

## FRAGMENTS.

By H. P. BLAVATSKY.

## IDOLATRY.

THE outward form of idolatry is but a veil, concealing the one Truth like the veil of the Saitic Goddess. Only that truth, being for the few, escapes the majority. To the pious profane, the veil recovers a celestial locality thickly peopled with divine beings, dwarfs and giants, good and wicked powers, all of whom are no better than human caricatures. Yet, while for the great majority the space behind the veil is really impenetrable—if it would but confess the real state of its mind—those, endowed with the “third eye” (the eye of Shiva), discern in the Cimmerian darkness and chaos a light in whose intense radiance all shape born of human conception disappears, leaving the all-informing divine PRESENCE, to be felt—not seen; *sensed*—never expressed.

A charming allegory translated from an old Sanskrit manuscript illustrates this idea admirably :

Toward the close of the Pralaya (the intermediate period between two “creations” or evolutions of our phenomenal universe), the great It, the One that rests in infinity and ever *is*, dropped its reflection, which expanded in limitless Space, and felt a desire to make itself cognizable by the creatures evolved from its shadow. The reflection assumed the shape of a Mahârâja (great King). Devising means for mankind to learn of his existence, the Mahârâja built out of the qualities inherent in him a palace, in which he concealed himself, satisfied that people should perceive the outward form of his dwelling. But when they looked up to the place where stood the palace, whose one corner stretched into the right, and the other into the left infinitude—the little men *saw nothing*; the palace was mistaken by them for empty space, and being so vast remained invisible to their eyes.. Then the Mahârâja resorted to another

expedient. He determined to manifest himself to the little creatures whom he pitied—*not as a whole but only in his parts*. He destroyed the palace built by him from his manifesting qualities, brick by brick, and began throwing the bricks down upon the earth one after the other. Each brick was transformed into an idol, the red ones becoming Gods and the grey ones Goddesses; into these the Devatâs and Devatîs—the qualities and the attributes of the Unseen—entered and animated them.

This allegory shows polytheism in its true light and that it rests on the One Unity, as does all the rest. Between the *Dii majores* and the *Dii minores* there is in reality no difference. The former are the direct, the latter the broken or refracted, rays of one and the same Luminary. What are Brahmâ, Vishnu and Shiva, but the triple Ray that emanates directly from the Light of the World? The three Gods with their Goddesses are the three dual representations of Purusha the Spirit, and Prakriti—matter; the six are synthesized by Svâyambhuva the self-existent, unmanifested Deity. They are only the symbols personifying the Unseen Presence in every phenomenon of nature.

#### AVATÂRAS.

“The seven [regions] \* of Bhûmi, hang by golden threads [beams or rays] from the Spiritual central Sun [or ‘God’]. Higher than all, a Watcher for each [region]. The Suras come down this [beam]. They cross the six and reach the Seventh [our earth]. They are our mother earth’s [Bhûmi] supporters [or guardians]. The eighth watches over the [seven] watchers.”

Suras are in the Vedas deities, or beings, connected with the Sun; in their occult meaning they are the seven chief watchers or guardians of our planetary system. They are positively identical with the “Seven Spirits of the Stars.” The Suras are connected in practical Occultism with the Seven Yogic powers. One of these, Laghima(n) or “the faculty of assuming levity,” is illustrated in a Purâna as rising and descending along a sunbeam to the solar orb with its mysteries; *c.g.*, Khatvânga, in *Vishnu Purâna* (Book IV.). “It must be equally easy to the Adept to travel a ray downwards,”

\* In every ancient cosmography the universe and the earth are divided into seven parts or regions.

remarks Fitzedward Hall (p. 311). And why not, if the action is understood in its right and correct sense?

Eight great Gods are often reckoned, as there are eight points of the compass, four cardinal and four intermediate points over which preside also inferior Lokapâlas or the "doubles" of the greater Gods. Yet, in many instances where the number eight is given it is only a kind of exoteric shell. Every globe, however, is divided into seven regions, as  $7 \times 7 = 49$  is the mystic number *par excellence*.

To make it clearer: in each of the seven Root Races, and in every one of the seven regions into which the Occult Doctrine divides our globe, there appears from the dawn of Humanity the "Watcher" assigned to it in the eternity of the Æon. He comes first in his own "form," then each time as an Avatâra.

#### INITIATIONS.

In a secret work upon the Mysteries and the rites of Initiation, in which very rough but correct prints are given of the sacramental postures, and of the trials to which the postulant was subjected, the following details are found:

(1) The neophyte—representing the Sun, as "*Sahasrakirana*" "he of the thousand rays"—is shown kneeling before the "Hierophant." The latter is in the act of cutting off *seven locks* of the neophyte's long hair,\* and in the following—(2)—illustration, the postulant's bright crown of golden beams is thrown off, and replaced by a wreath of sharp ligneous spines, symbolizing the loss.† This was enacted in India. In trans-Himâlayan regions it was the same.

