholesale interdiction of Vedic rites, and at a later stage subordinated the Vedic rites to Siva. Without Siva the Vedic rites are Prakriti or of the element of Prakriti. Prakriti has another name, Aja in Sankhya philosophy. Aja also means goat. The whole of this is allegorised in the mythology of Daksha Yajna.

The following is that story. In a Yajna performed by the Lokapalas, gods of Cosmos, all the gods and Rishis were assembled. Daksha entered the assembly, and all rose to receive him, except Brahma and Siva. On seeing Brahma, his father, Daksha, bowed his head and took his seat with Brahma's permission. But he noticed the insolence of Siva, his son-in-law, who did not even nod his head. He cursed Siva, saying "This Siva, the vilest among the Devas, shall not in any Deva Yajna share in offerings with Indra, Upendra, and other gods." He then left the assembly in a rage. Nandisvara, the chief follower of Siva, grew indignant on hearing the curse and seeing that some Brahmanas approved of it. (This evidently refers to a split among the Brahmanas), He then cursed both Dakshas and the Brahmanas. This was too much for Bhrigu, the head of the Brahmanas present. He also cursed the followers of Siva, saying, that, by giving up the old right path, they would be spoiled and become drunkards. Bhrigu also defended the Vedas and Vedic Karma.

Disputes thus went on between Daksha and Siva for some time. Daksha was then given the first place among Prajapatis by Brahma. (This means the supremacy of Brahmanism). Maddened with pride, he esteemed himself too much. He then performed a grand Yajna inviting all the Devas, Rishis and Pitris, but purposely keeping away Siva. Sati heard of the Yajna and importuned her husband to allow her to be present at the festivities. Siva most unwillingly gave way to her entreaties. To her grief, she found no place assigned to her husband in the Yajna, and did not herself meet with any reception. She reproached her father and grew so indignant that she could not bear the sight of him, and in disgust gave up the body she inherited from such an unworthy father; Siva in a rage sent his followers, headed by Virabhadra, to the Yajna. They killed Daksha and mutilated the Brahmanas. Brahma, however, conciliated Siva, who revived Daksha with a goat's head, and restored the Brahmanas to their former state. In future all Yajnas were offered to Siva.

The story as thus related, allegorises how Viyasa overthrew Vedic Brahmanism, and how it survived in a mutilated form. The

majority of Brahmanas accepted Brahma Vidya as expounded in the Bhagavadgita, which is the cream and quintessence of Brahmanical teachings.

Zealous Brahmanas tried to regain their prestige by the introduction of a later mythology about the kick of Bhrigu (meaning the Brahmanical school) direct into the breast of Sri Krishna. The writers of the Mahabharat, to conciliate the Brahmanas, made Sri Krishna wash the feet of all Brahmanas, in the Rajasuya Yajna of Yudhistira.

We shall now briefly refer to the other Mythology about the Vedas, given in the Mahabharata. The Vedas being unwritten scriptures were transmitted from ear to ear, and called Sruti, which means ear. Karna is synonymous with Sruti. In the Mahabharat, Karna stands for the Vedas—Arjun stands for Brahma Vidya, the possessor of which finds himself one with Iswar, in essence. Overlooking the phenomenal difference of Samashti and Vyasti—see how Arjuna and Karna resemble each other. Karna was the son of Kunti by the sun God. He was very powerful and was invincible in the possession of Kavacha, the preservative given to him by Surya. Karna was so charitable that he did not withhold even this Kavacha from Indra, who begged it from him for his son Arjuna. The invincibility of Arjuna was borrowed from that of Karna. Vyasa took the shelter of the Vedas in writing his Brahma Sutras. He called them Uttara Mimamsa or the last conclusion of the Vedas. The Vedanta philosophy thus firmly rooted itself upon the adamant foundations of the Vedas.

Now to return to the story Arjuna killed Karna in the battle of Kurukshetra. But before the battle even commenced, Krishna took Karna aside and explained to him that he was the eldest brother of the Pandavas who would obey him and make him king, and asked him to make common cause with his brothers. Karna said it would be treacherous on his part to give up the Brahmanical party (his foster mother Radha, Duryodhana and others), after being brought up by them and after allowing them to rely upon him. For Duryodhana would never fight with the Pandavas if he knew Karna was not on his side. Brahmanism took shelter in

the Vedas. How could the Vedas give up Brahmanism having been so long wedded to it. Nevertheless Karna was allied by birth to Arjuna and his party (Brahma Vidya)—Mahabharat, Udyoga Parva, Ch. 141 and 142—The death of Karna left very little to be done in the battle-field. It was all over with Duryodhana. He remained only in shadow and was killed in a short time by Bhima sena.

Of the two allegorical accounts about Vedic revolution, the one given in the Mahabharat is the earlier. That account, is that a compromise was anxiously sought by the reforming party to keep up the supremacy of the Vedas and it was proposed that Brahma Vidya should be incorporated with the Vedas. But the Brahmanas of the time did not yield. There was a bold revolution, a wholesale interdiction of Vedic rites. This is the story given in the Mahabharat. But the Brahmanas became wise after that event. They accepted the Upanishads as a part of the Vedas, they recognized Veda Vyasa as a mere arranger of the Vedas ; and they introduced Isvara into the Vedic rites. The Vedas revived, but had a new place assigned to them. This is the pith of the allegory about Daksha Yajna.

PART II.

CEREMONIES.

§ XXIV.—GAYATRI.*

Gayatri is the highest of all mantras. In its inmost nature it partakes of the nature of both matter and spirit and is thus the manifested Logos, which is the life or the spirit of the Universe. It is truth itself and in short it is Narayana himself, in that unmanifested condition in which he is exoterically described as lying on a *Ficus religiosa* leaf. Being of the nature of the unmanifested Narayana, known in Indian writings as Parabrahm it is capable of destroying ignorance, of bestowing Nirvana or Truth itself.

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XIII.

Being thus of both matter and spirit its immediate manifestation is the Second Logos *i.e.*, matter and spirit. In its manifestation as spirit, it is justly described as unborn, and of the nature of Parabrahm, beyond the five sheaths of matter spoken of by the Vedantins as enveloping the Atma and also the destroyer of the six passions mentioned in our writings or briefly beyond matter of any description. In its manifestation as matter it is described as Prakriti, Avyakta, two well-known synonyms and as hence living (latent) in the bosom of the first manifestation of Parabrahm.

So far as to the manifestations of Gayatri devata in the macrocosm. In the microcosm, its manifestations are as follow: the force in the Muladhara chakra spoken of by Yogis and in the Manipurakachakra from which Ida and Pingala Nadis take their rise; the private parts, which every student of occultism knows to contain some of the most spiritual of forces; in short the forces in the six chakras are her manifestations.

Sankaracharya says in his Commentary :—The Gayatri, pure and simple, denotes the identity of Jiva and Iswara. Yah = that which; nah = our, dhiyah = understanding, prachodyat = enlightens. What is it that enlightens? the Pratyagatma, enlightens the Gnana, Buddhi, and the Antahkarana, and which is the All-witness. Tatsavituh refers to Paramatma, which is of the same nature as Pratyagatma. It is said (in the Bhagavad Gita) that Om, Tat and Sat refer to Brahman. Tat here refers to that (form of) Paramatma (which is Pratyagatma), Savituh is that which presides over that illusion (of duality) of the world and which is of the nature of creation, support and destruction: in other words, Parabrahm is here meant. Varanyam refers to that unsurpassable nature (svarupa) which is desired by all. Bharguh means that gnana which can destroy Avidya, and other impurities. Devasya is that Chitsvarupa (of the nature of gnana) which is undifferentiated (akhanda), and which can enlighten all. Savituh and Devasya imply identity.

In other words, I (the Pratyagatma) who am a mere witness of things seen by Buddhi, &c meditate on my nature as that Brahman which is well-known, which presides over everything,

which is of the nature of the highest bliss, which is not the cause of sorrow, which is self-luminous, and which is of the nature of Gnana.

The idea (involved) in Gayatri is the meditation of Jivatma as Paramatma as "Soyamatma" (I the Atma, am that). Inanimate objects are manifestations (of Brahman) according to (the well-known illustration of) the rope and servant. From the first of these (sentences) identity is established between Jivatma and Paramatma. From the second that of inanimate objects and Brahman. In other words Brahman is everything. This Advaita conclusion is the meaning of Gayatri.

Thus the highest (or inner) meaning of Gayatri is:—I have become that Brahman, which is of the nature of that Atman which is all-pervading, all-brilliant, which is superior to everything, of the nature of eternal freedom from bondage; and which is of the nature of Sat, Chit and Ananda, and which is denoted by (the Syllable) Om.

§ XXV.—ARGHYA.

The Sandhyavandana (the Brahman prayer), as is known to all the Brahmans, consists of two parts, in the first of which the ceremony of ablutions with water takes place, and in the second Mantras are pronounced without any purification by water. In the former of these two ceremonies, Arghya is said to be the most important, and in the latter, the uttering of Gayatri a certain number of times. In the ceremony of ablutions with water which takes place at first, it may be remembered that three handfuls of water are thrown, each purified with the simultaneous utterance of the Gayatri once at a time and then after uttering the Pranayama Gayatri, or the Gayatri with its seven Vyahritis, and purifying the hand through its contact with the hollows of the ears, another handful of water is flung in a similar manner. This process of throwing water with the two hands is called Arghya; the number of times the water is thrown in the noon, differing from that in

* From the Thinker, Vol. II.

the morning and the evening, and being on the whole, three instead of the four handfuls in the two latter cases. Tradition asserts that each handful of this water impregnated with the influence of the Gayatri, should be thrown up in the air in order that it may serve as a thunderbolt to slay the Rakshasas called Mandehas. Then occurs the closing portion of the first ceremony, called Tarpana, beginning with Adityam Tarpayami, wherein all the Navagrahas such as the sun, the moon, &c., as well as Vishnu in his 12 manifestations of Trivikrama, &c. are satisfied with the 21 handfuls of water given.

After the external evil influence of the Rakshasas is thus warded off by the Arghya, the second part of Sandhyavandana is performed on land and without water. In this ceremony the most important of all is the uttering of the Gayatri which is repeated a certain number of times. Previous to this uttering, there are some introductory ceremonies performed, such as the uttering of the Pranayama Gayatri with its Devata, Rishi, &c., as well as the recitation of the Devata, Rishi &c. of Gayatri itself in order to make the Gayatri Devata come to our aid in the achievement of our object. These, with other ceremonies performed before the Gayatri is uttered, serve but as preambles to the chief and most important portion of the work, *viz.*, the uttering of the Gayatri. Manu has in his Smriti laid down that every Brahman should, facing the east in the morning, utter the Gayatri in a standing posture, whilst sitting he should utter the same in the evening. But he nowhere speaks of the other Mantras or ceremonies now conducted during Sandhyavandhana. From this it is clear that even of the abovementioned two important ceremonies now in vogue amongst us, Arghya plays but a subsidiary part. The ceremony of ablutions with water and the Arghya in it do but serve the purpose of keeping at bay the external evil influences, and of purifying the external body while, with the ten Pranayamas performed, we purify ourselves within. Having done with purification, both external and internal, we come to the important ceremony of the Gayatri wherein we invoke the spiritual sun or Paramatma. Here with the vibrations produced by the Gayatri repetition, we place

ourselves *en rapport* with the spiritual sun, and stimulate its influence.

Taittreya Aruna says :—

The Rakshasas made fierce Tapas unto Brahma. Then he asked them to demand a boon. Thereupon they demanded thus : “ We and Aditya (the sun) should (ever) fight.” Then Prajapati (Brahma) said—“ So be it.” Therefore the Rakshasas do fight with the rising sun till he sets. But they are brought to a quiescent state through the waters purified with Mantras. Therefore Brahmavadins (or knowers of Brahma) should face the east and throw up in Sandhya time the waters sanctified by Gayatri. Such waters do become *vajra* (thunderbolt) and throw the Rakshasas into Mandeharuna Dwipa. Through the Pradakshina (circumambulations round themselves) such personages make, they are cleansed of their sins (of killing the Rakshasas). A learned Brahmin who, meditating upon the dawning and the setting sun, performs this, gets all auspiciousness. Saying “ *Asāvādityōbrahma*”, he becomes Brahm itself. Whoever knows this, becomes Brahm.

Vishnu Purana says :—

The night is called Usha and the day is denominated Vyushta, and the interval between them is called the Sandhya. On the occurrence of the awful Sandhya, the terrific Rakshasas, called Mandehas attempt to devour the sun; for Prajapati (Brahma) denounced this curse upon them that, without the power to perish, they should die every day and revive by night, and therefore a fierce contest occurs daily between them and the sun. At this season, pious Brahmins scatter water purified by the mystical Omkara and consecrated by the Gayatri; and by this water, as by a thunderbolt, the foul fiends are consumed. When the first oblation is offered with solemn invocations in the Agnihotra (morning rite), the thousand-rayed deity shines forth with unclouded splendour. Omkara is Vishnu, the mighty, the essence of the three Vedas (or the triple gloried), the lord of speech; and by its enunciation, those Rakshasas are destroyed. The sun which is the eternal, unchanging light, is the highest part of Vishnu; and its supreme stimulator is Omkara which signifies Him. Light effused

by (the utterance of) the Omkara becomes radiant and burns up entirely the Rakshasas, called Mandehas. The performance of the Sandhya devotion (or service) must never therefore be delayed, for he who neglects it is guilty of the murder of the sun. Protected thus by the Brahmans, and the (pigmy sages called) Valakhilyas, the sun goes on his course to give light to the world.

From these quotations we gather that there are a set of Rakshasas, called Mandehas, whose seat is Mandeharuna Dwipa and who are so called on account of the Dwipa or island they live in. These propitiated Brahma and got a boon from him to fight with the sun, through which boon they were able to die by day and revive by night. Through the offering of Arghya coupled with the utterance of the Gayatri, they are flung into Mandeharuna Dwipa. It is not unknown that Hinduism holds to the existence of different states of matter, which states are stated to be seven or four in number. If there are seven states of matter which interpenetrate one another in space, all objects in nature should be in these seven states. Hence the sun should be also in seven states.

Applying the analogy of the physical sun to the spiritual sun, we find there are bacterias of a subtler nature obtaining in the higher or subtler states. They are termed the Rakshasas or the elementals. These are the evil ones which are stated to be in never-ending war with the sun, and to die during the day and revive during the night. In lieu of the physical sun, we have here the Divine sun shedding forth the divine light. Through its sunshine the Rakshasas are burnt up. Water is the element in which the bacterias multiply themselves in the absence of the sunshine. Hence it is that the Brahmans take hold of water when the bacterias are at their strongest and uttering the Gayatri, perform the Arghya. The Mandehas or Rakshasas are supposed to live in the Mandeharuna Dwipa. Dwipa is generally supposed to be an Island and hence connected with a liquid substance. These Rakshasas have according to the Hindus, a seat in the highest states of matter which may be stated to be their perennial fount from whence they make their excursions and pervade the whole space or lower states of matter. Occultism would divide or sub-divide these

states of matter into septenary divisions and locate the Mandehas in the middling stage of these states. They are called the plane of desires. According to the outer classification of the Hindu books, Bhuvar-loka is the plane of these Mandehas among the three Bhu, Bhuvar and Suvar. These Rakshasas include not only those that are the natural denizens of such states of matter, but also those evil thoughts or desires of man which are given out by him and become entities in the higher states of matter. Mandehas seem to be those spirits or elementals which have a wish that cannot be gratified. For, in spite of their blessing from Brahma to have daily fights with the Sun, they die by day but to revive during night. This means merely that, though they perished by the sunshine, still through the blessing of Brahma, they were able to revive during nights. The Dwipa is the seat which conceals or offers an asylum to these beings of fruitless desires.

It is evident then why our forefathers wished to offer Arghyam at dawn and at twilight for bacterias, whether physical or subtle (all obeying similar laws) rise then to their highest power. At dawn, when the Rakshasas after their night's extraordinary multiplication are at the zenith of their power, they find their enemy the sun approaching them with his rays of light and therefore exert their best efforts resulting, as it were, in a life and death grapple; also in the evening when the sun retires from a certain portion of the earth these Rakshasas are galvanised with life and hence become powerful.

Therefore it is that at these two critical periods of time, *viz.*, the dawn and twilight, Brahmans try through their Arghya and the Gayatri to avert the malevolent influences then reigning supreme in the universe. Along with these two periods, another has been added now, *viz.*, the noon, since it is also stated to be one of the Sandhyas or junction periods. It is at these periods that the world requires aid from the molestations of the evil influences in the subtler planes and the Brahmin supplied the need by virtue of his spiritual development. Not only does the spiritual warrior in India purify himself at this critical period by water, ablutions, &c., in order to prepare himself for communion

with the spirit within, but also the whole Universe. How are these achieved ?

We offer each handful of water suffused with the influence of the Gayatri. We take, with the two hands, a handful of water, and then utter the Gayatri. After it is uttered, we throw up the handful of water. Then we repeat the same over again. During the Sandhyas, the water, the seat of these bacterias, is full of them. To burn them up, we utter the Gayatri. We know that Mantras when intoned in a certain manner produce certain vibrations in the ether and therefore certain results. Now the Gayatri has at its head the Mystical Omkara. As soon as the Gayatri with Omkara preceding it is pronounced, there occurs a union between the mind of man and Vishnu or Paramatma resting in the heart. Omkara stimulates the Tejas from Vishnu in the temple of the heart. It becomes radiant all throughout the body and burns up through its light the Rakshasas or the Mandehas living in the waters of the body. This influence is also communicated to the water in the hand. The Mandehas in the body when they are once exposed to the Tejas from the Sun in the heart are converted into useful guardians of the household of the body to keep watch against the attacks of deadly Mandehas or from outside. So also with reference to the water impregnated with this Tejas which mingling with other waters purify the bad bacterias therein and render the waters pure.

It should not be supposed that the spiritual influence thus imparted is confined merely to the man performing the ceremony or to the water. All things done by man react on the Universe too. Now, the heart is said to fulfil the same ends in man as the sun is in the Universe. When the Tejas in the sun of the heart is stimulated, there will be a corresponding stimulation in the sun of the Universe. Therefore not only does the Brahmin, in stimulating the Tejas in the heart aid himself in his communion with the spirit within, but also burns up the Rakshasas in the world, so that they may not form impediments to other persons wishing to have communion within themselves, unless these latter voluntarily generate fresh Rakshasas in the waters of their own

body through the non-stimulation of the spiritual light within themselves or through their positive evil thoughts.

The four handfuls of the Arghya are with reference to the four worlds, or states of matter, since each world has its own appurtenant bacterias in the middling or Kama subdivision of each world. Of the seven lokas or worlds, the lower three, Bhu, Bhuvar and Suvar which occur in the Gayatri are the Rupa or form worlds; the higher three Arupa and the middling or Mahar Lokas are reckoned as one, for which a separate handful of water is thrown. The Pranayama Gayatri uttered after the three handfuls of water at first and the consequent cleansing of the hands by passing them across the ears, show the marked line of cleavage existing between the three Rupa worlds and the higher ones—in which higher ones, no separate handfuls of water are necessary except at the point of differentiation. It is these Arghyas that are said to subserve the purposes of thunderbolts in making the Rakshasas perish.

Thus, we see that the Brahmans after burning the Rakshasas up through the Arghya and making them their useful servitors, went into their chief part of the ceremony through which they entered into the temple of god within as well as without and, after paying adorations to Him with profound bhakti, enjoyed the transcendent Elysian bliss in that fount of Omniscience like the sun radiating his rays everywhere.

§ XXVI.—PRAYER *

The daily Hindu prayers and supplications are known by the names of Sandhya Vandanam and Nityanushtanam. Sandhya is the meeting of two periods of time, viz., day and night. The word Vandanam means adoration or prayers. These prayers are also known as Nityanushtanam or daily supplications, because they must be offered up every day, as a matter of strict duty, by every Aryan, both in the morning and in the evening. Some

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XI.

Smritis ordain the performance of Madhyahnika Sandhyas or noon prayer, and thus the word Sandhi is extended in its meaning and is applied to the change from mid-day to afternoon. The selection of twilight for these prayers seems to be appropriate, because it is then that almost everything in nature is more or less in a state of santi or rest, which greatly contributes to concentration of mind. As cleanliness is next to godliness, snana or ablution must be performed before Sandhya Vandana.

The Pratas Sandhya or morning prayer expresses gratitude to the Supreme Being for past acts of grace, beseeches forgiveness for sins committed during the previous night, and prays for further acts of divine grace. It must be performed just before sunrise, when some stars are visible to the naked eye. Madhyahnika Sandhya or midday prayer similarly expresses gratitude to God and prays for rain to purify and fructify the earth; it also beseeches God to purify the heart of the devotee from all sins and evil acts. The best time for performing it is when the sun is in the zenith. Sayan Sandhya or evening prayer expresses sentiments similar to those of the morning prayer and asks for forgiveness for sins committed during the day time. It must be performed in the evening just before sunset, when no star is visible to the naked eye. Hence, gratitude and benevolence form the two leading features of prayer.

There is a misconception regarding the object of worship in Sandhya Vandanam. Many foreigners and even some Aryans are under the false impression that it is the material sun that is adored by the Hindus. The fact is, as the sun is the largest and brightest body known to us, as he is the great giver of warmth and light, which are absolutely necessary to the growth of both animate and inanimate substances in the world, and lastly as he is the regulator of time in a remarkably accurate degree, that self-luminous body was chosen by the great Vedic seers of antiquity to represent as a symbolic conception of Parabrahma or the supreme spirit. The word Santa, used for the Savita in Gayatri, the essential formula of the Sandhya means the Creator of the Universe, *i.e.*, the Supreme Being or God. Again, in the very

beginning of the prayer, the devotee says that he begins Brahma-karma which means acts of devotion to the Supreme Spirit (Brahma Karma Samarabhe). Almost in the very middle of Sandhya Vandana, there is a clear text which seems to have been put in purposely to warn devotees against falsely thinking that there is more than one Supreme Spirit, and to point out in unmistakable language that the visible sun is only an outward symbol to represent God. That text is "Asavadityo Brahma..". That Sun represents the Supreme Spirit. The morning Sandhya is symbolically represented as Gayatri or Brahma Sakti or the energy of Brahma, the personification of the creative principle of the Supreme Spirit; it manifests itself as possessing Rakta varna or red hue. The midday Sandhya is symbolically represented as Savitri or Raudri Sakti or the energy of Siva, the personification of the destructive principle of Parabrahma or the Supreme Spirit; it manifests itself as possessing Sukla Varna or white color. The evening Sandhya is symbolically represented as Sarasvati or Vaishnava Sakti or the energy of Vishnu, the personification of the protective principle of the Supreme Being; it manifests itself as possessing Krishna Varna or black color. The three Sandhyas thus stand for the energies of the Trimurtis, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The union of these three energies is known collectively by the name of Sandhya Devi or the energy of prayer. This collective energy is but the symbolic conception of Parabrahma or the Supreme Spirit as represented by the union of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

Although certain sects of Hinduism differ in minor details in Sandhya, concerning the chanting of certain Vedic texts, &c., yet all sects agree in the necessity of using the Gayatri Mantra or the sacred text of Gayatri, at the time of Arghya Pradana or the pouring out of consecrated water three times in adoration, and also at the time of Japa or spiritual meditation. This holy text is called Veda Janani *i.e.*, the mother of the Vedas.