\* See Judges xvi., again, where Samson, the symbolical personification of the Sun the Jewish Hercules, speaks of his *seven locks* which, when cut off, will deprive him of his (physical) strength, *i.e.*, kill the material man, leaving only the spiritual. But the *Bible* fails to explain, or rather, conceals purposely, the esoteric truth, that the seven locks symbolize the septenary physical or terrestrial man, thus cut off and separated from the spiritual. To this day the High Lamas cut off during public consecrations a lock of the hair of the candidates for the religious life, repeating a formula to the effect that the six others will follow, when the "upâsaka" is READY. The lock of hair or tonsure of the Roman Catholic priests is a relic of the same mystery-idea.

† No need of explaining that *Sanjnâ*—pure spiritual conscience—is the inner perception of the neophyte (or chelâ) and Initiate; the scorching of it by the too ardent beams of the Sun being symbolical of the terrestrial passions. Hence the seven locks are symbolical of the seven cardinal sins, and as to the seven cardinal virtues—to be gained by the Sakridâgâmin (the candidate "for new birth") they could be attained by him only through severe trial and suffering.

In order to become a "Perfect One," the Sakridâgâmin ("he who will receive new birth," *lit.*) had, among other trials, to descend into Pâtâla, the "nether world," after which process only he could hope to become an "Anâgâmin"—"one who will be reborn no more." The full Initiate had the option of either entering this second Path by appearing at will in the world of men under a human form, or he could choose to first rest in the world of Gods (the Devachan of the Initiates), and then only be reborn on this our earth. Thus, the next stage shows the postulant preparing for this journey.

(3) Every kind of temptation—we have no right to enumerate these or speak of them—was being placed on his way. If he came out victorious over these, then the further Initiation was proceeded with; if he fell—it was delayed, often entirely lost for him.

These rites lasted seven days.

#### ON CYCLES AND MODERN FALLACIES.

The Hermetic axiom has been made good by astronomy and geology. Science has become convinced now that the milliards of the heavenly hosts—suns, stars, planets, the systems in and beyond the Milky Way—have all had a common origin, our earth included. Nevertheless that a regular evolution, incessant and daily, is still going on. That "cosmic life-times have begun at different epochs and proceed at different rates of change. Some began so far back in eternity or have proceeded at so rapid a rate, that their careers are brought to a conclusion in the passing age. Some are even now awaking into existence; and it is probable that worlds are beginning and ending continually. Hence cosmic existence, like the kingdoms of organic life, presents a simultaneous panorama of a completed cycle of being. A taxonomic arrangement of the various grades of animal existence presents a succession of forms which we find repeated in the embryonic history of a single individual, and again in the succession of geological types; so the taxonomy of the heavens is both a cosmic embryology and a cosmic palæontology." (*World Life*, p. 539.)

So much for cycles again in modern orthodox science. It was the knowledge of all these truths—scientifically demonstrated and made public now, but in those days of antiquity occult and known

to Initiates alone—that led to the formation of various cycles into a regular system. The grand Manvantaric system was divided into other great cycles; and these in their turn into smaller cycles, regular wheels of time, in Eternity. Yet no one outside of the sacred precincts ever had the key to the correct reading and interpretation of cyclic notation, and therefore even the ancient classics disagreed on many points. Thus, Orpheus is said to have ascribed to the “Great” Cycle 120,000 years’ duration, and Cassandrus 136,000, according to Censorinus (*De Natali Die*, Chron. and Astron. Fragments). Analogy is the law, and is the surest guide in occult sciences, as it ought to be in the natural philosophy made public. It is perhaps mere vanity that prevents modern science from accepting the enormous periods of time insisted upon by the ancients, as elapsed since the first civilizations. The miserable little fragment torn out from the Book of the Universal History of Mankind, now called so proudly “*Our History*,” forces historians to dwarf every period in order to wedge it in within the narrow limits primarily constructed by theology. Hence the most liberal among them hesitate to accept the figures given by ancient historians. Bunsen, the eminent Egyptologist, rejects the period of 48,863 years before Alexander, to which Diogenes Laertius carries back the records of the priests, but he is evidently more embarrassed with the ten thousand of astronomical observations, and remarks that “if they were actual observations, they *must have* extended over 10,000 years” (p. 14). “We learn, however,” he adds, “from one of their own old chronological works . . . that the genuine Egyptian traditions concerning the mythological period, treated of *myriads* of years.” (*Égypte*, i. p. 15.)

We must notice and try to explain some of these great and smaller cycles and their symbols. Let us begin with the cycle of Mahâyuga, personified by Shesha—the great serpent called “the couch of Vishnu,” because that God is Time and Duration personified in the most philosophical and often poetical way.