§ XXVII.—SANDHYAVANDHANAM.*

We shall now enumerate what is actually done in the way of Sandhya:—

(1) *Achamana.*

This is necessarily done before any religious act is begun. Its object is simply purification of the body. There are three kinds of Achamana:—Shrautachamana, Smartachamana, and Puranachamana, or Achamana in (according to) the Vedas, Smritis and the Puranas respectively. Shrautachamana consists of sipping a little quantity of water three times while the three padas (feet) of Gayatri, each of which contains 8 syllables, are recited; and then touching nine different parts of the body as in Puranachamana followed by a repetition of Apo hishtámayóbhuvah, and other eight mantras, prefixed by the seven Vyahrities (Ombhuh, Ombhuvah &c.) and the Gayatrisira (Omápóyóteerasamritambrahmabhurbhuvassuvarom) divided into two parts. There are several persons who perform Shrautachamana without uttering any mantra at all and thus follow the dictum of the Veda to the very letter.

Next comes Smrityachamana. Manu says that a small quantity of water should be sipped three times, after which the lips should be closed and the mouth touched by the root of the thumb, and the five organs of sense touched.

Lastly we have Puranachamana. According to this method, water should be sipped; while the mantras Kesavayanamah, Narayanayanamah, and Madhavayanamah, are repeated, then the two hands should be washed while Govindayanamah, Vishnavé-namah are repeated. Then the lips should be closed and during the repetition of Mathusudanayanamah and Trivikramayanamah, the mouth should be softly touched and passes made twice from the right to the left side; then with the mantras Vamanayanamah and Sridharayanamah, the head should be pinched, and two downward passes made; with that of Hrisheekesa, the two shoulders; with Padmanabhayanamah, water should be sprinkled on the two legs; and lastly with the mantras, Damodara, Sankarshana, Vasu-

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XII.

deva, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Purushottama, Adhokshaja, Narasimha, Achyuta, Janardana, Upendra, Hari and Sri Krishna, the head, chin, the right and left nostrils, the two eyes, the two ears, the navel, the chest, the head and the arms respectively.

All these methods of Achamana aim at one result, *viz.*, purification of the body as a necessary preparation for the performance of Sandhya, and it should be added that the mantras—even the names of Vishnu repeated in the case of Purnachamana have an esoteric signification. These mantras have some connexion with the parts touched, while they are being repeated; and the whole process is simply the establishment of a magnetic current, the object of which is to prevent disturbance from the supersensuous plane. This will be found to be the case when we connect this process with the mantras usually repeated after it by most Brahmans, and which means “Let the bûtas and pisachas which bear the world rise and go away (and thus preserve tranquility and purity) so that I may perform this Karma (ritual) to Brahma.” The result thus aimed at was internal as well as external—internal when water is sipped, and external when the different parts of the body are touched.

(2) *Sankalpa.*

This is a determination or willing that such and such a thing should be done. The two hands are brought together and placed on the right thigh with the right palm crossing over the left when the Sankalpa Mantra which usually runs “Sribhagavathâgnaya Sribhagavathprthartham prathassandhya (or Sayam Sandhya, or Madhyahnika, as the case may be) mupashishyé is being repeated.”

We now begin Sandhyavandhana. We first of all begin with Pranayama. It consists of restraining Prana, by performing Réchaka, Puraka and Kumbhaka, while the seven Vyakrities prefixed by Om, and followed by the Gayatri and Siromantra are being repeated. Pranayama is of three kinds; Rechaka, Puraka and Kumbhaka. Puraka is the drawing in through the nose of the breath or Prana, Kumbhaka is its retention, and Rechaka is its expiration. The time for all these varies according to individuals and their advancement.

I shall here say a few words by way of explanation of the above mantra. It is a well-known occult law that the lower nature should be gradually subdued, in the order of involution, before the highest is meditated upon. Precisely the same thing is done here. We have first of all the seven Vyahritis, Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satium, denoting the seven planes of consciousness or the seven worlds and these seven mantras are prayers addressed to the elemental forces on the seven planes. These elemental forces are stated in the Vedas to be manifestations of Parabrahmam itself. We have then the Gayatri itself, and lastly, the Gayatri Sira, which means that the water, light, rasa (taste ?) and the seven worlds as Bhuh and others, are all manifestations of Brahman.

After Pranyama there is Sankalpa, already described ; and after it we have the purification known as Marjana. With the repetition of Om, bhurbhuvassuvah followed by Gayatri and the sirómantra, the water to be used for the purpose should be purified and with the repetition of the nine mantras given below, a small brush made of kusa grass should be dipped in the water which is sprinkled therewith over the head and other parts of the body. If there is any quantity of water still left, it should be poured down. The water should be sprinkled with the right hand.

The object of Marjana is external purification or purification of the physical body, and is also to serve as an expiation, so far as that body is concerned, for sins committed during preceding twelve hours, without one being conscious of them. After the external purification is over, internal purification begins with the mantras "Agnyascha...Swaha," "Suryascha...Swaha," or "Apahpunanthu... Swaha," according as the sandhya performed is that of the evening, the morning, or of the noon. The deities addressed are Agni, Surya, Varuna, and the mantras contain requests to those deities, as philosophically speaking, so many manifestations of Parabrahmam.

After the internal purification, there is again a hymn addressed to Agni, beginning with "Dadhikravinnó...Prana ayogumshi torishat" and followed by nine mantras. These are called Ablingas,

and the first mantra of the series is "Apohishtamayobhuvah." The Ablingas are sometimes followed by other mantras addressed to Varuna, and begin with "Hiranyavarnas suchayah." The object of all these mantras is purification.

Arghyapradana (*lit.*, the giving of Argya) means the act of giving or leaving a handful of water on the ground or on the surface of water. The object of Arghya is simply this—From Sankalpa onwards you simply conceive, or invoke, the presence of this devata, and as a matter of satisfaction to it, you do the necessary acts of reverence or respect to that Devata. This idea is at any rate a little anthropomorphic, and shows that it must therefore be a recent one. It also shows that at first people were very good occultists but as time became more and more degenerate, Anthropomorphism took its firm root in the minds of Aryans.

I have said that the mantra for Arghya is Gayatri. This statement holds good in the case of morning and evening Sandhyas but a different mantras beginning with "Hagunsassuchi" is repeated by some for the Arghya for the midday devotion.

When the invocation is thus made, a magnetic circle is described around himself by the performer with a small quantity of water sprinkled from the hand while repeating "Asāvādithyobrahma". This Arghya should always be given facing the Sun.

After all these are over the Brahman next sits for his Japa of Gayatri and this forms the most important part of Sandhyavandana. Having made all the necessary preparations for the reception of Sandhya Devata, he now begins to concentrate all his attention on it, or in fact to place himself *en rapport* with that force.

Japa of Gayatri is now performed thus. A Brahman sits in the posture of Padmasana, repeating the mantra Pridvitēraya Asanam. He then repeats the Chandas of each of the minor mantras of the major mantra repeated during Pranayama, *viz.*, Om bhuh.....Bhurbhuvassuvarom. The word Chandas includes the names of the Rishi, who composed the mantra, Chandas proper, or the metre in which it was composed and the Devata to which it is addressed. The minor mantras in the major mantra above-mentioned are :—(1) Om (2) Bhuh (3) Bhuvah (4) Suvah

(5) Mah (6) Janah (7) Tapah (8) Satyam (9) Tatsaviturvarényam bhargodevasyadhimahi dhiyoyonah prachodayat and (10) Omapojyotirasomritam brahma bhurbhuvassuvarom.

The name of the Rishi, &c. of the mantra is given out in the mantra "Pranavasyarishir brahma devee gayatri chandah paramátmá devata."

Next he should place himself *en rapport* with the Sandhya Devata, this act is technically known as Nyasa. It is of two kinds, Anga-Nyasa and Kara-Nyasa. In Anganyasa he touches the several parts of the body, as the feet, the knees, the sexual organs, the heart, the neck, the tongue, the head, the heart, the head, the back of the head, the hands, the eyes, and the shoulders.

With the repetition of Ombhuh, Ombhuva, Omsuvah, Omamah, Omjanah, Omtapah, Omsatyam, Om Tatsavituh, Varényam, Bhargodevasya dhimahi, dhiyoynah, prachodyat, and the repetition of the Gayatri Siras, a pass has to be made from the head to the feet. The whole process is nothing but self-mesmerisation, through that of certain vital centres, and the whole terminated by magnetic passes, so that the body may be proof against any disturbance from without. Several of the acts described previous to Anganyasa ought to be done with the same object, but by going through a similar process, the ancients only aimed at becoming doubly sure of the results. Not satisfied with this even, they thought it better to magnetise the fingers, which are used to count the number of times a mantra is repeated, and thus make them purer. This is called Karanyasa. But before going to this, there is a Sankalpa or determination which should be preceded by Pranayama, or repetition of the major mantra, three times. Then the Sandhya Devata is formally invoked by the Mantra Ayátuvarada devi, &c. The several component parts of the Gayatri are then enumerated, and their Rishi, Chandas, and dévata enumerated.

This is followed by its Karanyasa and Anganyasa. The form consists of making passes with thumbs of both the hands on the forefingers, middle fingers, &c., while repeating the five mantras, Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah, Tatsaviturvarényam and bhargodevasya

dhimahi and making passes on the palms and backs of the hands with the mantra dhimahi dhiyoyonah-prachodayat. These six mantras should be repeated again, touching six parts of the body, viz., the heart, the forehead, the back of the head, the arms, the eyes, and the shoulders. Then a certain verse in praise of the devata is repeated. After this the Japa actually begins. The Brahman now considers himself as fully imbued with the spirit of Sandhya-devata and tries to identify it in his heart. Gayatri should be repeated not less than ten times on each occasion, but not more than 1008 times a day on the whole. This is followed by Pranayama, and a Sankalpa for Upastana.

Upastana is of two kinds, Gayatriupasthana and Suryopasthana. The Gayatriupasthana is the mantra beginning with "Ut-tamasikharedevi" and is intended to send back the Sandhyadevata which was previously invoked for purposes of meditation during Japa. Next to this is Suryopasthana, the mantras of which are those beginning with "Mitrasya charshanidrita," "Asatyana-rajasa," and "Imamevaruna" and which should be repeated facing the Sun during morning, noon and evening respectively. He should afterwards thank these deities he has invoked, viz., Sandhya, Savitri, Gayatri, Sarasvati, and lastly the whole of divine hierarchy. Then the mantra 'Kamokarsheenmanyurakarshinnamonamaha' is repeated, the object of it being to be excused by the above named deities for any indiscreet act or thought which might have been done or occurred during the performance of Sandhyavandana. The devatas presiding over the ten directions are then thanked.

Lastly, the Abhivadana or the final prostration towards Sandhyadevata, after which the Gotra, Sutra, and the name of the person is repeated. The Abhivadana is rather a mystical performance inasmuch as the performer should identify himself with Parabrahmam. The place where Japa was performed is then sprinkled with water consecrated by the repetition of Om.

This finishes the Sandhya of the Brahmin.

We shall now translate only those mantras, which were not previously explained. These mantras belonging as they do to the Vedas, are capable of being interpreted (1) Ordinarily, (2) Vedan-

tically and (3) Symbolically or Esoterically. We give only the more popular of the interpretations given to those mantras.

Besides the mantras already explained, there remain now the mantras for internal purification 'Dadhikravinnno akarisham' and other Marjana mantras; the mantras for Upasthana; and last, but not the least, Gayatri itself including the "Major mantra".

To begin with 'Agnyascha Mamanyascha ... Satyèjyotishi Juhomiswaha.' The Mantra means "May Agni, Manyu (the deity presiding over anger), the Manyupatis (the deities presiding over desire, and hatred), rescue me who am sinful. May the (deity presiding over) day wash me from sins committed by me in the day through mind, speech, the hands, the feet, the stomach, membrum virile, or any other kind of sin of mine; in fact, all this host of sins; me, a being of this description, I offer (as a havis) in the self-radiant tējas (Light) which is immortality and the origin of Cosmos and devoid of any pain."

The Mantra "Suryascha ... Surye Jyotishe Juhomi Swaha," has the same meaning as the preceding.

I shall next take up the Mantra "Apah punanthu...prati grihagswaha." The rendering of it may thus be given:—"Let the waters purify the earth: (May) the earth (thus) purified by water purify me; may the water purify the teacher of the Vedas; may the Vedas already pure, purify me; may the water expiate all my sins, (such as) eating forbidden food, or other sinful actions, if any, and purify me; then the sins of contact. For this purpose I offer myself."

We shall now turn our attention to the Marjana Mantras. "Dadhi Kravinnno ... Apojanayatha Janaha." It means: "I pray to Agni who receives the offerings, who is victorious, who is all-pervading (or who is of the form of a horse), who moves with great speed. May he make our faces fragrant, besides increasing our Life." This mantra is also interpreted as applying to the sun. The next mantras may be thus rendered:—"Oh waters! Ye are the source of happiness. Ye be fixed for (giving) us food. Give me food to (enable me to obtain) the adorable and lovely Guana. Ye deities presiding over waters, regenerate us who live

in this world, with your excellent fluids, just as mothers feed their children ; we pray to thee for obtaining that fluid (water), the possession of which makes you feel happy. Give us progeny, we are also born of those fluids."

The mantras for Upasthana are three-fold. The three Upasthana mantras may be thus translated in the order given above:—

Evening Upasthana.

Oh Varuna! hear me evoking you. Protect me now. I beseech you thinking you will protect me: for which purpose I offer myself to you, and pray to you by these laudatory hymns. The performer of a sacrifice desires these very things which I now pay to you for. Oh Varuna! without heedlessness realise my present condition. Oh Varuna of great fame, allow us to live the length of time as fixed by the Vedas. Oh! Varuna, I attend to that which you desire (with the same zeal) as people look after their own business (or excuse us if we do not attend to those things you most desire). Oh Varuna! do we ignorant men commit any fault towards you, the dweller of the region of Devas? Or, do we thwart any of your intentions. Oh Varuna! free us then from guilt (if there be any). Destroy only those sins by which the evil-minded defeated your intentions, or any sins unknowingly committed by us, or the nature of which we did not know. Oh Deva! Destroy the effects of even such trifling sins. Oh Varuna! we become your favourites."

Morning Upasthana.

The fame of Surya, who protects the cultivation, who is the lord over the day is a fit object for praise. I sing in praise of the fame of that Surya, (a fame) which is everlasting, and very wonderful to hear. This Surya having known the merits of people, allows them to look after their duties; besides this he protects the earth; also the heaven. He takes care of the Devas and human beings. We offer him (food) mixed with ghee. Oh Surya, may the person who is devoted to you, and becomes a very great worshipper of yours, reap the effects of good Karma. That devotee of yours will not suffer from disease, will not be conquered by a foe, nor will sin approach him.

Midday Upasthanam.

The sun who is the cause of all actions comes on surrounded by the light of truth and a halo of resplendant beauty, vivifying all the human and divine existences, and riding on a very pleasant chariot, and looking down on the worlds. We contemplate on that Surya. Besides, we, looking on the divine light which is ever active in expelling darkness, we obtain the God among the Gods, who is of the form of light. The rays bear this Surya by whose help every thing in the world is known (or the rays bear this Deva who is Agni). This halo of rays of various colors, equally in splendour, Varuna, or Mithras, or Agni, or the eyes, shines for the benefit of the world. The sun who is of the nature of Atma, fills in (with his rays) the animal, and non-sentient kingdoms, the heaven and the earth, and the space between them. I devote myself to him for the fulfilment of my desire. We see for a hundred years the sun's orb which is beneficial to the Gods, which bestows every good, which is well known, which is brilliant, and clear on rising. By looking at it, we live for a hundred years; we enjoy happiness with sons and others for a hundred years; for a hundred years we live cheerfully; for a hundred years we remain in a place; for a hundred years we hear pleasant words; for a hundred years we speak good words; and for a hundred years we are unconquerable. We long to see the brilliant Suriya. May that Suriya (purify us) who rises from the great ocean, who shines in the midst of the waters whose rays are of the color of the blood. The great knower, and the giver of all things purify us!"

Next with reference to Pranava.

This is the root of all the Vedas and all the Mantras. Every Mantra is its manifestation more or less. Every Vedic Mantra, should begin with it, and end with it. It is made up of three sounds, A, U, and M. It is said to be the root or the mother of the three Vedas.

There are two sets of interpretations; Vedic and Agamic. According to the latter, the letter A, signifies the Parabrahm, while U means 'Only', and M, the jiva or the individual ego.

The Vedas on the other hand, invariably point to Om as a

symbol of Parabrahm manifested, which is the cosmos. A represents the first manifestation, namely, Vaisvanara or Virat, the waking condition of the deity or Taijasa. U signifies Hiranyagarbha, the deity in the Swapna Avasta (dreamy state). M signifies Pragna or the Sushupthi Avastha and the Ardhmatra the Turiya Avastha, the condition of the Logas or Iswara. A came to mean the Vaisvanara, or the objective aspect of Parabrahm, inasmuch as objective aspect covers the whole visible Universe in the same way as the letter A covers the whole field of Sanskrit alphabet, which symbolises the universe. The last letter of the alphabet, namely Ha signifies cosmic force, which is represented as a female energy or deity. It is also explained that A symbolises the objective aspect of Parabrahm and Ha, the Force; and the whole universe is the result of union of these two principles corresponding to the idea of the formation by, and extension of, the alphabet between the two letters which symbolise them. The Mantra *Aham* is thus formed and is considered as a sort of substitute of Om (Aum). In this substitution Ha stands for U in the Om and these two letters are supposed to be identical in their signification. Just as all the sounds or letters of the Sanskrit alphabet are comprised between A and Ha (or U), so all the universe is not only formed but all the forces in nature are the offspring of the union of Virat (or Purusha,) and the cosmic force. The Pranava is thus figuratively said to comprise and to be the essence of all mantras.

The Pranava is considered to be the highest of the mantras for it is the one that is first given out in the Vedas; not only that every mantra is said to have been derived from it, but even the Gayatri also, which is only another form of Pranava.

The Advaitins consider A as signifying of course Parabrahm. U means only, and M means Jiva. Thus A, U, and M mean Parabrahm is Jiva, in other words its manifestation.

Gayatri.

Has been treated already.

§ XXVIII.—YAJNA.*

True reconciliation of religious observances and differences lies in their esoteric explanation and meaning, but not in the dogmatic assertion and belief of the orthodox communities. The Vedas never enjoined the literal killing of sheep, but pointed out so many observances of esoteric symbols having close connection with the working of the soul in the inner plane as aiding its progress towards the goal of Nirvana.

The real work of sacrifice begins in the chamber of the soul, and philosophy is the handmaid that awaits upon us. The ceremonies and observances which are performed and attended to only externally, are entirely useless and have no meaning whatever unless they indicate or are attended by an internal process of purification in the chamber of soul. When once the internal process takes place, the esoteric meaning of the symbols becomes easily understood. The communities of different religionists who pretend to solve the divine symbols by the supposed philosophical dissertations or ritualistic observances, such as "Yagna" without the necessary action and esoteric understanding, do really deserve contempt as poisoning the moral and the spiritual atmosphere of this world. It is the duty of every right-minded man to point out the symbols containing natural verities and make others perceive the truths themselves which are synthesised in the symbols, by removing the mass by which they were concealed, and restoring them to life.

If the exoteric meaning is cried down, what is the esoteric rationale? The ever unknowable and incognizable *karana* alone, the causeless cause of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save "through the still small voice" of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before, it ought to do in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their souls making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the universal spirit, their good actions the only priests and their sinful inten-

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XI.

tions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the presence (The Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 280).

The Occultists claim that there are seven senses in man as in nature, as there are seven states of consciousness. The Brahmana speaks in it "of the institution of the seven sacrificial priests (Hotris), he says, "The nose and the eyes, and the tongue and the skin, and the ear as the fifth (or smell, sight, taste, touch and hearing), mind and understanding, are the seven sacrificial priests separately stationed. (Ibid, Vol. I, 96).

The different yagams or sacrifices are so many stages of the purification of mind and soul of the aspirant after Brahma Gnanam towards his progress to the final beatitude of Nirvana. All the sacrifices mentioned in the Vedas may be broadly classified thus :—1. Pasu-Medham ; 2. Soma-Yagam ; 3. Raja-Sooyam ; 4. Aswa-Medham and 5. Nara-Medham.

The *first sacrifice* (killing of the animal) means the killing of animal passions or ego in man by right discrimination. The noblest worship that is required of an aspirant after Brahma Gnanam, or knowing one's own self, is the rooting out or sacrificing his animalism, which is allegorically and technically known as the animal in man. The first sacrifice therefore means the separation of the animal nature from the divine essence, and is the first step in the career of an aspirant after complete Brahma Gnanam.

The *second sacrifice* (killing of vulture):—In the first stage the aspirant separates his divine portion from his animal self, and sees that divinity alone is his true nature. This alone is not sufficient. The mind of man is always hunting after shadows and animal appetites like vultures which go in search of dead bodies to the longest distances, even though the best food may be available in their vicinity. Hence in this stage the aspirant should make his mind always bent in the practical pursuit of higher natures and potentialities by killing the vulture-like affinity of the mind in the pursuit of the basest inclinations and natures, even though it (the mind) knows that there is a better and divine nature for it to pursue.

The *third sacrifice* :—The king wages war with all other kings

of the world to establish his undivided and royal supremacy over them. When once in the second stage the mind has become amenable to, or vehicle of the higher powers and capabilities, the war is at once waged by the aspirant or the neophyte, against the kings of Kouravas, the passions, ills and avoers, and he having thus established his freedom at the overthrow of the kings of the internal enemies, proceeds with the development of superior powers in the psychic plane. The more he rises in the scale of initiation, the higher responsibilities naturally devolve upon him and he is therefore to be more guarded and proof against dangers, and that work is done in the fourth stage of sacrifice.

Fourth sacrifice:—This literally means the sacrifice of the horse. When the aspirant of divine knowledge scales the steps of spiritual ladder, the mind must necessarily become completely tamed down as to be made entirely amenable to the influence of the higher powers of nature, and consequently it must be entirely freed from all passions and Vriithies. What is required is the slow and sure conservation of energy, as undue and too much expansion of it, even for the noblest purposes is attended with the consequent exhaustion and dangers. A horse is left free by the king to wander over all the lands and seas, and if any adversary catches hold or takes possession of it the emperor is at once to wage war against the unlawful possessor and to vanquish him. The aspirant whose mind has become a fit charger for the battle, now allows his mind to travel throughout and mingle freely to try whether it actually stands proof against temptations and other internal enemies, and whether complete extirpation of the animal ego has been effected, and if there lurks one single desire to drag the mind, the aspirant, the king of the internal dominion, at once takes arms against it and extirpates it altogether. In this stage, even the germs of internal enemies are completely burnt down and the spirit become entirely uncrossed by its adversaries, and hence the sole possessor of the universal spiritual realm. When thus the enemies are no more either in thought, deed or work, the mind of the neophyte—the noble horse—is entirely sacrificed i.e., loses its separate function and existence and loses itself in or con-

verts itself into the Atma itself, which is allegorically called the killing of the horse.

Fifth sacrifice :—This means the sacrifice of Nara. Nara is the individuality, and every human being is a Nara owing to his detached and isolated existence from the divine fountain. When once in the fourth stage of sacrifice, the aspirant has actually taken complete possession of the Spiritual Kingdom, without a single enemy even in existence, Narathwam ceases and Nara is absorbed in Narayana, *i.e.*, the personality is altogether destroyed or the individuality is lost in the totality, or lost in cosmic ideation. He lives neither in the past, nor in the future, but in the eternal.

Thus under the noblest symbol of Yajna, the different mental sacrifices and the necessary attendant consequences are represented in a most philosophical and practical way.

In some Smrithis it is mentioned that Nara-Medham and other sacrifices are strictly prohibited in Kali-Yuga. The writers knowing that dead letter interpretation would be attached to esoteric versions and thus that a thousand and one crimes would be committed in the name of religion, strictly prohibited them for the profane—as pearls cannot be thrown before the swine, but it was never their idea and wish that these *yagams* or sacrifices should not be carried on, in the mental plane, as such injunctions are quite against nature and her inviolable laws, and it is unthinkable that Gnanam is the monopoly of certain yugams and their peoples as the institution of occult brotherhood and the imparting of occult knowledge to fit recipients are going on even in this material age even as they were in all former yugams.

§ XXIX.—FUNERAL CEREMONIES.*

The following editorial note is appended to a correspondence on the above subject :—

To this we answer by printing the following letter just received—“Now that the question of funeral ceremonies has be-

* From the Theosophist, Vol. V.

come so important, may I venture to place before the readers of the Theosophist the views of Agasthya Rishi (the chief of South Indian Yogis) embodied in a Tamil work called "Agasthya Pooja Vidhi". It purports to be Upadesa to Pulastya, one of the Sapta Rishis. It consists of 7 stanzas of 8 lines each, where he unequivocally denounces the *pindam*, *tarpanam* and *Amavasi* ceremonies. He adds that "No wise man shall therefore do as the priest-ridden mob does".

The following is the translation of the Tamil stanza as given in the Theosophist:—

"O Uttama! If the father and mother, who were but born die why should we perform ceremonies? It is the blind who relying on their feeble memory so-called and boasting of the *tarpanas* they perform, pour water and gingelly seed with all the time-honored *Shraddha*, and wander from temple to temple, but withal become not a whit wiser for it."

PART III.

CASTE MARKS.

§ XXX.—BRAHMAN THREAD.*

The ceremonial rituals of the Brahmans are of two kinds. Nithya and Nimithyaka—the former to be observed daily and compulsorily and the latter one optionally—and no one becomes holy, pure, and fit, to perform these prescriptions of the Karma Kanda unless he is converted into a Dwija—*lit.*, twice-born—and to become a Dwija, he must pass through the initiatory ceremony of Upanayanam or the investiture of the Holy Thread, and consequent initiation into the meaning of Gayatri, which is known as Brahmopadesam *i.e.*, revealing the knowledge or mystery of Brahma, or initiation into Gupta Vidya—and the one invested is known as the Upanithan. Upanithan means one that is drawn near; and

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XII.

the holy thread is known as *Brahma-Sutram* i.e., the card of Brahm; or in other words the cord or energy by which Brahm ties to itself all those that would come to it, and hence Upanithan means one that has placed himself in such a position as to be drawn nearer and nearer to Brahm, and to be bound by it, by being extracted from non-Brahmic coils and attractions. How does the holy thread symbolise the position of the wearer, and what is its meaning? The Srutis enjoin that cotton—pure and white, should be taken by virgins (*Kanyas*) and spun by the hand into a single thread, long enough to be three equal parts of 48 folds or 96 Indian inches i.e., 8 spans and afterwards all these three yams are twisted into one thread. This twisted thread is again folded into three equal parts and twisted into one; and the latter is again folded into three and knotted into a circle, and this forms the holy thread. The pure white cotton is Para Brahm and its being spun to the length of 96 inches by a virgin or *Kanya* represents the production of the phenomenal plane by the action of *Prakriti* or matter, by making the pure essence and the divine ray ensheathed in 96 *Thathwams* or cosmic principles; and that no sooner did this happen than, at once, the first triad, the second triad, and the third, together with their correlations, and inter-relations, came into existence.

“Swayambhu,” writes the learned author of “*Isis Unveiled*”, “is the unrevealed Deity; it is the Being, existent through and of itself; he is the central or immortal germ of all that exists in the universe. Three Trinities emanate and are confounded in him, forming a supreme unity. These trinities or the triple *Trimurthi*, are the *Nara*, *Nari* and *Viradj*—the initial triad; the *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Surya*—the manifested triad; *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Siva*, the creative triad. Each of these triads becomes less metaphysical and more adapted to the vulgar intelligence as it descends. Thus the last becomes the symbol in concrete expression.” This clearly expresses the meaning of the three triads of the holy thread and satisfactorily explains the macrocosmic evolution. Further the idea of *Kanya* explains the first two triads as the six primary forces of nature, by whose interaction and corre-

lation, the third visible triad which constitute the gross material universe was evolved and came into existence. The process of spinning gives the whole rationale of existence. The unspun cotton is caught by the left hand and the thread is being spun by the right hand. Looking above we perceive the unspun cotton and looking down we have individual thread hanging upon it, and this shows that all individual existences have their basis upon, and their matrix in, the universal spirit of Para Brahm, and that all such emanations are from the bosom of the unknown and have come out of it and when viewed in relation with it, are of the same essence and nothing apart from it. The knot in the thread represents "the central immortal germ whence the triad comes out at the divine impulse and whither all return." Further, each man's body being 96 inches long if measured by one's own fingers for the complete formation and existence of a triune man, the spirit is to get itself entangled or manifest in 96 microcosmic principles of which the body is composed, and this is typified by having the thread 96 inches long, and limiting it to that length. The reason why the course or the expiry of the 7th year is chosen for the ceremony is this. Man after being shoved down from the intra-uterine life undergoes a complete transformation of atoms and principles *i.e.*, it takes 7 years according to science to shed away all those particles which had partaken more or less the quality and tone of the intra-uterine cuticle and life, and the beginning of the 8th year is just the period when man begins "his life" as contradistinguished from the life which he was living at the primal impulse given by the parents and since this period is the most pliable and innocent stage of existence, and the mind, a blank white paper, having received no impressions either this way or that way, anything imparted to it becomes bone-bred and life-long and so our Rishis took this period as the best one for the inculcation of spiritual knowledge which turns out in most cases as strong intuitive faith.

Thus at the very sight of the holy thread we are perfectly initiated into the mysteries of Brahm, that (1) Athman, pure and spotless, is alone all existence as the first cause, (2) it evolved out

of itself the six primary forces of nature and through their correlations and inter-relations, all the visible triads which constitute the material world came into existence, (3) all individual emanation is part and parcel of Brahm, and is the unity of all in all, (4) all such manifestations and existences ultimately merge in the original cause, (5) there is every hope for man to merge himself so if he would lead the life, (6) subjection of animal thoughts, words and deeds are the essential duty of a neophyte and this is the right beginning of leading the true life, (7) seven years are more or less the period of probation for real initiation into Gupta V̄idya. The married man wears three holy threads as indicating his adoration of the three fires—the terrestrial, the astral and the spiritual, and since every marriage involves this triple constituency of the father, the mother and the child, which correspond to Purush, Prakriti and their united production, the manifested universe, the sense and symbol of married man wearing three holy threads speak for themselves. Sanyasis who have renounced the world completely, take away the holy thread altogether to symbolise their having entirely freed themselves from the coils of macrocosmic and microcosmic principles (typified by the holy threads), and hence out of material evolution and existence, and their being identified with the original source symbolised by the cotton. Cotton is chosen as symbol because evolution means the correlation of spirit with matter and the consequent interaction, and this correlation is so indistinguishably blended together, that for all ordinary eyes and minds, the interaction and the substratum are unperceivable, but when viewed with right discrimination, the unity of all in one pure essence becomes theoretically and practically realisable, and to represent all these phases of one problem simultaneously in one and the same substance, cotton is the best substance that can be used.

§ XXXI.—CASTE MARKS.*

Caste marks are symbols representing the different gradations of spiritual unfoldments and planes, though, in course of time both the key and the meaning were lost, and became consequently causes of bitter words and bitter deeds. The vertical caste mark of the Vishistadwaitis consists of two pure white lines and a red or yellow one in the middle. It is said that the white lines represent Ida and Pingala, and the yellow one Sushumna; and admitting this as one of the meanings, the real philosophy is left yet entirely unexplained. The substance which forms the middle line is known as Sree Choornam *i.e.*, the powder of Sree or Lakshmee, the consort of Narayana, and it is therefore a symbol of Prakriti. The two vertical white lines joined at the base are Nara and Narayana—the Logos and its light, the Eswara and Chit—and both have close connection with each other, as for every manifestation of Chit, the overshadowing of the Logos is entirely necessary. Again, the idea of the existence of the individual Soul or Chit presupposes the union with, and the inseparable shadowing of the Logos, as the said Logos is the fountain light of all the individual lights or as it is the first gnatha or the ego in the cosmos, and every other ego and every other self is but its reflection or manifestation, though in ordinary humanity its influence is smothered and hence non-perceivable, and the caste mark therefore symbolises the differentiated manifestation of (1) Prakriti or Achit (2) the Logos and (3) Chit. The Vishishtadwaitis hold that Eswara or Narayana (Chit) the Individual Soul or Jivatma (Chit) and Prakriti or matter (Achit) are three distinctive realities, yet acting in co-operation under the master influence of Narayana or Logos, and the symbol is therefore indicative of the ⁴Tatwatrayam and their functions—the philosophical tenets of the Vishishtadwaitis, the wearers of the caste mark under discussion.

The substance of the other vertical caste mark is known as Gopichandanam *i.e.*, the sandal of Gopikas, the paramours of Krishna. The Puranas say that once Krishna embraced his

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XI.

Gopikas with sandal daubed all over their bodies, and that in the act of embrace, the sandal fell into the river Ganges owing to the friction caused thereby, and that he who wears this Chandanam or sandal is purified of his sins. This refers to the union of Purush and Prakriti, as the substance used is ordinary golden coloured earth, a mixture of the white and yellow colour. The distinctive white and the yellow colour in the former caste mark have become blended into one (hence the color is golden) and the symbol therefore signifies the union of Purush and Prakriti towards the synthetic process of unmanifestation. Further, the Upanishads describe Eswara as the spirit that shines vertically in the heart of men in Pitha color; and this color is exactly the color of the substance used in this cast mark, and this symbol is a step philosophically higher in the scale of spiritual knowledge. The differentiation of Tatwatraya and its philosophy were taught in the first, and in the second the practicable and the necessary union of Purush and Prakriti for spiritual advancement towards the unmanifested state is hinted at.

The third caste mark is three horizontal white lines, and in this a whole and complete philosophy of evolution and involution of the way how to obtain Moksha, and of what that Nirvanic state is like, is scientifically examined. Let us explain the esoteric significance of this under the heads of (1) the substance of which, and the way it is prepared, (2) the way in which it is worn and (3) the meaning of the mark considered as a whole.

(1) Cow's dung is taken and balls are made of it and these balls are exposed to the sun's heat and then thrown into the blazing fire with oblation of ghee accompanied by mantras, and if, when properly burnt, the balls are found to have become pure white without the admixture of any other color, they form the substance of the caste mark. Cow in Sanskrit means Pasu or animal and this Pasu is applied in the Upanishads to all the souls who are enwrapped in Pasuthwam or Jadathwam, ignorance or animalism and hence Eswara is called Pasupathi, *i.e.*, the lord of Pasus or Jivatmas (Individual Souls) and the dung of the cow is therefore the animal part of man, which is in short his ignorance

or Agnanam itself. The dung balls represent then so many individual souls, and their exposure to the heat of the sun symbolises the calcining of the ignorance of the individual souls in the sun of wisdom or Gnanam. In the next stage these cow dung balls are thrown into fire with oblation of ghee and this points out that all the Jivas should throw themselves heart and soul purified into the bosom of the universal fire of Para Brahm, if they wanted redemption from "Animalism" and the balls becoming entirely white without any differentiation of colors, suggests that when once the individual souls merge themselves into the universal soul, all their Karmic, Agnanic affinities are burnt up, isolated individualisation ceases, and everything becomes part and parcel of Para Brahm pure and spotless and the color white therefore symbolises this. To sum up the first head, all individual souls or animals must be dried in wisdom or Gnanam and then merge and throw themselves into the bosom of Brahm, and when once they do so, they become completely extricated from the coils of Agnanam and become part and parcel of Para Brahm essence. This highest philosophical theory is explained in this head.

(2) *The way in which it is worn.*—The wearer is enjoined to take the white powder, and keeping it in the palm of the left hand to magnetise it by uttering mantras having the meaning that it (the powder) is Akasa, Vayu, Agni, Apas, Prithvi, Mind, Buddhi, and everything in fact. Then he is to apply this magnetised powder to the body by rubbing it from head to foot, and after this he mixes the powder with water and daubs the whole body with it, and finally the three horizontal stripes are drawn all over the body. The rubbing of the powder from head to foot conveys the idea that Para Brahm is Sarva-Vyapakam (Omnipresent), and the daubing of the powder with water signifies, that Brahm joined with Prakriti or Sakti for evolution, and no sooner did it do so than at once all the Thruputies *i.e.*, manifestation by triads came into existence in the phenomenal plane. Thus at the very sight of this caste mark we are perfectly initiated into (1) the philosophy of existence, (2) the way how to get ourselves rid of animalism, (3) the nature of Para Brahm, (4) the nature of the individual

soul, (5) the state of the individual soul at the time of Moksha, (6) the combination of Purush and Prakriti, (7) the evolution into triads in the phenomenal plane. This is surely in advance of the other two and expresses occult knowledge in a most masterly and exhaustive symbology.

The Upanishads describe the three horizontal lines as:—

- (1) The three Saktis—Kriyasakti, Itchasakti and Gnanasakti.
- (2) The three fires—the terrestrial, the astral and the spiritual.
- (3) The three gods—Maheswara, Sadasiva and Siva.
- (4) The three Gunas—Rajasa, Satwa and Tamas.
- (5) The three worlds—the higher, the middle and the nether worlds.
- (6) The three times—Morning, noon and evening.
- (7) The three Vedas—Rig, Yajur and Sama.

Side by side with the meaning of the caste mark, the tying of Rudraksham (a sort of beads) is strictly enjoined. Rudraksham is Rudra's eye, which is the psychic eye itself. Though numbers of Rudrakshams are tied, yet the Upanishads enjoin to tie one single white Rudraksham round the neck and calls it Mrithyootharakam, *i.e.*, security against death, and this means that the scattered energies of the soul should be focussed and centred in the Anahata Chakram and thus make the soul proof against death; and it is useless to dilate upon this symbol, as the meaning is explicable on its very face.

PART IV.

MAGIC.

§ XXXII.—MESMERIC AND MANTRAIC CURES.*

It is a well-ascertained fact that by means of mesmerism hundreds of thousands have been cured, and by using the will-power, people given up for years by physicians as incurable, have

* From the Theosophist, Vol. III.

gone on living, despite professional prognostications. As to the recitation of *mantrams* producing an immediate relief, this is quite a different thing. We cannot call their effect, mesmerism, since the curative agency in that is an anima, aura, force or fluid in one person, by means of which a peculiar action is set up in the physical system of another—whether without or with direct contact. We confess we do not see how anything of that kind—we mean a nervous fluid or force—can be said to reside in a mantram, even as a potentiality since a mantram is simply a recitation of certain verses held sacred among the Hindus. Yet, if repeated loudly and after a certain rule of phonetics *i.e.*, chanted in a peculiar way, we do not know why the resultant sound could not possess as curative a power in itself as a mesmeric force. The latter is neither more ponderable, nor more visible, than the former and is certainly not audible, which sound is. If the dulcet tones of a flute have been known to soothe and in many instances to arrest for a considerable time the throbbings of the nerves in fits of sciatica—why not the rhythmic sounds of a Sanskrit mantram? The fore-fathers of many Brahmins, if not the latter themselves—must have certainly known more of the mystery of sound than Professor Tyndall, even though that learned gentleman has succeeded in drawing musical sounds from fire and imponderable gases.

§ XXXIII.—FIVE-POINTED STAR.*

Writing of the efficacy of this geometrical figure, in cases of bites and stings of poisonous insects, &c., Babu Kedarnath Basu says :—

“I am of opinion that the Aryans introduced very judiciously signs, mystical incantations and so forth in connection with their magnetic manipulations, to secure the belief and faith of ignorant people, who would not have otherwise relied upon their efficacy. It is the innate nature of ignorant people and savages to attribute the cause of cures of diseases to miracles wrought by charms or

* From the Theosophist, Vol. IV.

other supernatural means, and this peculiarity is seen all over the world. The Aryans to satisfy and suit the low mental capacities of such people introduced cabalistic signs and mantras or mystical incantations and sundry other processes, merely to secure the patient's faith and belief which materially assist the manipulating process towards the cure of maladies. Therefore it cannot be said that the whole mystery and philosophy lie on the cabalistic signs or mantras themselves, but on the magnetic manipulations and will-power evinced in effecting them."

Speaking of the Pentagram, which, when drawn over the part affected is alleged to relieve pain from scorpion-sting, Madame Blavatsky says in the Theosophist:—

Like the six-pointed star which is the figure of the Macrocosm, the five-pointed star has its own deep symbolic significance, for it represents the microcosm. The former—the "double triangle" composed of two triangles respectively white and black—crossed and interlaced (our society's symbol)—known as the sign of Vishnu in India—is made to represent the universal spirit and matter, one white point, which symbolises the former ascending heavenward, and the two points of its black triangle inclining earth-ward. The Pentagram also represents spirit and matter, but only as manifested upon earth—emblem of the microcosm (or the "little universe") faithfully mirroring in itself the macrocosm (or the great Cosmos), it is the sign of the supremacy of human intellect or spirit over brutal matter.

The explanation given by the Theosophists for the occasional success obtained in relieving pain (such as scorpion-bites) by the application of the Pentagram—a success by the bye, which with the knowledge of the cause producing it might with some persons become permanent and sure—is a little less supernatural, and rejects every theory of "spirit" agency accomplishing it whether these spirits be claimed human or elemental. True, the five-pointed shape of the star has something to do with it as will be now explained, but it depends on and is fully subservient to the chief agent in the operation, the alpha and omega of the magical force—Human will. All the paraphernalia of ceremonial magic—perfumes,

vestments, inscribed hieroglyphics and mummeries are good, but for the beginner, the neophyte, his powers have to be developed, his mental attitude during the operations defined and his will educated by concentrating it on such symbols.

“What is in a sign?” will our readers ask. “No more than in a name”—we shall reply. Nothing except that as said above it helps to concentrate the attention, hence to nail the will of the operator to a certain point. It is the magnetic or mesmeric fluid flowing out of the fingers’ ends of the hand tracing the figure which cures or at least stops the acute pain in benumbing the nerves and not the figure *per se*. And yet there are some proficient who are able to demonstrate that the five-pointed star, whose points represent the five cardinal limbs or those channels of man—the head, the two arms and the two legs—from whence the mesmeric currents issue the strongest, the simple tracing of that figure (a tracing produced with far more efficacy with the finger ends than with ink, chalk or pencil) helped by a strong desire to alleviate pain, will very often force out unconsciously the healing fluid from all these extremities with far more force than it otherwise would. Faith in the figure is transformed into intense will, and the latter into energy; and energy from whatsoever feeling or cause it may proceed, is sure to rebound somewhere and strike the place with more or less force; and naturally enough that place will be the locality upon which the attention of the operator is at that moment concentrated and hence—the cure attributed by the self-ignorant mesmeriser to the Pentagram.

§ XXXIV.—CURSES.*

Rishis are said to have cursed persons to become stones, beasts, &c. for a certain time. Taken literally, it would go against the doctrine of eternal progression that says “nature shuts all her gates when one has passed through them”, thereby meaning that an ego cannot (except in the case of persons who have attained the

* From Prasnotara.

immortality of evil) return to a lower form of life after it has once passed it. A plant cannot be a stone, an animal a plant; and a human being an animal. But in the case of these curses there is this explanation. We see that a strong mesmeriser so controls his subject as to make him think as the mesmeriser likes. The mesmeriser tells him he is a dog, and forthwith the subject begins to act like one. Then, why cannot a Rishi by the potency of his will so control and influence the thoughts and feelings of a subject as to make him think that he is an ass or any other beast or even a stone or a tree for the time being. But there remains the question of form. The person cursed not only thinks himself a beast or a tree but even others see it so. How is that to be accounted for? We see Hindu jugglers perform feats of Maya called Indrajala and Mahendrajala. They make a certain thing or scene to be observed and experienced by a large number of persons, whereas it is the mental image projected and impressed by the will of the actor on the minds of the spectators. Why cannot a Rishi *i.e.*, an adept so produce a Maya as to make it last for a required period of time? It is only a question of the power of will. He can make others see what he likes.

§ XXXV.—OMENS.*

It is said that when a man starts on an errand, if a Brahman comes opposite to him, it is an inauspicious omen. When a Brahman comes opposite to you, his pure magnetic aura crosses, as it were, your purpose and therefore this omen is inauspicious.