It is said that Vishnu appears on it at the beginning of every Manvantara as “the Lord of Creation.” Shesha is the great Serpent-Cycle, represented as swallowing its own tail—thence the emblem of Time within Eternity. Time, says Locke (*On the Human Understanding*)—Time is “duration set forth by measures,”

and Shesha sets forth evolution by symbolizing its periodical stages. On him Vishnu sleeps during the intervals of rest (*pralayas*) between "creations"; the blue God—blue because he is space and the depth of infinity—awakens only when Shesha bends his thousand heads, preparing to again bear up the Universe which is supported on them. The *Vishnu Purāna* describes him thus: "Below the seven Pâtālas is the form of Vishnu, proceeding from the quality of darkness, which is Shesha, the excellences of which neither Daityas nor Dānavas can fully enumerate. This being is called Ananta [the infinite] by the spirits of Siddha (Yoga Wisdom, sons of Dharma, or true religion), and is worshipped by sages and by gods. He has a thousand heads, which are embellished with the pure and visible mystic sign [Svastika]; and the thousand jewels in his crests (*phana*) gives light to all the regions. . . . In one hand he holds a plough\* and in the other a pestle. . . . From his mouths, at the end of the Kalpa, proceeds the venomed fire that, impersonated as Rudra [Shiva, the 'destroyer'] . . . devours the three worlds" (ii. 211).

Thence Shesha is the cycle of the great Manvantara, and also the spirit of vitality as of destruction, since Vishnu, as the preserving or conservative force, and Shiva as the destroying potency, are both aspects of Brahma. Shesha is said to have taught the sage Garga—one of the oldest astronomers in India, whom, nevertheless, Bentley places only 548 B.C.—the secret sciences, the mysteries of the heavenly bodies, of astrology, astronomy and various omens. Shesha is so great and mighty, that it is more than likely he will some day, in far off future ages, render the same service to our modern astronomers. Nothing like "Time" and cyclic changes to cure sceptics of their blindness.

But Occult truths have to contend with a far more blind foe than science can ever be to them, namely, the Christian theologians and bigots. These claim unblushingly the number of years lived by their Patriarchs some four thousand years ago, and pretend to prove that they have interpreted "the symbolic predictions of scripture" and have "traced the historic fulfilment of two

\* An emblem referring to the "ploughing" and sowing the renewed earth (in its new Round) with fresh seeds of life.



of the most important of them"—handling Biblical chronology as reverently as though it had never been a relash of Chaldæan records and cyclic figures, to hide the true meaning under exoteric fables! They speak of "that history that unrolls before our eyes a record extending over six thousand years" from the moment of creation; and maintains that there are "very few of the prophetic periods whose fulfilment cannot be traced in some parts of the scrolls." (*The Approaching End of the Age.*)

Moreover they have two methods and two chronologies to show those events verified—the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. The first relies on the calculations of Kepler and Dr. Sepp; the latter on Clinton, who gives the year of the Nativity as A.M. 4138; the former holds to the old calculation of 4320 by lunar, and 4004 by solar years.



THE IDEA OF PREEXISTENCE.—Were I to ask any reflecting Occidental, who had passed some years in the real living atmosphere of Buddhism, what fundamental idea especially differentiates Oriental modes of thinking from our own, I am sure he would answer: "The Idea of Preexistence." It is this idea, more than any other, which permeates the whole mental being of the Far East. It is universal as the wash of air; it colours every emotion; it influences, directly or indirectly, almost every act. Its symbols are perpetually visible, even in details of artistic decoration; and hourly, by day or night, some echoes of its language float uninvited to the ear. The utterances of the people—their household sayings, their proverbs, their pious or profane exclamations, their confessions of sorrow, hope, joy, or despair—are all informed with it. It qualifies equally the expression of hate or the speech of affection; and the term *ingwa*, or *innen*—meaning Karma as inevitable retribution—comes naturally to every lip as an interpretation, as a consolation, or as a reproach. The peasant toiling up some steep road, and feeling the weight of his handcart straining every muscle, murmurs patiently: "Since this is *ingwa*, it must be suffered." Servants disputing, ask each other, "By reason of what *ingwa* must I now dwell with such a one as you?" The incapable or vicious man is reproached with his *ingwa*; and the misfortunes of the wise or the virtuous are explained by the same Buddhist word. The lawbreaker confesses his crime, saying: "That which I did I knew to be wicked when doing; but my *ingwa* was stronger than my heart." Separated lovers seek death under the belief that their union is banned by the results of their sins in a former one; and the victim of an injustice tries to allay his natural anger by the self-assurance that he is expiating some forgotten fault which had to be expiated in the eternal order of things. . . . So likewise even the commonest references to a spiritual future imply the general creed of a spiritual past. The mother warns her little ones at play about the effect of wrong-doing upon their future births, as the children of other parents. The pilgrim or street-beggar accepts your alms with the prayer that your next birth may be fortunate. The aged *inkyō*, whose sight and hearing begin to fail, talks cheerily of the impending change that is to provide him with a fresh young body.—L. HEARN, *Kokoro*, p. 222.