Whenever one proceeds on a journey, his 'Double' travels through the whole journey quick as thought. Being more amenable to the finer forces of nature, it experiences the same state of things as it would if it accompanied the body. Now, if the *double* undergoes any serious obstacles or risks on the way, it instantly comes back and re-enters the body, it may be in a convulsed state, and gives signs of warning.

* From Prasnotara.

Some birds may have the power of observing the convulsed state of the double, and their voice, if properly understood, may warn against danger.

§ XXXVI.—EVIL EYE.*

Recent research into mesmeric laws and phenomena has thrown much light upon the nature of that maleficent magnetic glance of the human eye, whose direful effects have been known in all countries since the remotest antiquity. If the Hindu mother suspends around the child's neck an amulet to protect it from the evil eye, and similarly the Indian cultivator guards his thriving field or orchard, or his new house, by setting up some uncouth image or painting, a Svastika or some other sign of power, to arrest the first envious glance, so also do the simple folk of other countries adopt the like expedients.

The human eye is, in fact, a reservoir of tremendous psychic power, and the world's literature teems with expressions to indicate the potency of its light, its lightning, and its blandishments. Some of the most romantic stories extant are based upon the fact of ocular fascination. The benevolent healer cures the sick by his kindly glances, and animals and lunatics are alike subjugated by the spell of the fixed gaze. The possessor of evil eye is often unconscious of his gruesome gift and disposed to ascribe to mere coincidence the tragedies of which he seems to others the perhaps unwitting and horrified cause.

* From the Theosophist, Vol. X.

PART V.

PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE.

§ XXXVII.—PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE.*

In the first place, the sacred cities of the Hindus are well organised and powerful spiritual centres, and from them there radiates an elevating influence. Places of Pilgrimage are truly spiritual seminaries which, though completely closed to the idler and the superstitious, in selfish quest of personal holiness and personal salvation, are ever open to receive the earnest and devoted searchers after truth. There is no important place of pilgrimage in India which does not enjoy the presence, in most cases permanent, of some adept or initiate of a high order, who is ever ready to point the path to the higher life into which he himself has entered.

The holy cities were built, or at all events, completed, in the later epochs of Brahmanic history. When the spirituality of mankind began to be clouded by progressive materiality, consequent upon the desire of selfish enjoyment, the seclusion of the adepts became greater and the great Sanscrit language became daily less understood. As a remedy for this great cyclic evil, the holy ones of the earth left to the profane vulgar the symbolical architecture of the great temples, which yet serve as finger-posts to mystical students.

Very few persons are aware that as the pilgrim stands on the bridge of boats on the Ganges before Benares he is face to face with a most sublime and awful mystery, the full import of which none but the higher initiates comprehend.

What is Kasi?

Kasi is the supreme power of the Great God Siva who is the undifferentiated bliss, consciousness and being. Siva or Peace here represents the fourth or unmanifested state of the universe.

* From the Theosophic Gleaner, Vol. IV.

He is the Chidakasa, his other name being Vyoma or space, the small circle or dot which is placed on the top of the Sanskrit Mystic symbol Om. What relation it has to the force located in the human body above the eyebrows and represented by the dot over the crescent moon, the mystic knows very well. Kasi is called the Goddess who embodies consciousness and bliss and is the same as Sakti. If Siva is not united to Sakti he cannot produce even a flutter of well-being. Sakti is adorable of Hari, Hara and Viranchi. By one turning the key of the symbology here adopted, we find that Hari or Vishnu is the dreaming state of the universe, the first differentiated aspect of the darkness, the destroyer or remover Hara. Although Hara is usually taken as a loose synonym for Siva, it is here used with the deliberate object of implying that the transcendental state of the universe, emblematised by Siva, is beyond the state of the destroyer, as the thuriya state is beyond the sushupti. Siva is Para-Nirvana, while Hari is Nirvana. It is easily intelligible how to the popular mind no distinction is observable between Nirvana and Para-Nirvana. Hari we have said, is the first differentiated condition realized by the human ego. He is therefore the son represented by the sign Leo on the Zodiac. Viranchi or Brahma, the Creator, is the aggregation of the perceptible universe. Sakti is therefore above these three, and the consort of Siva. This explains why Kasi is called Tripuradhari, the royal residence of the destroyer of the three cities, the undifferentiated synthetic condition of the three states mentioned above. With regard to the human ego the three cities are the three bodies, gross, subtle and causal, beyond which is the spirit. From this it also becomes clear that Kasi is the eternal Chinmatra. It also becomes manifest from this that in one of its aspects Kasi is Pragna, in which is realized the great formula "Thou art it." This Pragna is the mother of Mukti or liberation, as all Vedantins know. The Tirthayati says—"I make salutation to that Kasi by whose favour I am Siva, and I know Siva to be the spirit of all that is". Kasi is Pragna, Buddhi, Sakti or Maya, the different names of the divine power which dominates throughout the universe; in fact, it is one aspect of the one soul. The

above quoted mystic states further:—"This Kasi is the power of Siva, the supreme consciousness, but not different from him. Know Kasi to be the same as Siva and the supreme bliss. Kasi is that by which the supreme reality of the spirit is manifested or in which it is so manifested. She is also sung as the Chinmatra. I make salutation to her, the Supreme Knowledge." Elsewhere the same writer calls Kasi the darkness (Syama). This darkness is the undifferentiated matter of the Cosmos, beyond which dwelleth the sun-coloured one, the spirit.

To return to Kasi in its aspect of Buddhi. It is to be remembered that Buddhi is the first differentiation of Prakriti. According to Kapila, Buddhi is the determination in nature of Prakriti to evolve egotism. Buddhi has three conditions or aspects. Its own essentially pure condition is that in which it is identical with Prakriti, in which the three substantive qualities of goodness, passional activity and delusion are in a state of equilibrium and in that sense non-existent. This Bhuddhi is the mother of salvation; in fact it is salvation. When under the influence of Rajas, the quality of Satva predominates, four things are generated—the practice of virtue (Dharma), dispassion (Vairagya), the spiritual power (Aisvarya) and finally salvation, when by the excess of goodness Buddhi returns to its original state of purity. When under some influence Tamas predominates, the four opposites of what is stated above are produced. Tamas by its enveloping power (Avarna Sakti) makes the one reality in the universe appear as the differentiated universe of matter and then Rajas by its expansive power (Vikshepasakti) produces the passions which are the cause of bondage.

These three conditions of Buddhi are the aspects of Kasi:—Nirvisesha (undifferentiated), Sudha (pure, when the Satvaka quality predominates), and Jada (when tamas predominates). One under the domination of tamas looks upon the geographical Kasi as the reality.

The Suddha Kasi is the abstract consciousness still limited by forms.

One under the domination of the Satva quality practises virtue, still ascribing good and evil to nature around him.

In her Nirvishesha condition, Kasi is self-existent in her glory, and is the supreme god of Siva and of all liberated souls.

We shall now understand why it is generally believed that residence in Kasi removes all sins committed elsewhere, but a sin committed in the temple of the Lord, Kasi itself, renders one incapable of receiving grace—the reference being to the spiritual evil—for which there is no remission. The wretch who knows the truth and follows the left hand path is doomed to nameless misery in Avitchi Nirvana.

It will be no exaggeration to say that the secret of the ancient archaic science, for which an enquirer will search in vain the mystical books of the East, are often symbolically represented in some of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in India. The mysterious ideas generally associated with the position of Kasi, its past history, and its innumerable gods and goddesses contain clearer indications of the secrets of final initiation than a cart-load of books on Yoga philosophy. Look again at Chidambaram and examine carefully the plan on which its celebrated temple was built by Patanjali by the light of the Hindu doctrines relating to the great mystery of the Logos. Similarly various occult secrets find their true interpretation and explanation in Srisylam, Ramnad, Jagannath, Allahabad and other places, justly considered as sacred, owing to their various associations, by the followers of the Hindu Religion. It would require several volumes to explain at length the sacred symbols connected with these places and their mystic significance, and interpret in a proper manner the Sthalapuramams relating thereto. As no writer was permitted in ancient times to divulge in clear language the secrets of occult science to the public, and as books and libraries could be easily destroyed by the ravages of time or the vandalism of barbarous invaders, it was thought proper to preserve, for the benefit of posterity, in strong and lasting edifices of granite, some of the greatest secrets known to the designers of these buildings, in the form of signs and symbols.

A Sanskrit Verse is often repeated by the Hindus, which says that journeys to seven places of pilgrimage will secure Moksha to

the devotee. These places are enumerated thus :—(1) Ayodya, (2) Mathura, (3) Maya, (4) Kasi (Benares), (5) Kanchi, (6) Avantika (Ojeen), and (7) Dwaraka. Now, these places are intended to represent the seven centres of occult energy in the human body, known as (1) Sahasram (2) Agnia, (3) Visuddhi, (4) Anahatam, (5) Swadhishtanam, (6) Manipurakam and (7) Mulatharam respectively. The ideas associated with these places will become intelligible when examined by the light of the doctrines connected with these force-centres recognized by Yogis.

§ XXXVIII.—MOTHER GANGA.*

According to the Vishnu Purana the sin-removing stream of the divine maiden, Ganga, flows from the toes of the left lotus foot of Vishnu. At the time of the Trivikrama Avatar the whole of Suvarloka was covered by the left foot of Vishnu. This loka is represented by that portion of the heavens which lies between the tropic of Cancer and the Pole-star, the most stable object in this changing universe. The toes of Vishnu's left foot rested on the constellation of the Great Bear, and therefore this part of the heavens is called the supreme foot of Vishnu. This part of the mundane sphere remains in its place during the time that fourteen Manus rise and fall, after each of them had witnessed the births and deaths of fourteen Indras. But at the end of Brahma's day the whole of the three lokas retire from manifestation. The Ganges is therefore the Kriya Sakti or dynamic energy, of the three lokas, having her origin in the highest loka, representing the highest point of manifestation. Beyond this the Ganges is the ambrosial stream that issues from Vishnu's feet to give immortality to the dwellers of the spiritual spheres, which remain untouched by Kalpic pralayas; she is not then our Mother Ganges. The origin of that Ganga is at the highest point of the psychic or svapna plane—on the confines, so to say, between that plane and the spiritual sphere, of sushupti. At the end of a day of Brahma

* From the Theosophist, Vol. VIII.

the physical and the psychical plane become merged in the Tamogunam of Sushupti. The spiritual lokas, Jana, Tapas and Satya are really states of Samadhi, and not subject to change except during the Prakritic pralaya, which takes place at the end of a hundred years of Brahma; Maharloka, standing midway between the upper and lower three, has properties peculiar to itself. It is called "mortal-and-immortal," because though it is not destroyed at the Kalpic pralaya, it becomes uninhabited.

The Ganges issuing from the feet of Vishnu for a long time dwelt in the sphere of Brahma, that is, on the sushuptic plane in the three lokas. The three forms of immortality, absence of pain and the extinction of its liability to recur, in which Vishnu's grace is enjoyed by the three spiritual lokas, must be taken as the Ganges prior to her manifestation in the world of death—the three lower lokas. The reasons which induced her to descend were to shed her benign influence upon the wicked sons of Sagara, incited by the Wrath of the sage Kapila, and give them a new life. Now Kapila is no other than Vishnu himself in a particular aspect, he is the Purusha that dwells in the sun, and therefore the same as Jivatma. In the Vishnu Purana it is said that, at the Kalpic Pralaya, the fire issuing from the mouth of Sankarsana or Jivatma burns up the three lokas, which thus become the wicked sons of Sagara. The name Sagara or "with poison" is a fitting designation for the sphere of death, consisting of the three lokas. Bhuh, Bhuvah and Suvah; Bhurloka is the lowest; it is the sphere of the earth; Bhuvarloka is the atmospheric region where all elementals and elementaries reside. Suvarloka is the abode of the Gods. Below the earth there are seven other lokas, the antipodes, so to say, of the seven we have described, they represent the stages through which the evolutionary tide has mounted up to this earth; in the mineral kingdom and the states into which the spiritually-evil personalities fall. The Monad is eternal, and consequently it never can evolve. The successive changes in the forms it inhabits constitute evolution. The three aspects of the Ganges as existing in heaven, on earth, and in the nether spheres represent the three aspects of the evolutionary progress, as on earth, and

above, and below it. To understand the character of the earthly Ganges we must remember that the ego in Devachan or Svarloka, descends into incarnation by a very peculiar process. The Jiva or ego in Devachan is called in sanskrit Taijasa; its abode is in the element of a Akasha. After the exhaustion of the Karma that sustains the taijasic condition of the Jiva, it falls into the element of air, and then it descends farther as the fire in the cloud, and finally comes down on the earth with rain, to dwell in the food which the parents of its next incarnation eat; and thus it finally passes into fetal life. These elements must not be confounded with their manifestations perceptible to us. The Ganges in her passages through the various stages of her descent on earth describes the path of the incarnating ego.

§ XXXIX -- DWARAKA.*

The adepts of y. . . instituted seven places as undying mementoes of the seven life-centres in man. The seven centres are Ayodhya (Oudh), Mathura, Maya (Haridvar), Kasi (Benares), Kanchi (Conjeeveram), Avantika (Onjeen) and Dwaraka, corresponding to the seven centres in man, viz., Sahasrara, Ajnachackra, Visuddhi, Anahita, Manipura, Svadhistana and Muladhara. They are located respectively in the head, between the eyebrows, the throat, heart, navel, the generative organs and the anus.

Dwaraka, which, according to its etymology, signified the road to heaven, is the first entrance to the same, since it stands for the first portal to heaven. viz., Muladhara.

A Yogi, if he is to be the master over his own self, has to conquer the different Saktis in each centre and locate his higher or spiritual intelligence therein. Therefore the conquest of each chakra includes the conquest of its lower or depraved powers. But those powers have not to be entirely expurgated, but have to be made our servants, in order that they may minister to our wants. The lower power that has to be mastered in Muladhara is here represented by the Asura, Kusa, which represents the

* From the Theosophist, Vol. XVII.

depraved powers in us, leading us to bestial tendencies. It is only after this, that the Saktis Ichcha, Kriya and others which pertain to the other chackras have to be mastered. Now this Asura is not utterly driven away and hence is given a subterranean place lower than Krishna, in order that pilgrims may see him first, and then God, and thereby know the Asura whom they will have to conquer first and drive underground. When the visitor enters the temple, he finds the god and goddess, living apart. Here is introduced the story of the curse of Durvasa, that Rukmani should so live, but be visited by her consort every morning and evening. Durvasa is an incarnation of the Amsa of Siva, and is properly made the bifurcator of the two principles, Atma and Buddhi or spirit and its consort, the material side.

PART VI.

TEMPLES AND FESTIVALS.

§ XL.—TEMPLES.*

All the temples of Puranic existence, if critically examined, consist of seven Mantapams (stone halls with open sides) and three Prakarams (rectangular open paths around the idol); and of all the idols in temples, two are the foremost in worship, the one known as "Mulavar" (literally, he—the original cause) and the other as "Uthsavar" (he of festivals and adoration). The place occupied by the former is the seventh and that by the latter is the sixth Mantapam counting from the entrance. The first is fixed to the ground, whereas the second is movable and portable. The first represents Para Brahm and hence motionless, permanent, immovable, and the second is the Logos or Ishwara, which is capable of consciously manifesting itself and overshadowing humanity. The other idols in the temples are so many auxiliary spiritual forces in the human body, being placed in the several localities of the temple corresponding to their positions in the

* From the Theosophist, Vol. X.

human body, and the temple is the body itself. The three Prakarams represent the three bodies of Sthula, Sukshma and Karana (the gross, the subtle, and the causal), and the three stages of Jagrata, Swapna and Sushupti, (waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep), To sum up. The seven Mantapams represent the septenary principles in man, and the two chiefest idols represent the 7th and the 6th principles, being rightly placed in the 7th and the 6th Mantapams respectively, and the three Prakarams represent the three bodies and states of Pragna, thus briefly noting that man is a septenary, having Para Brahm and Logos in him, and that the said Para Brahm is beyond the three bodies and states. The seven Mantapams further teach that man has 7 spiritual centres in him: (1) Mulatharam, (2) Swadhishtanam, (3) Manipurakam, (4) Anahatam, (5) Agia, (6) Vesudhi and (7) Sahasram, and that man should rise up from one centre to another until final emancipation is completed in the 7th centre, wherein the "causeless cause" resides, and this is represented by the Hindu going from the 1st Mantapam to the 2nd, and so on to the 7th, paying worship to the idols in each. Further, the more you penetrate into the Hindu temples, the greater darkness you find in them, very unlike the churches which are streaming with light. The 2nd Mantapam is less bright than the 1st, and the 3rd than the 2nd, and the 7th is completely dark, and it is therefore usually lighted with other lights, as else the idol placed there is entirely non-perceivable. This signifies that the more you rise in the spiritual centres and initiations, the more your passions will be lashed as trials, and the more responsible and incomprehensible you will find your position to be unless you call forth all your spiritual capabilities to your aid. Further, this idea of darkness means that the universal Jyotis or principle is complete darkness to the profane, and for a right perception of it no mortal eyes and mind can be of any use unless all the latent spiritual forces are lighted up in the temple of human bodies.

A stone bull is placed in the 6th Mantapam facing the idol Siva, and the worshipper is required to touch below the root of the bull's tail and directing his sight through the back and

between the horns of the bull, he sees the idol and exclaims 'Sadasivoham'. The bull represents Pranava, its two horns, Ida and Pingala, and the line running through the back is the Sushumna. At two fingers' distance above the tail Mulatharam is situated. The meaning is that he who wants redemption from the trammels of matter must rouse up the latent divine spiritual forces from the 1st centre, Mulatjaram (typified by the touching of that position in the bull), and directing it through Sushumna artery (represented by the back of the bull) which lies between Ida and Pingala (the two horns) centres his Pragna in the 7th centre, Sahasram, and thus becomes enabled to see Siva—the divine principle—face to face, and no sooner does he so see than 'all conditioned existence ceases, and the natural exclamation is "that he is God," being merged in the universal principle.

In all the biggest temples 7 brass circular plates are placed one above the other with inter spaces between, with a brass rod connecting them perpendicularly in a spiral manner—only one light is shining in the 1st plate, in the 2nd 4 or 5, and so on till in the 7th, 28, 36 or 48 lights are burning, and at every time of puja these lighted plates are shown before the idol, and no worship is complete without this. This clearly indicates that the single light or Jyotis in the first place is Para Brahm, and how that one, non-dual Jyotis descended lower and lower and manifested itself in so many individual lights or Jivatmas, owing to its being encased, as it were, in 28, 36, or 48 Tatvams or Upadhis. All the innumerable lights in the lower plates (each plate represents one plane of consciousness) are lit in the single light of the 1st plate. Analysis downwards from the 1st leads to all the varied manifestations of the divine principle, and synthesis upwards leads to that single universal divine light of which all other lights are manifestations. The seven plates represent the seven creations, corresponding to the seven places of consciousness and the arrangement of the plates signifies that evolution is spiral. This, in short, is its philosophy, and the temple with its idol worship, stands for a spiritual Asramam (hermitage), and a guru initiating those that come to it into spiritual truths, by means of symbols.

§ XLI —BRAHMOTSAVAM.*

In Southern India, every Vishnu temple with a decent income celebrates at some part of the year a grand festival called the Brahmotsavam. For the benefit of those who have not had the occasion to attend the festival a few words may be said by the way as to what the Brahmotsavam is.

The Brahmotsavam, literally the great festival, is a series of festivals, a grand programme extending over ten days. During this period, every morning and evening the god of the temple is taken out seated on a huge vehicle and carried through the town. Even to the mere sight-seer, the festival is a grand occasion. The commencement of the festival or utsava is marked by a ceremony called the Dhwajarahanam or the hoisting of the flag. In the centre of the outer court of the temple stands a huge stone-pillar called the flag-stand (Dhwajasthamba), and on this occasion a long strip of new cloth is bound round the pillar with solemn ceremony.

Every religious act, public or private, of a Hindu must begin with a formal Sankalpa or resolution. Everything he does must be done with a determined will and not in a slipshod manner. To impress this idea on the mind is the object of the Sankalpa. When the act is private, the two hands are brought together, the left hand is grasped with the right and both are placed on the right thigh. But when the act is public, the Dhwajarahanam is the outward symbol. It indicates the vow undertaken by the people of the town to celebrate the festival. Hence it is that no one who was present within the limits of the town on the occasion of the Dhwajarahanam may leave the town until the festival is over.

The close of the festival is marked by the Dhwajarahanam or the lowering of the flag. The meaning is obvious.

As was said above, during the festival the god of the temple is brought out seated on a vehicle. The vehicles are many in number: the swan, the lunar orb, the solar orb, the lion, the horse, the elephant, the car, garuda and so forth. To the intelli-

* From "the Arya Bala Bodhini."

gent student of religion every one of those vehicles has a world of meaning. The whole of the Vedanta is there. To the work-a-day men and women of the world who have not the privilege of studying the wonderful Scriptures which are our heritage, these Utsavams must be a great boon, if competent persons explain to them the meaning which underlies each symbol. But alas, this is not done and the festivals have sunk into mere tamasha (fun).

The Brahmotsavam proper is intended to teach us the way to divine self-realization. The last of the festivals furnishes a clue to the understanding of the great festival. The last festival is called the Thirthotsavam, literally water festival. On this occasion, after the return of the god to the temple, he goes out once more, this time without any vehicle but in His prabha and comes back, the whole town following Him to the temple. Within it, His blissful abode, the Bhaktas flock together, and receiving His prasada or grace, plunge into the sacred waters of the temple-tank. What is all this but a representation of what takes place in reality in those higher regions we read of in our scriptures? Does not the plunging into the sacred tank typify the entering into Nirvana? Is this not the end of all religious aspiration? One noteworthy realm in that last festival is the solicitude of the god who goes into the town a second time, revealing himself in all His native glory, to collect together all His bhaktas and confer on them His prasada. Realise this idea, and feel how full of hope life becomes.

Well, how is this divine realization to be attained? Which is the first step on the ladder whose "summit is lost in eternal heights Nirvanic." The first day's festival gives the answer. On the morning of the first day, He goes out on no vehicle, but during the night, He is taken out on the swan. What is this swan? These swans the Puranas, in their wonderful way, relate, live in that inaccessible region, called the Manasasaras, the Mental lake, into which falls the sacred Ganga, the Ganges, proceeding from the lotus feet of Maha Vishnu. They have a wonderful power of separating the milk from a mixture of milk and water. All this is most suggestive and pregnant with meaning.

The swan represents the Viveki whose life is of the mind, who is able to discriminate between the transient and the everlasting, to whom God sends his grace, in whom he loves to dwell. This then is the first lesson that is taught, that Viveka is the first acquisition that has to be made, for He loves to reside in the heart of the Viveki.

So one can take up Vahan after Vahan for study and learn a chapter of the Vedanta. This would be a useful exercise to the religious student tending to the growth of his intuitive faculties. We shall here give only an explanation of the Garudavahana, the Eagle-vehicle.

The Garuda-utsava is considered by us the most important of all, but which very few of us care to know. Moreover it is considered more beneficial religiously to worship Him as He is seated on His favourite vehicle just at the entrance to the temple than anywhere else. The rationale of this will be clear in the course of the explanation.

Garuda, the King of the feathered tribe, represents, like the Phoenix of old, the soul of man. Hence, the great importance of the Garuda-Utsava. The Visishtadwaitin holds that Narayana is the soul of all souls, and the Garuda-Utsava expresses this phase of thought. That Garuda is intended to typify the soul of man clearly appears from this; that while the swan, the horse, the elephant and the other vahans are representations from nature, the Garuda which should have been a representation of the eagle which the Garuda is supposed to be, is represented as a human being, with an aquiline nose with the addition of a pair of wings. From the similar consideration it would appear that the Hanumantha-Vahana too represents Man and is intended to convey an important truth of the Vedanta with reference to Man as Mind.

The Garuda, we said, represents Man; it typifies Man the Perfect, the glory of our race. The Garuda-Vahana is by itself an admirable study. The representation is of a man possessed of gigantic muscular power in a kneeling and self-collected attitude, with steadfast, piercing looks. His open arms seek service, and his extended wings reveal a readiness to render assistance wher-

ever assistance may be needed. The brilliant star on his breast is the fire of love that is burning in his heart with a thousand tongues. The lines on his heavy brow betray the severe struggles he had to face in his career. There is a touch of sadness in his countenance as he looks upon the world enveloped in darkness, but those firm set lips reveal a smile, expressive of hope. His very enemies hiss and flourish on his bosom and they that breathed no more when merely his shadow fell upon them, are exultant in his presence.

He has obtained the crown of glory which he wears, the reward of his struggles, life after life standing at the entrance to the temple, he surveys the world with its teeming millions steeped in ignorance. On one side of him lies the region of bliss Nirvanic, the abode of Narayana to which he has gained the right of entrance. On the other lies the wide, wide world steering without a guide, and shrouded in the thick folds of darkness and of gloom. Full of compassion to the suffering world, he renounces the bliss of beatitude and resolves to devote himself to the helping of humanity. Shall we not worship him then, as he stands at the gateway to the temple, and, full of compassion, makes the great Renunciation, he, the flower of the race? Jai, Jai, rings the cry all around, when off he flies to bring succour to that pious king lame of foot, in the Murangan Street, athirst after God.

§ XLII.—THE CAR-FEAST.*

In every grand feast lasting over several days, each day is performed what is called an *Ithikam* (meaning an ancient tradition or truth). And the grandest event in a Brahmotsavam is the car-feast; and that feast only is called Brahmotsavam in which the car-feast is one of the events. The Brahmotsavam would mean a feast in honor of the true Brahm or where the truth of Brahm is manifested.

To describe briefly the festival: the principal thing is the

* From the Siddhanta Dheepica or the Light of truth.

huge car, in the body of which all the Devas are worked in wood. We find attached four horses, and above them is seated a figure with four heads, and behind this figure its modern representation is the Kammala waving his red handkerchief. Behind him the musicians. In the middle is seated the representation of the Deity with a single arrow and bow in its hands. We see the whole town or village turning up to see what is popularly called *Katshi* or Darsan, meaning the manifestation of God's grace.

The breaking of the car's axle is also an ordinary event in the car-festival. Now, consider the ancient tradition recorded in the Yajur Veda and elaborated in the Puranas and Mahabharata and the story is also alluded to in the Ramayana. The story is the Tripurasamhara.

Three Asuras had acquired by their Tapas (human will and desire) three flaming forts whereby they were committing woe and destruction on men and Devas. The Devas repaired in a body to the Supreme and invoked His aid. He consented to destroy them provided each rendered his help as he is described as He who is not aware of His own greatness. Then the Devas shaped the huge car in which each had his part. The upper and lower halves were the heavens and the earth. The sun and the moon became the wheels. The four Vedas became the four horses. Brahma its charioteer, Mount Meru and Vasuki became the Bow and String, and the arrow was shaped out of Vishnu, the iron, Vayu the feathers, and Agni, the head. The structure had become complete and the Deity had taken its seat, and the dreaded Asuras were tempted by curiosity, and were nearing to view the wonder. When lo! pause! The Devas could not contain themselves and each began to think "I foolishly invoked the aid of the one. What could he do without my help." The very moment the Deity smiled; the three puras (three flaming forts) had joined and were consumed to ashes and the three Asuras took their stand by the Deity and the axle broke and the car was a ruin. The Devas woke up smashed and addressed the Deity that he is the Pasupati and that themselves are all pasus. And from that day the One began to be addressed as Tripurantaka and Pasupathi. And it is to be

noted that in Ramayana the Deity is addressed as Tripurantaka and Pasupati.

Now for its meaning. In the Tirumantram of Thirumular the three puras are compared to three Mala or Pasa or Human coats of the soul or Atma. The Asuras typify the human monad in itself pure but making mischief through its encasement in the flesh and senses (flaming forts). Liberation comes when these coverings are destroyed and the feet of the Lord reached. To effect this liberation is the effort of the humanity and their labor and perseverance is truly wonderful.

They pray to all souls of Gods and read all sorts of books and think out all sorts of methods, but the one thing running through their whole fibre, their Egoism, that pride of self, Ahankara and Mamakara, they do not forget, and it ever and anon crops up. Even when they pray to this true One this pride of self does not vanish and he exclaims 'what a great gnani, what a great bhakta am I'. "Am I not achieving salvation by my own gnanam and by my own bhakti. This poor human effort can only provoke a smile, and the huge structure built by this so-called Gnanam and Bhakti falls to pices. And yet the Suras who nearing to view the Supreme (they forget their own peril, theirselves for the time being) unite their three forts *i.e.*, attain Mummalaripakam to the indifference of the self, by the balancing of pleasure and pain, yet these attain to the feet of the Lord, their Mala being destroyed by the fire, yea, the smile (grace) issuing from the lips of the Lord. And this is called destruction or Samharam. This is merely destructive conquest of flesh, a conquest of Agnanam by knowledge and grace of God.

Can we then cavil if the feast illustrating all this is called Brahmotsavam?

§ XLIII.—DURGA PUJA.

From the poorest peasant and village artisan to the richest and bravest warrior and king, and the devout Brahman, all unite their gladsome heart in doing Pujah to the Universal Spirit which is all

knowledge and all bliss. As is generally the case in Hindu Religion, the central idea is one thing and it assumes a symbolism and slowly and surely in course of time, the thought and symbolism is expanded and extended and adopted in the multitudes of creeds and sects, we have among our midst. The central thought is that the Supreme Intelligence and Wisdom arises out of darkness and conquers evil and that it is only with the aid of the Divine Light we can conquer also our darker passions.

As all the Vedic (Mantric) rituals and philosophy were subsequently clothed in Agamic (Tantric) symbolism, the above thoughts were symbolised by Durga warring with Mahishashura and trampling him under foot triumphant and her standing also on the bosom of her lord Siva. Durga is the Power, Thought and Desire (Krya, Gnana and Ichcha sakti or Chit sakti) and she is the Energiser and her Lord is the self-supporting Sat. Mahishasura, the Asura with the buffalo head (what more stupid than the buffalo to the Hindus?) means Ignorance, Avidya or evil. This is the Universal war going on from eternity which war is represented in various shapes from time to time. This exactly is the meaning of the war in the Skandapurān, in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

This Supreme Wisdom, this Mahasakti, this Great Chit, this Mahadevi (whose feast is the Mahanambu), this Durga who is addressed as the One with the Brahman, this Uma highly adorned, the daughter of Himavat, tells the highly conceited Devas, who thought the victory was theirs, when the Brahman it was who obtained the victory. It is the Brahman. It is through the victory of Brahman, that you have thus become great. This Brahman who is known and thought by one who thinkest he does not know Him, and is not known to him who thinks he knows. The Devas each in his own mind, thought he was the Great Being, the great actor and their own insignificance; and the great truth, they did not know, till they were told by the Supreme Sakti, herself. When therefore Durga or Sakti means Supreme Sakti or Wisdom, it is easily conceivable after the nine dark nights of conflict of good over evil, all arts and learning and knowledge and

work and sport should receive their light and life and the Puja to Mahadev, Mahalakshmi, and Mahasaraswati and weapons and tools (Ayudha puja) &c., should be celebrated. This was originally celebrated in the spring, when after the death and darkness and misery of water, nature herself put on her best and freshest robes and everything assumed beauty and life and light. But it was changed from Spring to Autumn as Rama worshipped Durga in this season before commencing his great fight with Ravana. And Arjuna invokes her aid also in the famous battle of Kurukshetra and it is said that 'Durga Kijai' was the universal war-cry in India. And from this also, we gather what were the notions of true warfare among Hindus. No war could be justifiable unless its object was to put down injustice and vice and lawlessness, and no war could be sanctioned which had merely the object of greed and gain and power only.

§ XLIV.—DEEPAVALI.*

This is an important festival celebrated with much rejoicing through the length and breadth of India by all classes of Hindus. The origin of this grand festival is explained in one way by the Saivites and in another by the Vaishnavites.

According to the Saivites, the Devas were greatly oppressed by a huge giant named Narakasura Rakshasa. Unable any longer to endure the cruelties of the Titan, the Devas prayed to Iswara for relief. Maheswara, ever merciful and ever beneficent, particularly to those who pray to him, readily granted the boon by sending his valiant son Subramania to help them against the Asura. The son-god proceeded against Narakasura, met him in battle, fought him and slew him. To commemorate this grand triumph of God Subramania over the Asura, the Hindus have ever since celebrated the festival once every year on the anniversary day of the defeat with great eclat.

According to the Vaishnavas, Narakasura has imprisoned 1600 Gopis. Sri Krishna, out of compassion accompanied by his con-

* From Arya Bala Bodhini, Vol. V.

sort Sathia Bamai, went against the Asura, fought with him, and left him dead on the field. The gopis were released and they became greatly elated with their success. They illumined their houses with myriads of lamps, and, having at the break of day, just at the hour corresponding to that at which Narakasura died, they partook of a sumptuous feast. The sons of India have since that day celebrated the feast in the same manner.

These Pauranic stories are not without their esoteric significance.

Kartikeya or Subramania is the Atma Gnana. The Devas represent Satva Guna. The Rakshasa is the wicked principle. Devas are assailed by the Rakshasas; that is Satva guna is interfered with by wickedness and in consequence follow temptation and misery. The Devas, thrown into misery seek Iswara, that is, the miserable man seeks a spiritual teacher and finds one in Siva, that is, a Yogi, and He taught them the knowledge of the self, which is what we are to understand by saying that Iswara gave Subramania for help. With the aid of His divine knowledge, the miserable mortal regains his Satva guna, having fought the wicked principle and conquered it.

The festival is celebrated on the dark night and the day following. The night indicates Ahankara, the illumination represents the effulgent Swagnana, and the sounds of crackers symbolise the din of the contest with the wicked principle.

The story is full of meaning as every other Puranic story is. It behoves us to meditate on stories of this kind and to find out their right interpretation instead of looking down upon them as cock-and-bull tales invented by our forefathers for their amusement.

PART VII.

ASTROLOGY.

§ XLV.—ASTROLOGY.

I.*

Although a study of Astrology may enable one to determine what the course of events will be, it cannot necessarily be inferred therefrom that the planets exercise any influence over that course. The clock indicates, it does not influence the time. And a distant traveller has often to put right his clock so that it may indicate correctly the time of the place he visits. Thus, though the planets may have no hand in changing the destinies of man, still their position may indicate what that destiny is likely to be. This hypothesis leads us to the question, 'what is destiny'. As understood by the occultist, it is merely the chain of causation producing its correspondential series of effects. One who has carefully followed the teachings of occultism knows that every individual is his own creator or his own father, *i.e.*, our future personality will be the result of our present mode of living. In the same manner our present birth, with all its conditions, is the tree grown out of the germ sown in our past incarnations. Our physical and spiritual conditions are the effects of our actions produced on those two planes in previous existences. Now, it is a well known principle of occultism that the One Life which pervades all, connects all the bodies in space. All heavenly bodies have their mutual relation, which is blended with man's existence, since he is but a microcosm in the macrocosm.* Every thought, as much as action, is impressed in the imperishable book of Nature—the Akasa, the objective aspect of the unmanifested life. All our thoughts and actions thus produce the vibrations in space, which mould our career. And Astrology is a science which, having determined the nature of the laws that govern these vibrations, is able to state

* From the Theosophist, Vol. V.

precisely a particular or a series of results, the causes of which have already been produced by the individual in his previous life. Since the present incarnation is the child of the previous one, and since there is but that One Life which holds together all the planets of the solar system, the position of those planets at the time of the birth of an individual—which event is the aggregate result of the causes already produced—gives to the true astrologer the data upon which to base his predictions. It should be well remembered at the same time that just as the “astronomer who catalogues the stars cannot add one atom to the universe”, so also can no astrologer, any more than the planet, influence the human destiny.

This necessitates a consideration of the element of clairvoyance necessary to constitute a true astrologer.

The ancient Rishis, had, by observation, experiment and deep occult knowledge, taken account of all conceivable combinations of various causes and determined with mathematical precision almost to infinitesimal point their effects. But yet, since the cosmos is infinite, no finite being can ever take cognizance of *all* the possibilities of Nature.

Recognizing the truth of this most important but unfortunately often neglected axiom, they laid down as the first condition of success in Astrology a pure life, physically, morally, and spiritually. This was intended to develop the psychic capacities of the astrologer who could thus see in Akasha the combinations, not alluded to in the written works, and predict their results. In short, true astrology is a mathematical science, which teaches us what particular causes will produce what particular combinations, and thus, understood in its real significance, gives us the means of obtaining the knowledge how to guide our future births. True, such astrologers there are but few—but are we justified in condemning the science of electricity because there may be very few real electricians? We must not at the same time lose sight of the fact that although there are numberless combinations which must be determined by the psychic vision of the astrologer, there are yet a very large number of them which have been determined.

and put on record by the ancient sages. It is these cases which baffle us when we find that some astrological calculations prove correct while others are quite beside the mark.

II.

The following is from the Introduction to the "Astrological Self-Instructor" by Mr. Suryanarayana Rao, B.A., who says that "there are many considerations which go to prove that astrology like any other science, is the result of tentative methods and not one that has been directly handed down by any supernatural power to man for his benefit":—

The earth moves round as well as the sun on his own axis. All the planets revolve round the sun. The earth receives an infinitely small quantity of the sun's stores of energy and this is sufficient to account for all the terrestrial phenomena. Light brings electricity and magnetism. Gravitation is universal, as also the forces of cohesion, adhesion and chemical attraction. The earth has been formed into its present shape by the action of sun's light and heat and these two great physical agents influence everything on the earth's surface. The oceans are under their influence, as well as the atmosphere and marine currents. Metallic and non-metallic elements are common to the whole solar system. All these have their relative influences, working in a thousand wonderful ways. Man is the result of previous forces working under definite laws, with such local modifications as are found to be necessary in each individual case. *His physical constitution* is under the direct influence of the Sun, because the seed that produced him, the bed in which he was nourished, the food with which he is fed, the clothing he wears, the water he drinks and the air he breathes are the result of the Sun's rays working in Nature in their own inscrutable ways. His brain-cells and his nervous system are greatly affected by the time, place, seed, food, climate and other conditions of his life and his *intellect* is entirely dependent upon the quantity and quality of the brain's cells derived from those sources. Vision would be worse than useless if there had been no light, and so also his other senses, each of which has been made to work under the direct influence of a particular planet. All the

planets shine by light borrowed from the sun, and while retaining something of their power they add something of their own and thus influence mankind in various ways. As the rain drops are affected by the nature of the soil they fall upon and are influenced by its properties, so also the planets, though shining by borrowed light shed influences peculiar to their own. The Moon exercises great influences over us and affects our minds considerably. Lunatics, idiots, and mad men exhibit marked changes on Full Moon and New Moon days. Sick people always pass restless nights before New Moon days, and if they are seriously ill, everyone despairs of their life until they pass the New Moon days. Electricity has been declared to be the great physical agent, which pervades through the whole universe and is the cause of the production of the strangest phenomena. The intellect of man is nothing but a result of the nervous currents, which pass through the human frame, and which, when largely concentrated, form what is called the mind or will-power. Whatever will might be, it cannot remain for any length of time, unaffected by its surroundings, and the food and climate are important factors in the determination of our mind or will-force. Will is therefore under the direct influence of the Sun's light and heat and might have been called into existence by their combined chemical action. The greater the influence of the Sun, the greater is the nervous energy or will-force in man. The Sun is the great fountain-head from which we get all our electricity and magnetism. When he influences us powerfully, we become powerful; when his influence is weak, we become worthless and insignificant men. Electricity is divided into two kinds, positive and negative. Similar electricities repel each other, while opposite electricities attract one another. The preponderance of these electricities in objects in Nature depend upon a thousand circumstances which cannot be detailed here. In Nature, rivers, mountains, lakes, elevated grounds, forests, plants, villages, towns, cities and even individual houses have the power of storing large quantities of positive or negative electricities due to causes working previously there under certain conditions. They have also been shown to possess the power of changing their sides, positive

becoming negative, or *vice versa* ; our tastes, our success, our failure and our energy depend on these electrical currents. Almost inconceivable fractions of the Sun's light and heat are sufficient to produce the greatest perceptible changes in Nature. The atoms of matter are extremely minute and these inconceivable forms of living beings cannot have been produced by any other powers we know of than that generated by the solar energy. A very minute fraction of the solar force is enough to keep the Earth as it is, with all its flora and its fauna, and now we have to conceive an inconceivable fraction of this infinitesimally small fraction of the solar power that is needed to bring an individual into existence and destroy him again for redistribution. The revolutions of the planets round the Sun, their absorbing and reflecting powers of light and heat, the rotation of the Sun on his own axis, the presence or absence of huge dark spots darting forth vast flames of hydrogen gas from the body of the Sun for thousands of miles, and their fall again upon his disk, the passage through space of the Sun at a tremendous velocity along with the other planets, the nearness or distance of the Earth from the Sun in her revolutions round him, all these must account and satisfactorily explain the different historical periods, changes in social life, political convulsions, differences in morality, alterations in taste, intellectual developments, the creation of new species, the extinction of old ones and in fact every other thing for which we find no record in the past or no parallel in the coming future.

Let us now consider in detail how planets affect our *success and failure in life* ?

We know that the Sun is the fountain-head from which we get all our electricity and magnetism. Our nervous currents have been shown to be identified with electrical currents. Electricity is divided into two kinds, positive and negative. Electricities of the same kind repel each other, while electricities of the opposite nature attract each other. In the Universe, there is no object which is not pervaded by this great Physical agent called electricity and in all objects, whether animated or not, we see positive and negative electricities combining together, only with difference

that the quantities of these two kinds of electricities are not equal and constant. There is also another fact in this connection which is worthy of notice and that is, that in nature under certain physical conditions which have not been clearly understood by Scientists, these two kinds of electricity suddenly change their sides and exhibit altogether different phenomena. For the sake of convenience, we must call these objects positively or negatively electrified bodies as positive or negative electricity preponderates in them.

Our nervous currents do nothing more than carry these electrical currents; they are identified with them and thus become the most important factors in the constitution of man. For man could do or say nothing without bringing into play those electrical currents. We shall now show how these affect our prospects in life and make us successful or unsuccessful men. Our constitution is the result of our birth, breeding, climate and food and these must affect the nervous system for good or bad. Apart from the strength of the seed that is sown in the soil, whose nature must also considerably affect its growth or other circumstances like ploughing, watering, manuring, exposure to heat and light must also be taken into consideration in the determination of its produce. In the same manner, the nervous energy of the father and mother, the climate of the place, the effects of food, clothing and various other causes determine the predominance of the positive or negative electricities in the constitution of the child born. Some places have peculiar powers of storing large quantities of positive or negative electricities and this is most remarkably seen in the virtues of certain plants, which, on particular days, acquire this power of storing electrical currents to a very large extent. It is possible that, since plants have special powers of storing up electrical energy under certain conditions, we may, by obeying the laws of nature, add a large quantity of nervous energy, by keeping the plant with us and this increase in electricity must produce the result anticipated, *viz.*, the subjugation of the minds of those with whom we come in contact. Mesmerism gives us a striking proof of such electrical energy. Say a man is positively electrified, with an energy which is represented by \times . He goes to a business

man, whose electrical energy is $2 \times$ and who therefore does not much care for one who has only \times energy in him. The latter to be successful in his competition must increase his virtue and this can only be done by the concentration and development of the Will force, or by such artificial aids which would induce into him a larger quantity of electricity than he possessed before. Now, by bringing in a plant with a certain amount of electrical power, he gets more than $2 \times$ energy and therefore can compete with or subjugate a man, who becomes his inferior in electrical strength. Mesmerism is based on this principle. The contact of such people with others of an inferior power, is always injurious to them, as by the nature of electrical currents, they are always induced from the greater body to the smaller. Positive electricity has greater virtue than the negative and our popularity and successes depend upon our store of these respective electricities. Our success in life may be defined to be the readiness with which a proposal is received by the party to whom it is addressed. If the proposal is not received favorably by the party to whom it is addressed, the person making the proposal meets with what we call a failure. How does this take place? If a positively electrified, person goes to another similarly electrified he is repulsed in his attempt even when backed by the strongest letter of introduction. But if, on the other hand, he goes to one who is negatively electrified, he meets with a ready consent, even should he chance to be a perfect stranger. Those in whose horoscopes the Sun is powerfully situated, command more respect and possess a greater indescribable personal charm which recommends them to success, than those in whose horoscopes the great luminary is badly situated. We have often seen that men with superior intrinsic merits, find no favor in certain localities while others get on well there. The astrologer on consultation predicts that they would have success only in a certain direction and that only with a certain class of people. There are several examples in our daily life, which go to prove beyond doubt the above statement regarding the electrical theory above adduced. There is, what is called, animal magnetism, simply another name

for electricity and this attracts or repels us according as it is positive or negative or north or south. Our tastes, on which hardly depends our success in life, are examples of the same unaccountable influences. When there are so many forces at work, sometimes in union, sometimes against each other, the results from such working will also be favorable or otherwise according to the nature of the powers that produce them. Good planets influence us for good and bad planets for bad and success in life means nothing more than the resultant force of all these agencies working on us. The success and failure of man were keenly watched by the intelligent classes of all times and were associated with the appearances of certain stars, combinations of planets and the motion of the Sun and the Earth. The attention of the reader has been simply drawn to these singular facts which find an easy solution in the electrical theory above adduced, but which become inexplicable by the light of any known principles of human conduct. The Sun, shining through his millions and billions of rays, affects our body, our minds, and our prospects in life. He makes man courageous or timid as he sheds a greater or less influence on the person in question. In entering the human body, the solar rays are not uniform in their effects. In some organs they produce health, while in others they produce disease. The chemical effects of the refracted solar rays are different in different parts and the minutest surface exposed to the solar light has as much power of refraction as the huge sky when we witness the appearance of the rainbow. Herein lies the secret of planetary influences. They fall on the bodies, they affect their color, they change their constitution producing health or disease and make them pursue a certain path, which may or may not be to their advantage. All the influences above explained come directly from the Sun and we are entirely subjected to them. In fact we could not have taken our present existence, if it had not been for his universal influence.

PART VIII.

PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH.

§ XLVI.—DEATH.*

Death is but an event in our eternal life. It is a change in the situation and in the condition of the individual. And as it is a law of nature that every true and spontaneous change is attended with an improvement and advancement in the condition and constitution of the thing which is changed, so is man's death to the outer world an important and valuable change in his situation and condition. In other language, death is simply a birth into a new and more perfect state of existence.

When the body contracts its muscles, and apparently manifests the most agonizing and writhing efforts, it is merely an open indication of joy unspeakable in the inner being and of ecstasy unknown to all but itself. When the countenance is contorted, pain is not experienced, but such is an expression of ineffable delight. And when the body gives forth its last possession, a smile is impressed on the countenance, which of itself is an index of the brightness and resplendant beauty that pervade the spirits' home! In the last moments of outer life the spiritual perceptions are greatly expanded and illuminated and the spirit is thus rendered competent to behold the immense possessions of its second habitation. It is given me to know these things by daily experiencing them and having them verified in the frequent transitions that occur within my being, from the outer to the inner world or from the lower to the higher spheres. I speak therefore from personal experience, which is knowledge fully confirmed by the varying sensations and phenomena that occur.

Death is but a door which opens into new and more perfect existence. It is a triumphal arch through which man's immortal spirit passes at the moment of leaving the outer world to depart

* From Philosophy of Death by Andrew Jackson Davis.

for a higher, a sublimer and a more magnificent country. And there is really nothing more painful or repulsive in the natural process of dying (that which is not induced by disease or accident) than there is in passing into a quiet, pleasant, and dreamless slumber.

The following is how an individual human spirit was observed to undergo the changes consequent on physical death or external dissolution.

The physical organization could no longer subserve the diversified purposes or requirements of the Spiritual Principle. But the various internal organs of the body appeared to resist the withdrawal of the animating soul. The muscular system struggled to retain the element of Motion; the vascular system strove to retain the element of life; the nervous system put forth all its powers to retain the element of sensation, and the cerebral system laboured to retain the principle of Intelligence. The body and the soul, like two friends strongly resisted the various circumstances which rendered the eternal separation imperative and absolute. These internal conflicts gave rise to manifestations of what seemed to be to the material senses, the most thrilling and painful sensations, but these physical manifestations are indications not of pain or unhappiness, but simply the spirit is eternally dissolving its co-partnership with the material organism.

Now the head of the body suddenly became enveloped in a fine-soft-mellow-luminous atmosphere, and as instantly I saw the cerebrum and the cerebellum expand their most interior portions. I saw them discontinue their appropriate galvanic functions; and then I saw that they became highly charged with the vital electricity and vital magnetism which permeate subordinate systems and structures. That is to say, the brain, as a whole, suddenly declared itself to be ten-fold more positive over the lesser portions of the body than it ever was during the period of health. This phenomenon invariably precedes physical dissolution.

Now the process of dying, or of the spirit's departure from the body, was fully commenced. The brain began to attract the elements of electricity, of magnetism, of motion, of life and of

sensation into its various and numerous departments. The head became intensely brilliant and just in the same proportion as the extremities of the organism grew dark and cold, the brain appeared bright and glowing.

Now I saw in the mellow* spiritual atmosphere, which emanated from and encircled her head the indistinct outlines of the formation of another head. This new head unfolded more and more distinctly; and so indescribably compact and intensely brilliant did it become, that I could neither see through it, nor gaze upon it as steadily as I desired. While this spiritual head was being eliminated and organised from out of and above the material head, I saw that the surrounding aroamal atmosphere which had emanated from the material head was in great commotion but as the new head became more distinct and perfect, this brilliant atmosphere gradually disappeared. Those aroamal elements which were in the beginning of the metamorphosis attracted from the system into the brain and thence eliminated in the form of an atmosphere were indissolubly united in accordance with the divine principle of affinity in the universe; which pervades and destinates every particle of matter and developed the spiritual head.

In the identical manner in which the spiritual head was eliminated and unchangeably organized, I saw unfolding in their natural progressive order, the harmonious development of the neck, the shoulders, the breast, the entire spiritual organization. This shows that the innumerable particles of what might be termed unparticled matter, which constitute the man's spiritual principle, are constitutionally endowed with certain electric affinities analogous to an immortal friendship. The innate tendencies which the elements and essences of the soul manifested by uniting and organizing themselves, were the efficient and imminent causes which unfolded and perfected the spiritual organisation. The defects and deformities of the physical body were in the spiritual body almost completely removed. In other words it seemed that those hereditary obstructions and influences were now removed, which originally arrested the full and proper development of the

physical constitution ; and therefore that the spiritual constitution being elevated above those obstructions was enabled to unfold and perfect itself, in accordance with the universal tendencies of all things.

While this spiritual formation was going on, the material body manifested to the outer vision of observing individuals, many symptoms of uneasiness and pain ; but these indications were totally deceptive ; they were wholly caused by the departure of the vital or spiritual forces from the extremities and viscera into the brain and thence into the ascending organism.

The spirit arose at right angles over the head or brain of the deserted body. But immediately previous to the final dissolution of the relationship which had for so many years subsisted between the spiritual and material bodies—I saw—playing energetically between the feet of the elevated spiritual body and the head of the prostrate physical body—a bright stream or current of vital electricity. This shows that what is customarily termed Death is but a Birth of the Spirit from a lower into a higher state, that an inferior body and mode of existence are exchanged for a superior body and corresponding endowments and capabilities of happiness. The correspondence between the birth of a child into this world and the birth of the spirit from the material body into a higher world, is absolute and complete—even to the umbilical cord, which was represented by the thread of vital electricity, which, for a few minutes, subsisted between and connected the two organisms together. A small portion of this vital electrical element returned to the deserted body immediately subsequent to the separation of the umbilical thread and that portion of this element which passed back into the earthly organism, instantly diffused itself through the entire structure and thus prevented immediate decomposition.

As soon as the spirit was wholly disengaged from the tenacious, physical body, the spirit began to breathe the most interior or spiritual portions of the surrounding terrestrial atmosphere. At first it seemed with difficulty that it could breathe the new medium, but in a few seconds, it inhaled and exhaled the spiritual elements of nature with the greatest possible ease and delight.

Now it was in the possession of exterior and physical proportions, which were identical, in every possible particular, improved and beautified—with those proportions which characterized the earthly organisation. That is to say, it possessed a heart, a stomach, a liver, a lungs &c., &c., just as her natural body did previous to its death. This is a wonderful and consoling truth. But the improvements wrought upon and in the spiritual organisation were not so particular and thorough as to destroy or transcend the personality nor did they materially alter the natural appearance or earthly characteristics.

The spirit continued to conform and accustom itself to the new elements and elevating sensations which belong to the inner life. It was philosophically tranquil throughout the entire process and its non-participation, with the different members of the family, in their unrestrained bewailing of its departure from the earth. It understood at a glance that they could only gaze upon the cold and lifeless form which it had but just deserted; and it readily comprehended the fact that it was owing to a want of true knowledge on their parts that they thus vehemently regretted its merely physical death. There is great cause to rejoice at the birth of the spirit from this world into the Inner sphere of Life—yea, it is far more reasonable and appropriate to weep at the majority of marriages which occur in this world, than to lament when man's immortal spirit escapes from its earthly form, to live and unfold in a higher and better country!

As soon as it became accustomed to the new elements which surrounded it, it descended from its elevated position which was immediately over the body, by an effort of the will-power and directly passed out of the room; where it had been prostrated with disease for several weeks. It passed then the adjoining room out of the door and stepped from the house into the atmosphere. It walked in the atmosphere as easily and in the same manner as we tread the earth and ascend an eminence. Immediately upon its emergence from the house, it was joined by two friendly spirits from the spiritual country, and after tenderly recognizing and conversing with each other, the three, in the most graceful man-

ner, began ascending obliquely through the ethereal envelopment of our globe. They walked so naturally and fraternally together that it could scarcely be realized that they trod the air—they seemed to be walking upon the side of a glorious but familiar mountain!

§ XLVII.—HOW WE FEEL WHEN WE DIE.*

The Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research contains a paper of surpassing interest by Mr. F. W. H. Myers. Its title is adopted apparently with the purpose of concealing its interest from the public,—“On Indications of Continued Terrene Knowledge on the part of the Phantasms of the dead.” Under this uncouth phraseology Mr. Meyers conceals some extraordinary experiences of how we feel when we die, and throws some light upon the question as to whether we shall continue to learn and understand all that goes on in the earth when we have quitted this mortal sphere. As it is appointed to all men to die, and as in the whole range of human literature there are hardly any authentic narratives as to how a man feels at the moment of death, the evidence in this paper of Mr. Meyers is extremely interesting. This most remarkable and exceedingly wonderful narrative was contributed by Dr. Wiltse, of the St. Louis Medical and Surgical Journal. Dr. Wiltse is the authority for the statements which follow. When in full possession of all his faculties he appeared to come to the moment of death in the last stage of typhus fever. He discussed with his family the arguments in favour of immortality. His voice failed and his strength weakened, and, as a last effort, he stiffened his legs and lay for four hours as dead, the church-bell being rung for his death. A needle was thrust into various portions of his body from the feet to the hips without having any effect. He was pulseless for a long time, and for nearly half an hour he appeared absolutely dead. While his body was lying in this deathlike trance, his soul was disengaging itself from its earthly tabernacle. Dr. Wiltse, describing his own experience, says that he woke up out of unconscious-

* From the *Review of Reviews*.

ness into a state of conscious existence, and discovered that the soul was in the body but out of it. He says:—

With all the interest of a physician, I beheld the wonders of my bodily anatomy, intimately interwoven with which, even tissue for tissue, was I, the living soul of that dead body. I learned that the epidermis was the outside boundary of the ultimate tissues, so to speak of the soul. I realised my condition and reasoned calmly thus: I have died, as men term death, and yet I am as much a man as ever. I am about to get out of the body. I watched the interesting process of the separation of soul and body. By some power, apparently not my own, the ego was rocked to and fro, laterally, as a cradle is rocked, by which process its connection with the tissues of the body was broken up. After a little time the lateral motion ceased, and along the soles of the feet beginning at the toes, passing rapidly to the heels I felt and heard, as it seemed, the snapping of innumerable small cords. When this was accomplished, I began slowly to retreat from the feet towards the head, as a rubber cord shortens. I remember reaching the hips and saying to myself, "Now, there is no life below the hips." I can recall no memory of passing through the abdomen and chest, but recollect distinctly when my whole self was collected into the head, when I reflected thus: I am all in the head now and I shall soon be free, I passed around the brain as if I were hollow, compressing it and its membranes slightly on all sides towards the centre, and peeped out between the sutures of the skull, emerging like the flattened edges of a bag of membranes. I recollect distinctly how I appeared to myself something like a jelly-fish as regards colour and form. As I emerged from the head I floated up and down and laterally like a soap bubble attached to the bowl of a pipe, until I at last broke loose from the body and fell lightly to the floor where I slowly rose and expanded into the full stature of a man. I seemed to be translucent, of a bluish cast, and perfectly naked. With a painful sense of embarrassment I fled towards the partially opened door to escape the eyes of the ladies whom I was facing as well as others, whom I knew were about me, but upon reaching the door I found my-

self clothed, and satisfied upon that point I turned and faced the company.

As I turned, my left elbow came in contact with the arm of one of two gentlemen, who were standing in the door. To my surprise, his arm passed through mine without apparent resistance the severed parts closing again without pain, as air reunites. I looked quickly up at his face to see if he had noticed the contact, but he gave me no sign,—only stood and gazed toward the couch I had just left. I directed my gaze in the direction of his, and saw my own dead body.

I saw a number of persons sitting and standing about the body, and particularly noticed two women apparently kneeling by my left side, and I knew that they were weeping. I have since learned that they were my wife and my sister, but I had no conception of individuality; wife, sister, or friend were as one to me. I did not remember any conditions of relationship; at least I did not think of any. I could distinguish sex but nothing further. Not one lifted their eyes from my body.

I turned and passed out at the open door, inclining my head and watching where I set my feet as I stepped down on to the porch.

I crossed the porch, descended the steps, walked down the path and into the street. There I stopped and looked about me. I never saw that street more distinctly than I saw it then. I took note of the redness of the soil and of the washes the rain had made. I took a rather pathetic look about me like one who is about to leave his home for a long time. Then I discovered that I had become larger than I was in earth life and congratulated myself thereupon. I was somewhat smaller in the body than I just liked to be, but in the next life, I thought, I am to be as I desired.

My clothes, I noticed, had accommodated themselves to my increased stature, and I fell to wondering where they came from and how they got on to me so quickly and without my knowledge. I examined the fabric and judged it to be of some kind of Scotch material, a good suit, I thought but not handsome; still, neat and

good enough. The coat fits loosely too, and that is well for summer. "How well I feel," I thought, "only a few minutes ago I was horribly sick and distressed. Then came that change, called death, which I have so much dreaded. It is past now, and here am I still a man, alive and thinking, yes, thinking as clearly as ever, and how well I feel."

Dr. Wiltse, in the exuberance of his joy at the thought that he would never be sick again danced in his glee. He then noticed that he could see the back of his coat with the eyes of his old body, while the spiritual eyes were looking forward. He discovered that a small cord like the thread of a spider's web ran from his shoulders back to his body, and was attached to it at the base of the neck in front. Then he went through the air upheld by a pair of hands, which he could feel pressing lightly on his sides. He travelled at a swift but pleasant rate of speed until he arrived at a narrow but well-built roadway inclined upwards, at an angle of 25 deg. It was about as far above the tree-tops as it was below the clouds. The roadway seemed to have no support, but was built of milky quartz and white sand. Feeling very lonely, he looked for a companion, and as a man dies every twenty minutes, he thought he ought not to have to wait long. But he could see no one. At last, when he was beginning to feel very miserable, a face full of ineffable love and tenderness appeared to him. Right in front of him he saw there prodigious rocks blocking the road. A voice spoke to him from a thunder-cloud, saying, "This is the road to the Eternal World; once you pass them you can no more return to the body." There were four entrances, one very dark, the other three led into a cool, quiet and beautiful country. He desired to go in but when he reached the exact centre rock he was suddenly stopped. He became unconscious again; and, when he woke, he was lying in his bed. He awoke to consciousness and soon recovered. He wrote out this narrative eight weeks after his strange experience, but he told the story to those at the bed side as soon as he revived. The doctor, who was at the bed side said that the breath was absolutely extinct so far as could be observed, and every symptom marking the patient as dead was present.

"I supposed at one time that he was actually dead, as fully as I ever supposed any one to be dead." This story proves the consciousness of the apparently dead person that he existed apart from the body with which he was connected by a very fine line, the severance of which would complete the process of dying. The moral of this story seems to be that what we call dying is no more death than the changing of a suit of clothes. The earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved but the soul goes on living just the same as before, only under different circumstances. The ugly part of the story is the comparative indifference with which the liberated soul regarded those whom it loved on earth. This, however is so contrary both to experience and to reason that it may be regarded as exceptional, and due solely to the extreme novelty of the situation, which in this case had not time to pass before the process of dying was rudely interrupted.

PART IX.

MAN AND UNIVERSE.

§ LVIII.—PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS.*

The causes of existence are not only the physical causes known to science, but also the metaphysical causes. According to esoteric teaching, the real cause of all existence remains forever hidden and its first emanations are the most complete abstractions mind can conceive. These abstractions must of necessity be postulated as the cause of the material universe which presents itself to the senses and intellect, and they underlie the secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, which, anthropomorphised, have been worshipped as god and gods by the common herd of every age. It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank. This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when

* From the Secret Doctrine.

we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both Science and Religion jump to this condition of blankness much more quickly than is necessary ; for they ignore the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions. These abstractions become more and more concrete as they approach our plane of existence until finally they phenomenalize in the form of the material universe, by a process of conversion of metaphysics into physics analogous to that by which steam can be condensed into water and the water frozen into ice.

§ XLIX.—INVOLUTION AND EVOLUTION.*

We recognize the manifestation of matter and spirit, as the two poles of being, spirit being involved and matter evolved. These two meet and blend in all created forms. The one gives power and ideal form, the other structure.

The phenomenal existence in space and time is only one member of the equation of existence, the other lies in the subjective world, not in time and space. The pattern after which nature everywhere builds and the laws which determine her mechanism though displayed in matter are derived from the subjective world. There is a coming forth and a receding back into the unseen world, so that manifestation on the phenomenal plane is synonymous with duality. The recognition of this dual law is the reconciliation of Science and Religion. If we call evolution materialistic, we may with equal propriety call involution spritualistic. And neither term can be construed into a reproach. The physical world is thus the embodiment and manifestation of the spiritual in terms of matter, space, time, and motion ; for matter and force being regarded as inseparable and indestructible might nevertheless be resolved back into magnetic substance from whence they came, which would not destroy them, but merely cause them to disappear from the physical planes. They may pass from the active to the passive plane and still exist as invisible, unparticled matter and potential force.

* From the Theosophist, Vol. X.

§ L.—ORIGIN OF MAN.*

Tradition tells us that the human race has been procreated by a single pair (one man and one woman). This does not seem to be an idle theory. It is very easy for us, the Hindus of the present day (*viz.*, the twice-born classes) to trace back our origin to Brahma, the first progenitor; because if not all, at least a majority of the different sections of the upper three classes have a gotra or a tribal name informing them of the first Man from whom the tribe has descended. These progenitors, ten in number, were the sons of Manu who was produced by Brahma. But even now if we trace any tribe or nation back to its origin, we may arrive at the same result, namely, that there was a single pair at its origin, though this enquiry may lead us to far remote times of which the accounts may appear incredible at a first reading. We have shown that there is a time when the evolution of the world takes place, and as a consequence of the above argument, it necessarily follows that there must have been a common progenitor of the race at the beginning of human origin. The highest condition to which by the good quality a soul can be exalted is that of Brahma. As to how Brahma is born subjectively or potentially, one should study Manu on Creation, Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad and Mandukya Upanishad. It is difficult to give here all the information necessary on the subject.

§ LI.—SEPTENARY CONSTITUTION OF MAN.†

The following is the deep analysis of man, made by the Hindu philosophers:—(1) The Material body—*Stoolasariram*. (2) *The Lingasarira*. (3) The Life Principle—*Jiva*. (4) The *Kamarupa* resulting as *Mayavirupa*. (5) The physical Intelligence or Animal Soul—*Manas*. (6) The Spiritual Intelligence—*Buddhi*. (7) The *Atma* or the divine and eternal principle. The Hindu Philosophy of man fits in with the lines of modern science much more snugly than that of either the supernaturalistic religions or the materialistic man of Science. As the successive forms of water

* From Har Narayan's "Vedic Philosophy". † From Olcott.

run up into the invisible world, so Esoteric Hindu philosophy gives us a graduated series of molecular arrangements in the human economy at one end of which is the concrete mass of the *Stoolasarira*, at the other the last sublimation called *Atma* or spirit. Each of these several sets of atoms which compose the seven parts of man occupy the interstitial spaces between the next coarser set of atoms. The atoms of the *Buddhi* pervade the interstices of *Manas*, those of the *Manas*, those of the *Kamarupa*, those of the latter, those of *Jiva*, and those of the *Jiva* those of the *Stoolasarira*. And as each coarser contains the particles of all the finer principles, therefore the *Stoolasarira* is the gross casket within which the several parts of the composite man are contained. Pervading and energising all is the *Atma*, or that incomprehensible final energy which cannot be comprehended by the physical senses.

§ LII.—SPIRIT AND MATTER.*

In the secret philosophy spirit and matter are viewed as graduated. Though *one and the same thing* in their origin, spirit and matter, when once they are on the plane of differentiation, begin each of them their evolutionary progress in contrary directions—Spirit falling gradually into matter and the latter according to its original condition, that of a pure spiritual substance. Both are inseparable, yet ever separated. In polarity, on the physical plane, two like poles will always repel each other, while the negative and the positive are mutually attracted; so do spirit and matter stand to each other—the two poles of the same homogeneous substance, the root-principle of the universe.

Spirit and matter are the two states of the *One*, which is neither spirit nor matter, both being the absolute life, latent. Spirit is the first differentiation of (and in) *space*; and Matter, the first differentiation of spirit. That, which is neither Spirit nor Matter—that is It—the Causeless Cause of spirit and matter, which are the cause of the cosmos. And That we call the One Life or the Intra-Cosmic Breath.

* From the Secret Doctrine.

The following Extracts are also in point:—Says Annie Besant, F.T.S. in several places:—

From the Theosophical stand-point, Spirit and Matter are essentially one, and the universe one living whole from centre to circumference, not a molecule in it, that is not instinct with life.The physical plane may serve the student as a model from which by analogy he may gain an idea of the subdivisions of the spirit-matter of other planes. When a Theosophist speaks of a plane, he means a region throughout which spirit-matter exists, all whose combinations are derived from a particular set of atoms.

Again Mrs. Annie Besant in speaking of the several planes of existence (according to Theosophy, there are seven planes, Physical, Astral, Kamalokic, Mental, Devachanic, Buddhic and Nirvanic in order of succession, Nirvanic being the highest, beyond which Theosophy does not go) says:—

The phenomenal spirit and matter of any universe, are finite in their extent and transitory in their duration, but the roots of spirit and matter are eternal. The energy of the Logos, or the Supreme Lord as whirling motion of inconceivable rapidity “digs holes in space” in this root of matter, and this vortex of life encased in a film of the root of matter is the primary atom; these and their aggregations, spread throughout the universe, from all the subdivisions of spirit-matter of the highest or seventh plane. The sixth plane is formed by some of the countless myriads of these primary atoms setting up a vortex in the coarsest aggregations of their own plane, and this primary atom enwalled with spiral strands of the coarsest combinations of the seventh plane becomes the finest unit of spirit-matter, or atom, of the sixth plane. These sixth-plane atoms and their endless combinations form the sub-divisions of the spirit-matter of the sixth-plane. The sixth-plane atom in its turn, sets up a vortex in the coarsest aggregations of its own plane, and with these coarsest aggregations as a limiting wall, becomes the finest unit of spirit-matter, or atom, of the fifth-plane. Again, these fifth-plane atoms and their combinations form the subdivisions of the spirit-matter of the fifth-plane. The process is repeated to form successively the spirit-matter of the fourth, the third, the second, and the first

planes. These are the seven great regions of the universe, so far as their material constituents are concerned.

§ LIII.—UNIVERSE AND MAN.*

The principal ideas, advanced by teachers of Theosophy are somewhat as follows—briefly stated:—

The Universe has a spiritual instead of a material basis. The various things in Nature which appeal to our physical senses are merely transitory forms assumed by this basic Akasic substance, and can all be dissipated and restored to their primary or invisible condition in harmony with certain laws, as readily as a lump of ice can be dissipated by heat and evaporation. The Universe is one vast unit, all its parts being closely and inseparably connected with the whole; Ultimate Spirit or Parabrahm, being the root of all, and Essential substance or Mulaprakriti, its negative aspect, opposite pole, or first differentiation, from which, by gradual changes, the appearance which we call matter is formed. The Universe is also subject to cyclic law, resulting in immense periods of alternate rest and activity, which may be very faintly illustrated by our day and night.

Man also in his inmost nature is a spiritual being—a spark or offshoot from the great primal source of all, and this spark is destined for ultimate re-union with its source. He uses from time to time, for the unfoldment of his powers, a physical body, the elements of which have been gradually built up, by slow processes of evolution through the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom, until they have become fitted to form parts of that temple designed for the indwelling spirit. Thus all mankind are, by necessity of their origin, when viewed spiritually, one great brotherhood, whether the fact be recognized by them or not.

The human being, on this earth, may be said to consist of seven constituent parts, viz,—1st, *Spirit or Atma*—the illuminat-

* From the Theosophist Vol. XIX. "This article consists mainly of gleanings—condensed and modified—from Mrs. Besant's Manuals; so but little originality is claimed for it. It is now published by request, with the hope that it may be useful as an elementary treatise—Ed."

ing spark or ray from the Divine; 2nd, *Spiritual soul or Buddhi*—the highest discriminating principle in man, one remove from pure spirit; 3rd, *Human soul or Mind, called Manas*—a radiation from the Universal Mind. This in conjunction with the two higher principles previously named, constitutes the reincarnating ego—the Individuality of Man. But Manas is dual in its nature and in order to come into relation with matter, it casts its reflection upon the finer portion of the inner body and as a result we have, 4th, *The Animal Soul or Kama* illuminated by the Manasic reflection, making what is called Kama Manas; Kama being the seat and totality of the purely animal instincts, passions and sensations to which the Manasic radiation adds *reason*, and a higher grade of memory than the lower animals possess, together with a consciousness of distinct personality.

Thus Mind or Manas in its upper aspect touches spirit, while its lower aspect touches refined matter, so as to enable the body to become the vehicle of the soul's manifestation on earth; the higher Manas telegraphs its messages of guidance to the Animal-Man, while the lower Manas, in its turn telegraphs the finer portions or essence of its earthly sensations, experience and knowledge, up to the re-incarnating ego, for registration and future use. Next we have 5th, *Prana, the vitality or Life-principle* and 6th, *Astral body*, both of which are necessary as connecting links in the chain of communication with 7th, *The outer body*, and through it with the material world around us; for Manas cannot touch the gross physical body. The astral body or Etheric Double is the model which attracts to itself the particles composing the material form or gross body, which are moulded through the agency of vitality, or the life-principle; and when this latter departs, the outer body becomes a mere lump of earth, and the Astral body soon disintegrates along with the physical.

Atma, Buddhi and Manas are termed the higher triad, the other four—the body, its Ethereal double, Prana and Kama-Manas—the Lower quaternary.

Each individual atom which enters into the cells and tissues of the physical body has its separate life which it contributes to

help from this body—the grand unit of the higher order. Though these little atoms which have been styled microbes, are continually changing, the human form remains permanent, for it existed before the physical structure was built. As Mrs. Besant says in *Death and after*:—

“The death of the physical body occurs when the withdrawal of the controlling life-energy leaves the microbes to go their own way and these many lives, no longer co-ordinated, scatter from each other and scatter the particles of the cells of the man of dust.”

The Linga Sharira or Etheric Double is the contact body wherein are located the centres of sensation, through the agency of which we come in touch with material things. The bullet or the knife does not destroy this Etheric or Astral body, yet the intense action of the mind of a mother, caused by some sudden shock, may be sufficient to wither some portion of this invisible model and as a result a child may be born minus an arm or a leg. Thought is the primal power which builds forms, and which can also mar them. Mrs. Besant, in speaking of the great ocean of life in which we and all living things are immersed, and of which we constantly partake compares each individual living organism to a sponge; and the infinite sea of Jiva or Life-force to the ocean in which the sponge is immersed, and by which its every pore is filled, and says “we may think of the ocean outside the sponge, or of the part of the ocean which is appropriated by the sponge. Theosophy distinguishes this appropriated life under the name of Prana”.

Kama may be defined as that principle in us which includes all our lower appetites, passions, emotions, desires and instincts. Hatred, envy, pride and jealousy as well as the lower aspect of love or lust come under this head. It gives the desire for physical existence, for the experience of animal sensations and purely material pleasures. This is the principle which anchors us to earth-life. It is by no means the human body which is the grossest factor in the constitution of man, but this middle principle or Kama, which is the real animal centre. The body is but the irresponsible channel through which the beast, the human animal

in us, acts out its life. Our consciousness may function on separate planes of our being. It may for a time be limited to physical sensations which have their centres in the Astral body, again it may be wholly occupied on the Kamic plane, as in the heat of passion or the excitement of battle, when slight wounds pass entirely unnoticed. To give free action to the purely Manasic or intuitive plane of consciousness, the entire animal nature must be completely stilled.

The quarternary constitutes the personality of the man, Kama Manas being its leading principle, the one that makes us recognize our own selfhood as distinct from that of others. This lower Manas when swayed by material sensations and emotions, fails to recognise the unity underlying the great whole, and turns a deaf ear to that inner voice which speaks for harmony.

It is well to regard Manas as the Thinker, the re-incarnating ego, the real individual, now reaping its harvest of earthly experiences in a temporary physical body. When we can thoroughly realise that the body is in no sense this Thinker, but only its useful machine; and that we can enjoy full individual consciousness and power of thought when entirely out of this body, and that many now living in earth-life do enjoy this privilege, we are in a condition to control the body better. We can then view it as a garment which we usually wear for protection, but which we can also lay aside and view as being entirely separate from our real self.

The animal man differs from its purely animal relatives, the beasts, according "to the influence exerted over it by the Thinker, who has come to train and ennoble it." Take away the Thinker and you have the animal—whether its form be human or otherwise.

The Thinker imparts to the animal-man such of its own capacities as this lower man by virtue of his organisation, is able to manifest and these capacities working in and through the human brain, are recognized by us as the brain-mind, lower mind or lower Manas.

"In the West, the development of this brain mind is regarded as marking the distinction in ordinary parlance between the brute

and the human being. That which the Theosophist looks on as merely the lower or brain-mind is considered by the average Westerner to be the mind itself; hence there is often much confusion of thought between the Theosophist and the non-Theosophist. We are taught that "the Thinker, striving to reach and influence the animal-man, sends out a ray that plays on and in the brain, and that through the brain are manifested so much of the mental powers as that brain, by its configuration, by the extent of its convolutions and other physical qualities, is able to appropriate or translate. This ray sets the molecules of the brain nerve-cells vibrating, as a ray of light sets in motion the molecules of the retinal nerve-cells, and so gives rise to consciousness on the physical plane. Reason, memory, will, ideation, as these faculties are known to us, are manifested when the brain is in full activity. All these are the outcome of the ray sent forth by the Thinker, modified by the material condition through which it must work." "These conditions," so plainly stated by Mrs. Besant, "include healthy nerve-cells with a properly balanced development of their respective groups, and a full supply of blood containing nutritive matter that can be assimilated by the cells, so as to supply their waste. If these conditions or any of them are absent, the brain cannot function, and thought processes can no more be carried out through such a brain than a melody can be produced from a violin without strings or an organ with a broken bellows. The brain no more originates the thought than the organ originates the melody; in both cases there is a player working through the instrument. But the power of the player to manifest himself in thought or in melody is limited by the capacities of the instrument."

Let this difference between the Thinker and the animal-man be clearly viewed.

"The Thinker re-incarnates, the animal-man does not." The animal-man is born and the true man or the Thinker is gradually linked to him. Through the brain of the animal-man the true man works; at one time in one body, again in another.

"The question 'why do I not remember my past lives' is based on a misconception. 'I'—as the true 'I'—do remember;

but the animal-man not yet in full responsive union with his true higher self, cannot remember a past in which his functioning in his present personality had no share. Brain-memory can contain only a record of the events in which that special brain has been concerned, but as the true self becomes increasingly able to affect its bodily habitation, glimpses of past incarnations will flash on the lower consciousness and these will at length become less like flashes and more like permanent visions, until finally the past is recognised as 'mine' by the continuous thread of memory that gives the feeling of individuality. Then the present incarnation is recognised as being merely the last garment in which the self has clothed itself."

"Death consists indeed in a repeated process of unsheathing. The immortal part of man shakes off from itself one after another its outer casings and emerging therefrom as the butterfly from its chrysalis, it passes into a higher state of consciousness. When the fact that this escape from the body and this dwelling of the conscious entity either in the Astral Double or in a yet more ethereal Mind-body can be effected during birth-life, is thoroughly realised, man may become familiar with the excarnated condition and if the life has been a noble one, death will finally be shorn of the last vestige of terror. One cannot travel far from his body in his Astral Double, but if he learns to use his Thought-body, he is no longer chained to the neighbourhood of his material body and realizes in full consciousness the independence of the spiritual intelligence. Why should a man who has thus repeatedly shed his body and his Astral Double and has found the processes result not in unconsciousness but in a vastly extended freedom and vividness of life, why, I say, should he fear the final casting away of his fetters and the freeing of his immortal self?"

§ LIV.—MOTHER LOTUS.*

The Lotus or Padma is a very ancient and favorite simile for the cosmos itself and also for man. The Lotus seed contains within itself a perfect miniature of the future plant, which typifies the fact that the spiritual prototypes of all things exist in the immaterial world before those things become materialized on Earth. Further the Lotus plant grows up through the water, having its root in the mud and spreading its flower in the air above. The Lotus thus typifies the life of man and also that of the cosmos; for the Secret Doctrine teaches that the elements of both are the same, and that both are developing in the same direction. The root of the Lotus sunk in the mud represents material life, the stalk passing up through the water typifies existence in the Astral world, and the flower floating on the water and opening to the sky is emblematical of spiritual being.

§ LV.—PLANES.†

The phenomenal spirit and matter of any universe are finite in their extent and transitory in their duration, but the roots of spirit and matter are eternal. The energy of the Logos or the Supreme Lord as whirling motion of inconceivable rapidity "digs holes in space" in this root of matter, and this vortex of life encased in a film of the root of matter is the primary atom; these and their aggregations spread throughout the universe, form all the subdivisions of spirit-matter of the highest or seventh-plane. The sixth-plane is formed by some of the countless myriads of these primary atoms setting up a vortex in the coarsest aggregations of their own plane, and this primary atom enwalled with spiral strands of the coarsest combinations of the seventh-plane becomes the finest unit of spirit-matter or atom of the sixth-plane. These sixth-plane atoms and their endless combinations form the subdivisions of the spirit-matter of the sixth-plane. The sixth-plane atom in its turn, sets up a vortex in the coarsest aggrega-

* From the Secret Doctrine. † From Annie Besant's *Ancient Wisdom*.

tions of its own plane, and with these coarsest aggregations as a limiting wall, becomes the finest unit of spirit-matter or atom of the fifth-plane. Again these fifth-plane atoms and their combinations form the subdivisions of the spirit-matter of the fifth-plane. The process is repeated to form successively the spirit-matter of the fourth, the third, the second, and the first-planes. These are the seven great regions of the universe, so far as their material constituents are concerned.

NOTE—The word *spirit-matter* is used designedly. The word implies the fact that there is no such thing as dead-matter. All matter is living; the tiniest particles are lives. Science speaks truly in affirming ‘no force without matter, no matter without force.’ They are wedded together in an indissoluble marriage throughout the ages of the life of a universe and none can wrench them apart. Matter is form, and there is no form which does not express a life; spirit is life and there is no life that is not limited by a form.

§ LVI.—UNIVERSE.*

The Universe is two-fold, since it is composed of the two principles—Purusha and Prakriti or Spirit and Matter. These two principles are variously denominated in different religions and sub-religions. They are called Chit and Achit by some, motion and non-motion by some others, Atma and non-atma by some and so on. But all of them convey the same idea. Purusha is so-called, since, according to the Aitreya Upanishad, it (from Puri-Sayanam) resides in the (Puri) City of Prakriti or Matter; and Prakriti is that which is acted upon, *viz.*, by Purusha. Hence these two represent the male and female principles of the Universe.

Parabrahm (God) has two aspects, the imperishable and the perishable. The imperishable is its true nature; but the perishable is this Universe. On this perishable aspect of Parabrahm, the Vishnu Purana says:—

“Brahm, in its totality, has essentially the aspect of Prakriti.”

* From the Theosophic Thinker.

both manifested and unmanifested (Mulaprakriti) and also the aspect of Spirit (Purusha) and the aspect of Kala (time). Purusha is the leading aspect of the Supreme Brahm. The next is a two-fold aspect—Prakriti, both manifested and unmanifested, and (Kala) time is the last.”

From these passages it is clear that the Universe has its two stages of *Avyakta* and *Vyakta*, viz., its noumenal condition, when it is in an unmanifested state and the phenomenal condition when it manifests itself. The Ancient Hindu writers maintained that the Universe is ever oscillating alternately between manifestation and non-manifestation. The manifested stage they termed *Maha-Manvantara* or *Kalpa*, while the unmanifested was dubbed with the title of *Pralaya*, when all nature goes to repose for a fresh struggle and work. But the Vishnu Purana terms this unmanifested stage *Mahavishnu* or *Narayana* and the manifested, *Brahma*. H. P. Blavatsky states that the former is the unmanifested Logos and the latter is the manifested Logos. The former may be termed *Purusha Prakriti* stage. When these two are in their *Laya* state (or state of absorption), while the latter may be styled the stage of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, differentiated. *Narayana* is represented prior to creation to be merely resting in a natatory position in the waters of space and it is only at the commencement of a period of creation that *Brahma* rises from his navel and begins to create. So that we clearly understand from this allegory that *Narayana* stands for the sleeping aspect of the universe in its unmanifested stage, while *Brahma* stands for the active period of creation.

It is only when we enter into the question whether *Purusha* and *Prakriti* are principles like *Brahm* or the ephemeral aspects of the non-dual Principle that there arises “the apple of discord” between the different religious sects of Southern India. When *Pralaya* sets in, are these two merged into the bosom of *Parabrahm*, as one or do they yet preserve a distinct individuality of their own? The *Advaitins* contend that there is a *Sayujya* or *Laya* state when nought else is but the one principle. They say that this universe of dualities is merged as one into its noumenon of *Parabrahm* and that it is not real, since it ever changes name

and form. Dwaitins contend that the two Principles, Purusha and Prakriti are as real as Parabrahm and are co-eternal with it. But Vishishtadwaitins take a middling course. According to the illustration given by H. P. Blavatsky, shall we take Oxygen and Hydrogen, when they combine together as water, to be yet existing as two in the state of solution or as one? Water can be said to be one in its liquid condition or in esse, but to be two in posse, since it can again be decomposed into two. This is merely a metaphysical difficulty which it is not worth our while to be ever fighting about as the three sects in Southern India are always doing. Even these difficulties can be set at rest by holding that they are only different standpoints from which each observer looks at the question, while they tend towards the same end. They present but the three aspects of the one truth, wherein the universe is first in its latent state, secondly in that transition stage when the latent becomes patent, and thirdly, in its patent state.

§ LVII.—SPACE.*

(OR LOKAS OR TALAS.)

The seven Lokas, such as Bhu, Bhuvar, &c., and the seven Talas—Atala, Vitala, &c., are not the visible worlds of our present vision; but are different states, whether of consciousness or of matter; for Hindu philosophy asserts that the one consciousness or cosmic ideation manifests itself in different states of consciousness through different states of matter. These different states of matter are not the same as the solid, liquid and gaseous states of modern science, since these latter pertain to our physical earth only; but include in it, as one, the physical with all its sub-divisions.

Hindu philosophy postulates the existence of one primordial matter, called Mulaprakriti. It is the one homogeneous matter, out of which all other states of matter producing differentiations have arisen. It is not even the protyle posited by Professor

* From the Thinker, Vol. II.

Crookes, since according to him, it is the homogeneous substance underlying the physical world only. But as the Hindu philosophy holds to the existence of higher and higher states of matter, than the physical, Mulaprakriti can be called the primordial protyle. When in our progress we ascend to higher heights of matter we find that what was considered Protyle in a certain stage and of the physical world, becomes differentiated; for then only is progress possible. The fact is that even Mulaprakriti, which the Hindus consider as the primordial protyle, becomes differentiated in a still higher evolution; therefore Mulaprakriti is primordial in a relative sense only and is protyle for all the evolution to come in this Maha-Kalpa.

Turning to the differentiation of the original matter, we find it evolves to seven stages or planes of manifestation, each grosser than the preceding one, till the last stage of density, *viz.*, our present stage is reached. Again this septenary division has in itself endless septenary sub-divisions which are too difficult to be mentioned. It should not be supposed that this septenary division is the only possible division existing in the cosmos. Both the septenary and the triune divisions are only different ways of dividing the universe; the triune being included in the septenary, which alone is the occult and comprehensive division of the cosmos.

Now about the nature of these universes. As already stated, the whole universe is nothing but a compound of Purusha and Prakriti or Spirit and Matter. It should not be supposed that spirit and matter are two entirely different principles. They are, according to Vishnu Purana, but two aspects of one and the same principle.

Even this physical universe, when looked at from the plane of the mind, is one vast mass of intelligence, but is in itself Jada or inert. So carrying this conception still higher to the seven subtle universes, a person finds when he ascends to the highest plane that the whole space is nothing but one intelligence of the highest order. So that what we find is that the intelligence exhibited on the highest or the seventh-plane, is far superior to that on lower planes. And why? Because of the differentiation of

matter in each of the seven planes. Thus therefore we find that intelligence and inertness are the two poles of the universe, whether we take into consideration one alone or the seven, all together. Therefore all the seven worlds can be treated of either in the light of matter or in the light of spirit. It is only when both the views are had, that we can understand the phenomena completely.

Now to the view of the worlds or space from the standpoint of matter, all the Lokas or worlds are coexistent in space. The matter of one world is so attenuated as to pass through the matter of its next lower world since the former is so subtle as to pass through the molecules of the latter. Amongst these seven Lokas, the higher three, viz., Jano, Tapo, and Satya are said to be Arupa or without form. The first three are Rupa or with form. The middle one serves as their connecting link being Rupa-Arupa. With every Kalpa all the creations of form are destroyed in the three worlds; when they do reside in the fourth world, untrammelled by the matter of the three lower Lokas, to reanimate again in the next Kalpa for fresh progress.

Bhu or the physical world extends as far as it is illuminated by the rays of the sun and moon. Wherever earthy substance exists, which may be traversed by the feet, that constitutes the sphere of the earth. Bhuvanloka is that region which extends from the earth to the sun. If a sphere be described with a line joining the sun and the earth as the radius, then in this space move the atoms of Bhuvan space. Suvarloka is that region comprised by a sphere made with its radius extending from the sun to Druva, the polar star. Then beyond Suvarloka are Mahar, Jano, Tapo, and Satya Lokas, which are said to be formless. From the fact that Bhu, Bhuvan and Suvar are described to include a space which recur in all the three, it is clear that they should refer merely to planes of matter, one within another, in space. The books merely describe the extreme limits to which matter of one state can pervade and act in space. It is these worlds that form the region of the consequences of Karmas, they being enacted on the land of Bharata. Then as to the denizens of these Lokas. In

Bhuvar Loka are said to live Yakshas, Rakshasas and other elementals, which are of a lower order. In that Loka are also stated to live Siddhas and other Munis since it is the seat also of developed men who have thrown off the trammels of matter. The third is the region of pure elementals such as Vasus, Rudras, Adityas as well as still highly developed human beings. In the fourth Loka, such Rishis, as Bhṛigu and others live, giving astral forms to all creation, humanity included. Janoloka is said to be tenanted by such saints as Sanaka and others who contain in themselves the egos of all humanity which incarnate in the bodies prepared for them. They are also the perfected saints. Vairajas do live in the sixth world. They are said to be the sons of Viraj or Brahma. They are the same as Manus. They are those who have reached the Atma-Buddhi state or Dharmakaya state. Beyond these is the seventh state or the Loka of Brahma, that Loka which contains in itself all the other Lokas.

The matter that we know of in our present state obeys certain laws. It is perceived by our senses and has form or dimensions, color, &c. Its dimensions are length, breadth and height. The matter of Bhuvar Loka has a fourth dimension called "Throughth." It means permeability. Our organs of sight are able to respond to light vibrations which lie between two means. Beyond a certain maximum and minimum vibrations, our visual organs do not pass. Likewise with sound and others. Our tympanum is not able to pass beyond certain limits when the vibrations of sound get too weak or too strong, our powers of audition are too feeble to synchronise to and hence sense them. Not that the sound vibrations are destroyed; but they are in the ether, and our ears are not so delicate as to sense them. All these mean that if there exist in man subtle organs of perception, they will render men susceptible to the higher and subtle impressions. And this is exactly what the Hindu philosophy says. It says that there is a subtle or Linga Sarira in man which increases man's powers of perception and makes him perceive objects which no microscope or other physical instruments will reveal.

Then, as to the Talas. They are also to be stated as seven.

They are generally given as Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talatala, Mahatata, Rasatala and Patala.

All the universes have got their two aspects of positive and negative. And the Talas do merely represent one of these aspects. This can be better understood only when they are explained from the standpoint of consciousness. It should not be supposed that the states are fourteen, but only seven ; each of the different states of matter having its dual aspect. When our Puranas state that there are seven higher and seven lower worlds, they refer merely to states and not to locality. Each world has its higher and lower aspects.

Corresponding to these seven Lokas are the seven elements. Though in each Loka there are seven elements, one element preponderates in one plane in order to give its distinct impress to that plane. Prithvi (earth), Ap (water), Agni, Vayu, Akas, Bhutadi (or Ahankara) and Mahat—these are the seven elements corresponding to the seven Lokas beginning with Bhu. This world consisting of the seven Lokas and Talas is said to be the Mundane Egg ; and above and below it are said to be the seven Avaranas or envelopes which together constitute the whole universe. Of course, these seven envelopes are not the seven elements that we see now, but are the subtler ones.

The Lokas and Talas may also be interpreted metaphysically as septenary states of consciousness.

Unless this main conception of the Hindus that space, as we know it, is but a compound of different states of consciousness or density of matter which constitute the different planes or Lokas of the world, one permeating another, and that Lokas and Talas are but aspects of the same space, is properly grasped, all our Hindu writings containing references to the same will be nothing but fairy tales to them.

§ LVIII.—HINDU CHRONOLOGY.*

The four ages of the Hindu Chronology contain a far more philosophical idea than appears on the surface. It defines them according to both the psychological or mental and the physical states of man during their period. Crita-Yug, the golden age, the age of joy, or spiritual innocence of man ; Treta-Yug, the age of silver, or that of fire—the period of supremacy of man and of giants and of the sons of God ; Dwapara-Yug, the age of bronze—a mixture already of purity and impurity (spirit and matter) the age of doubt ; and at last our own, the Kali-yug or age of iron, of darkness, misery and sorrow. In this age, Vishnu had to incarnate himself in Krishna, in order to save humanity from the goddess Kali, consort of Siva, the all-annihilating—the goddess of death, destruction and human misery. Kali is the best emblem to represent the fall of man ; the falling of spirit into the degradation of matter, with all its terrific results. We have to rid ourselves of Kali before we can ever reach Moksha or Nirvana, the abode of blessed Peace and Spirit.

§ LIX.—SEA-GIRT CONTINENT.†

The ancient Hindus knew more of this earth than what is known at present. The Shastras say that the known earth (including Asia, Europe, Africa and America) is but a small fraction of the actual extent of this globe and that the four continents known to us comprise an insignificant portion of what is known as Bharatavarsha. The Earth according to the Hindus occupies a circle in space whose diameter is 50 crores of Yojans (1 Yojan = 8 miles). The Earth is divided into seven large tracts of land, each of which is surrounded by an ocean. The names of these tracts are Jumbhu, Plakha, Shalmali, Kusha, Krouncha, Shak, and Pushkara. The first piece of land is surrounded by Lavan Samudra (salt ocean) ; the second by Ikshu Samudra, the third by Sura, the fourth by Sarpi, the fifth by Dadhi, the Sixth by Dugdha and

* From Isis Unveiled, Vol. II. † From the Light of the East, Vol. V.

the seventh by Jala. The central tract or globe is subdivided into nine parts by the Varsha mountains; for this reason each of the nine parts is called a Varsha. The Southernmost tract of the Jambu Dwipa is termed Bharatavarsha. All these Varshas are divided from one another by mountains and seas. Bharatavarsha is again divided into nine Dwipas (tracts of land) and one of these tracts of land is called Sagara Samvrita Dwipa, the sea-girt continent. This latter continent is 1000 Yojans, *i.e.*, about 9000 miles in diameter. The diameter of the known earth as calculated by the Europeans is about the same. The nine tracts of land into which Bharatavarsha is divided is separated from one another by mountains and oceans. The divisions of Bharatavarsha are:—(a) Indra Dwipa, (b) Kaseruman, (c) Tanra barna, (d) Gavasthiman, (e) Nag Dwipa, (f) Soumma, (g) Gandharva, (h) Baruna and (i) Sagara Samvrita Dwipa.

It is very curious to note that the extent of the Sagara Samvrita Dwipa almost exactly coincides with the extent of the world as known to the moderns. It has been mentioned before that the sea-girt continent is one thousand yojans in diameter, which is equivalent to 9091 miles. The distance between the extreme north of Greenland and Cape Horn is only 131 degrees, *i.e.*, 9104 miles.

According to the Hindus the eastern part of the sea-girt continent was inhabited by the Kiratas; the western part by the Javanas, and the middle portion by the Hindus. The Matsa Puran definitely says that all the extremities of the sea-girt continent were inhabited by the Mlechas and only the middle portion by the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. From this it would appear that the habitation of the ancient Hindus far exceeded in extent the area inhabited by the modern Hindus. The word Javanas frequently occurs in the Puranas and it seems that this word includes every other nation except the ancient Hindus. Another point that should be remembered in this connection is that the vast stretch of the Atlantic Ocean which flows between the old world and the new was formerly a continent which joined both of them, and such is the opinion of many modern geologists. The geography of the Puranas cannot be properly under-

stood without taking into consideration one or two submerged continents. That the Atlantic continent is one of them, there is not the least shadow of doubt. The wide view which the Shastras take of the earth is not so improbable as may appear at first sight. Who can vouchsafe that there do not exist other continents on this earth than the four well-known continents? The geography of the earth at the time of Mahabharata is likely to bear very little resemblance with the geography of the present time. According to the statements in the Puranas, the world to us is an insignificant part of the great world, which lies beyond the pale of our knowledge. There are seven such earths as we have shown before, each surrounded by an ocean belt. Whether the materials by which all these earths are composed are the same or whether they are subject to the same laws of gravitation is not known to us. A little difference in the degree of gravitation will produce quite a different race varying from us in essential characteristics. The changes in the physical body of animals will be immense by a mere change in the degree of gravitation.

The earth according to the ancient Hindus is therefore a vast stretch of land and water extending far beyond the limits of the four continents. Its diameter is about 400 crores of miles and it stretches far beyond the north and the south poles. Even now we know very little of this earth though we have discovered another continent, America. The human intellect is trying to extend its knowledge beyond the starry spheres but there are many things under our feet of which it is quite ignorant. The future will reveal what is closed at present and humanity will at last smile at its own ignorance.

§ LX.—SUN DRAWN BY HORSES.*

The sun is depicted as drawn by seven horses, and by one horse with seven heads:—the former referring to his seven planets, the latter to their one common origin from the One Cosmic Element. This One Element is called figuratively *Fire*.

* From the Secret Doctrine.

§ LXI.—DWIPAS.*

Dwipas can be examined either geographically or metaphysically. Metaphysically, the division of Dwipas in the Swayambhu period is but a general formula for the understanding of the different divisions of the Dwipas in the different rounds or periods. If we know the general division of Dwipas in the First Round, it will make us understand the divisions of Dwipas obtaining in the other Round, also, as they are simply analogous. Looking at the Geographical aspect of this division of Swayambhu Manu period, the seven Dwipas refer to several localities, first of all to our planetary chain, Jambu Dwipa alone representing our globe, the six others are (to us) invisible companion globes of this earth. This is shown by the very nature of the allegorical and symbolic descriptions. Jambu Dwipa is in the centre of all these (the so-called insular) continents, and is surrounded by a sea of salt water whereas Plaksha, &c., are surrounded severally by great seas of sugar-cane juice, &c., and such like metaphorical names. These seas represent nothing but the Milky Way and the various congeries of Nebulæ.

Now, therefore, when the geographical description of these Dwipas is taken into consideration as obtaining in the first Round, what do these Dwipas signify? They stand for this earth of ours remaining in different states of matter. All the Dwipas, except Jambu Dwipa, do stand for those earths which were or are in existence in a very subtle state unperceived by our present vision. Hence it is said that they are stated to be the invisible companions of our present earth—invisible to our present eyes, but visible to our subtle ones when developed. All these subtle invisible companions of our earth are even now co-existent with it, do interpenetrate it. When the seas are stated to surround these Dwipas in higher states of matter, all that we mean is that some kinds of gaseous subtle particles of watery matter surround them in their subtle states just as physical water surrounds this physical earth.

* From the Theosophic Thinker, Vols. II and III.

Then, turning to the second description of Dwipas in this Round of ours, what does it refer to? Each of these is not strictly a continent in the modern sense of the word, but each name from Jambu down to Pushkara, refers to the geographical names given (firstly) to the dry lands covering the face of the whole earth during the period of a Root-race in general; and (secondly) to what remained of these after a geological (Race) Pralaya as Jambu for instance, and (thirdly) to those localities which will enter after the future cataclysms into the formation of new universal continents, peninsulas or Dwipas—each continent being, in one sense, a greater or smaller region of dry land surrounded with water. Dwipas here mean that they are the beds of dry earth surrounded by water upon which each Root-Race humanity incarnates and fulfils its allotted mission, parts of which beds surviving after a Pralaya, or the destruction of a Root-Race, and when another Root-Race or bed of the earth springs up afresh—four Root-Races have passed away, and hence four Dwipas or beds of earth welled up from the ocean depths and returned whence they came. We are now in the 5th Root-Race tenating the regions of Jambu Dwipa. Two more Root-Races have to spring up on this earth of ours, and hence require two more beds of earth to bubble up from the earth's surface underneath the waters. Excluding the Dwipas, Jambu, Saka and Pushkara which constitute the regions for the 5th, 6th and 7th Races of humanity, we have to identify the other Dwipas which flourished in past times and have passed away. In these Dwipas, there are seven rivers and seven mountains in them. All these refer to the seven Sub-Races which humanity has to undergo.

If these Dwipas are meant to apply to the different portions of the earth that bulged out of the ocean to form the bed on which each Root-Race humanity flourished, then we can identify them with the different portions of the gross earth. In the Secret Doctrine it is stated that the First Race flourished near the North Pole; the Second Race on the beds of the Antarctic Ocean, the relics of which are found in the Islands of Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen; the Third Race or Linurious flourishing on the beds of

the Pacific Ocean, the remnants being Australia &c.; the Fourth Race on the beds of the Atlantic Ocean. Jumbu Dwipa, that portion of the earth on which present Race flourishes is mainly in the centre of the earth and nearabouts is clear. Round Jambu Dwipa is stated to be Plaksha Dwipa where the Fourth Race men lived. The Atlantic Ocean encircling mainly this earth of ours, Pushkara is said to be round this our Jumbu Dwipa. Then comes the Pacific Ocean, on the beds of which stood Salmali Dwipa, where the Third Race humanity lived. Round this is Kusa Dwipa where the Second Race abode. Krauncha Dwipa, which comes next, encircling Kusa, was tenanted by the first Race men. The Sixth Race humanity will incarnate North of where the First Race men were. Beyond these, at the North Pole will incarnate the Seventh Race humanity in seat, called by our Puranic writers, Pushkara.

The names of these Dwipas are supposed to have been given from some objects in them. These Dwipas are named after some trees or others growing in them since probably they possess some mysterious properties which give the tinge to the humanity that incarnates in them.

The different kinds of oceans which are seven in number are metaphorical names representing nothing but the Milky Way and the various congeries of Nebulæ. Prior to the earth becoming fit for the First Race, Astral men to tenant it, it should have been at first like Jala, or fresh water. Then, through the process of churning, it should have become Milky and then condensed itself into the appearance of curds, or the icy state of water which we see in the North. Then, the butter stage is reached. As heated butter becomes red in the ghee state, it reaches the state of the redness of wine. Then, water reaches the color of sugar-cane Juice, till it becomes the saltish water of the color we now see it to be.

§ LXII.—VARSHAS AND KHANDAS.*

Having done with the Dwipas, let us now deal with the Varshas into which the Dwipas are divided. In doing so, we shall treat of the Varshas into which Jambu Dwipa is divided. It must not be supposed that all the divisions of the earth now existing are comprised in Jambu Dwipa, since some portions of the former Dwipas too now survive and form portions of the present Dwipa. So that Jambu Dwipa, if construed literally, will apply to those portions of the earth only which issued out of the waters to form the seat for the Fifth Root-Race to tenant in.

The term Varshas has been applied to the subdivisions of Jambu Dwipa, since it is stated in the Puranas, that all the subdivisions of Jambu Dwipa are watered by the four streams arising from Brahma's abode at the top of Meru. In the middle of Jambu Dwipa stands the Mount Meru, like the pericarp of a lotus. On this Mount is stated to be Brahma's abode and from there branch out 4 Rivers, the Sita, the Alakananda, the Chakshu and the Bhadra. From the feet of Trivikrama or Vishnu, who strode the three worlds with his three steps, arose the Heavenly Ganges which passing through the regions of Dhruva and the Sapta Rishis and lunar orb, came through Akas down to Brahma's abode, where it ramified itself into the four Rivers named above. These four Rivers flowing in the opposite directions of Meru through the Varshas, or countries lying on the four sides of it are said to empty themselves in the oceans. Amongst these, the Sita flows eastward, the Alakananda flows to the South, the Chakshu flows to the West and the Bhadra to the North.

What does Meru mean ?

Applied to the Cosmos, it means nothing more than that it is the central axis of the whole Cosmos passing in its way through the diameter of the earth. Hence, when this term is applied to the earth it is nothing more than that which passes through the middle of the earth globe and protrudes on either side. On its upper station or the North Pole are the Devas (being the abode of

* From the Theosophic Thinker, Vol. III.

Brahma) and on the nether or South Pole is the abode of demons (or hell); Brahma is said to have his abode on this Hindu Olympus and hold his Court there. Geographically Meru is not the fabulous mountain in the centre or navel of the earth, but its roots and foundations are in that navel, though it is in the far North itself. This connects it with the central land that never perishes; the land in which the day of the mortal lasts six months and his night another six months.

From these passages it is clear that Meru geographically is in the North Pole, the Mountain itself protruding there, having its roots and foundations at a spot North of the Himalayas. Metaphysically it is the central axis of the cosmos or of the earth. The Heavenly Ganges is the one spiritual magnetic current, or in the language of the Puranas, the aerial cord which, becoming many, cements the whole cosmos. Starting at first from the feet of Trivikrama, where it is the one in three, or the three in one, it flows down to Brahmia or the form world; diverges into four currents and replenishes all the Cosmos with its nectary current. Physically, of these streams, the present Ganges in India is said to be the Alakananda associated with Bhagirathi, which, flowing South, drains its contents into the ocean.

From difference in the nomenclature of these streams, it is clear that they do not apply to physical streams, but only to subtle currents to which different writers applied different names; the physical streams brought into existence only to symbolize the higher workings. The complete number seven is given out here, since, in the preservative stage of Vishnu, the four principles only are visible and the others need not be mentioned; the three being latent as in Trivikrama. Whereas in the case of Siva, the destroyer, all the seven principles of the aerial or spiritual stream, both visible and invisible, have to be given out.

The foregoing explanations of Meru are quite necessary to the topic on hand, since of all the Varshas in Jambu Dwipa, Ilavrita Varsha is made the central one, having Meru at its centre. And unless we know clearly what Meru means, we cannot understand what the terms North and South of Meru, as applied to the Varshas

do signify. Going into the descriptions of Varshas, we find that Jambu Dwipa is divided into nine Varshas of which Ilavrita is made the central one. North of Ilavrita are located three Varshas, Ramyaka, Hiranmaya and Kuru, Ramyaka being next North of Ilavrita, and Kuru occupying the extreme Northern region. On the South of Ilavrita are located Hari (next to Ilavrita), then Kimpurusha and then Bharata. On the East of the central Varsha is Badraswa and on the West of it is Ketumala. All these Varshas are separated from one another by mountain ranges. That between Bharata and Kimpurusha is the Himalayas.

Then to the locality of these Varshas. Before going into the different localities of these Varshas, we have to understand as to what we mean by the North and South of Meru. Meru, as explained before, is merely the seat at North Pole where the mountain which lies to the North of the Himalayas terminates. Ilavrita Varsha is said to be in the centre of all the Varshas, and in its centre is said to be Meru. Hence Ilavrita should naturally be round the North Pole. Such being the case, North and South of Ilavrita should refer to only the two sides, and hence to the two divisions of the globe. The Hindus divided the whole earth into two by drawing a line on the North-Western part of the Himalayas connecting the North Pole with the South Pole. This line passing just on the West of India through India on one side and Afghanistan and Beluchistan on the other side, goes through Turkestan and Siberia up to the North Pole. The same line in the Western hemisphere includes on its Western side San Francisco, British Columbia, Alaska and others West of the Rocky Mountains. Therefore one hemisphere according to this division will comprise in itself the above portion of America West of the Rocky Mountains and the major portion of Asia excluding Afghanistan, Persia and others. This division of the globes is corroborated by the fact that the Meru Mountains are supposed by the Hindus to have their root in the Himalayas. Proceeding northward from them, Meru is said to terminate in the North Pole.

The Hindus have divided the Varshas through the parallel

chains of mountains which separate them. Bharata Varsha is said to be in the South of the Himalayas. North of it is said to be Kimpurusha Varsha between the parallel chains, the Himalayas and the Hemakutas. Then farther North is Hari Varsha between the mountains, Nishada and Hemakuta. So with reference to the other three Varshas which lie south of the central Varsha. Taking the centre as the North Pole, we find in the Eastern hemisphere of modern geography two parallel chains of mountains caused therein. In the same line with the Himalayas are the Atlas Mountains in Africa in the 30th degree of latitude North of Equator. Parallel to the Himalayas is the Altai Mountains in Asia. Going to Europe in the same latitude *viz.*, 58 degrees North of Equator, we find the Alps and other mountains.

Taking, first, our division of hemisphere which includes the major portion of Asia and others, we find it stated that Bharata Varsha lies between the Himalayas and the ocean. The Himalayas referred to here includes not only those that we know of but also other ranges of hills in continuation of the same in Burma, South of China &c. Hence we may state that all the lands in this hemisphere south of 30 degree latitude (North of Equator) are comprised under Bharata Varsha. The Hemakuta Hills may be identified with the present Altai mountains, and hence between them and the Himalayas lies the next Varsha called Kimpurusha. That is, all the lands in this hemisphere between 30 and 50 degrees latitude (North of the Equator) should come under this Varsha. The regions north of this Varsha are called Hari Varsha. The central Varsha *i.e.*, Ilavrita, is one that cannot be waded through by us now, and is identifiable with the regions near the North Pole. Ramyaka Varsha includes all the regions North of 50 degrees latitude (North) in the other hemisphere including Great Britain, &c. Truly is it the regions of sport in material pleasures. Hiranmaya Varsha lies between 30 and 50 degrees latitude, north of the Equator. Kuru is the last and far South of all these.

Ketumala lies on the West of all the Varshas and as such should refer to the Western portions of Asia including Afghanis-

tan, Persia, Arabia, &c. Bhadraswa should refer to Japan and other places in the East of Asia.

Then again Bharata Varsha is sub-divided into nine portions, which are called Khandas. They are Indra Dwipa, Kaserumat, Tamravarna, Gabhastimat, Naga Dwipa, Saumya, Gandharva and Varuna; the last or ninth Dwipa is surrounded by the ocean, and is a thousand Yojanas from North to South. This last one is generally termed Bharata Khanda, the India whereon we live and which we repeat in our Sankalpas. We utter in our Sankalpas, Jambu Dwipa, Bharata Varsha and Bharata Khanda, in order to identify the spot whereon we stand, and invoke our Devata, or the Universal principle.



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12. Monism of Theosophy.
13. Tat tvam Asi.
14. Ekam Eva Advityam.
15. Advaitism and Scientific Monism.
16. Visishtadvaitism or qualified Advaitism or Monism.
17. Dvaitism or Dualism.
18. Vallabha's Suddadvaitism or Pure Monism.
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2. Monism—the Philosophy of Science.

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INVISIBLE WORLD.)

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Advocates Monism—the Philosophy of Science—which holds with *Herbert Spencer** and *Sankara*, the founder of *Advaitism* or *Indian Monism* as well as with *Madame Blavatsky*, that though the relation of Subject and Object renders necessary the antithetical conceptions of Spirit and Matter, the one is no less than the other to be regarded as but a sign of the One Absolute Reality—the one Substance with two sets of properties, the double-faced unity, in whose involution and evolution consists the life of the universe. Monism denies with *Herbert Spencer* and *Sankara*—as well as *Madame Blavatsky* and *Annie Besant*, F.T.S.†—Soul and God, other than this one Reality as believed by *Western Dualistic Theism* as well as *Visishtadvaitic* and *Dvaitic Vedantism* (*Indian Qualified Monism* and *Dualism*). Monism differs from *Advaitism* chiefly in that the latter, in the words of *Annie Besant*, F.T.S., alleges that matter exists in states other than those at present known to Science, though it also believes neither in *Immateriality* nor in a *Supernatural kind of Existence*. Lastly Monism confesses with *Herbert Spencer*, *Sankara* and *Annie Besant*, that the why of the manifestation of this One Absolute Reality, cannot be answered.—From the “*Awakener of India*”, Vol. I. (The passages in Italics were added subsequently on a careful study of *Advaitism* and *Theosophy* since *Swami Vivekananda* said in 1897 that the “*Awakener of India*” in its *Scientific Monism* advocated only *Esoteric Advaitism*).

* “*Herbert Spencer's Philosophy* (of *Monism*) brings him very near to *Esoteric Philosophy* (*Theosophy*), the nearest exponents of which are *Buddhism* and *Advaitic Vedantism*”.—*Madame Blavatsky*.

† “*In Theology*. *Theosophy* is pantheistic. It denies a personal God and holds that God is all and all is God. Hence, as *Madame Blavatsky* has pointed out, *Agnostics* and *Atheists* more easily assimilate the teachings of *Theosophy* than do believers in *Orthodox Creeds*. In all that I have written and said as *Atheist* against *supernaturalism*, I have nothing to regret, nothing to unsay. On the negative side, *Atheism* seems to me to be unanswerable. Its case against *supernaturalism* is complete. I was satisfied and I have remained satisfied that the universe is not explicable on *supernatural lines*. According to the *Theosophist*, every idea of the existence of the *Supernatural* must be surrendered. The *Theosophist* only alleges that matter exists (*Science* would say *may exist*) in states other than those at present known to Science.”—*Annie Besant* F.T.S.

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