

ANCIENT SURVIVALS AND MODERN ERRORS

Articles by H. P. Blavatsky

LAMAS AND DRUSES

PERSIAN ZOROASTRIANISM AND

RUSSIAN VANDALISM

THE DEVIL'S OWN

PROGRESS AND CULTURE

ANTIQUITY OF THE VEDAS

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FOREWORD

IN this collection of articles chosen from her contributions to the *Theosophist* and *Lucifer*, H.P.B. turns her practiced pen and penetrating mind to two familiar themes—one, the clear traces of the continuity of the ancient teachings of the Wisdom Religion among peoples who have remained historical mysteries to the West; and, two, the modern obliteration and distortion of old simplicities and cultural excellences which once bore witness to the common religio-philosophic inspiration of the distant past.

“Lamas and Druses,” first published in the *Theosophist* for June, 1881, removes some of the confusion about the Druses, a not very numerous people who live in the mountainous country of Syria, and who are, H.P.B. explains, “the descendants of, and a mixture of, mystics *of all nations*—mystics, who, in the face of cruel and relentless persecution by the orthodox Christian Church and orthodox Islamism,” took refuge “in the fastnesses of Syria and Mount Lebanon.” There, over many centuries, they preserved in secrecy their ancient occult teachings, letting the profanely curious remain completely ignorant of what lay behind the protection of external customs. She also shows the common origin of the religious philosophy of the Druses and the Lamaist sects of Tibet. “Persian Zoroastrianism and Russian Vandalism,” printed in the *Theosophist* for October, 1879, throws a similar light on the origins of the “Fire-Worshippers,” now best known as represented by the Parsee community of Bombay, although their sanctuaries were once located near the shores of the

Caspian Sea. The displacing of these ancient structures by an enormous Russian petroleum refinery, made the occasion for H.P.B.'s title.

More on the religion of the Parsees is given in "The Devil's Own—Thoughts on Ormuzd and Ahriman," which appeared in *Lucifer*, March, 1891. In this article H.P.B. explains the metaphysics of the Mazdean religion, showing its correspondences with occult doctrines, and interpreting the symbols of the Persian teaching by means of the principles of the sevenfold constitution of man. Here, as so often in her writings, H.P.B. includes a brief outline of the Theosophic view of human history, reminding her readers of the meaning of the Kalki avatar, and describing the transformations in human nature due to take place by the middle of the seventh race of the present planetary cycle or Round. Archaic myth is demonstrated to have direct application to the moral struggle continuously proceeding for all mankind, while the closing portion of this article is a severe commentary on the havoc wrought, almost a century ago, by what is now widely recognized as the destructive-ness of technology.

"Progress and Culture" is one of H.P.B.'s militant editorials calling into question the claims of "Christian civilization." It appeared in *Lucifer* for August, 1890. Readers may conclude that Lynn White, Jr., a contemporary historian, added but a footnote to her much earlier indictment with his often quoted article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis" (*Science*, March 10, 1967). While Dr. White concerns himself mainly with modern ravaging of the natural world, H.P.B. goes to the source of cultural decay in arrogant and pretentious selfishness, allowed by the dogmatic creeds of State religion.

In "Antiquity of the Vedas," published in the *Theosophist*, October, 1879, H.P.B. challenges the scholarship of Max Muller concerning the epoch during which the Vedas were composed, and also his supposition that these philosophical hymns were written in the language of humanity's childhood. Quoting an eminent Vedic scholar, Dayanund Saraswati, she shows that Western Orientalists have relied upon untrustworthy commentaries, and using anthropological studies of her time, she points out that a much greater antiquity would have to be

assigned to the Vedas if Muller's idea that these works belong to "the days of human mental infancy" is to be confirmed. The shadow which blights virtually all Western chronology is shown to be the absurd Biblical computation declaring that only six thousand years have passed since man's appearance on earth.

Theosophist, June 1881

LAMAS AND DRUSES

MR. L. OLIPHANT'S new work "*Land of Gilead*" attracts considerable attention. Reviews appeared some time since, but we had to lay the subject aside until now for lack of space. We will now have something to say, not of the work itself—though justice can hardly be sufficiently done to the writings of that clever author—but of what he tells us respecting the Druses—those mystics of Mount Lebanon of whom so little is known. We may, perchance, shed some new light on the subject.

"The Druse," Mr. Oliphant thinks, "has a firm conviction that the end of the world is at hand. Recent events have so far tallied with the enigmatical prophecies of his sacred books, that he looks forward to the speedy resurrection of El Hakim, the founder and divine personage of the sect. In order to comprehend this, the connection between China and Druse theology has to be remembered. The souls of all pious Druses are supposed to be occupying in large numbers certain cities in the west of China. The end of the world will be signalled by the approach of a mighty army from the East against the contending powers of Islam and Christianity. This army will be under the command of the Universal Mind, and will consist of millions of Chinese Unitarians. To it Christians and Mahomedans will surrender and march before it to Mecca. El Hakim will then appear; at his command, the Caaba will be demolished by fire from Heaven, and the resurrection of the dead will take place. Now that Russia has come into collision with China, the Druses see the fulfilment of their sacred prophecies, and are eagerly waiting for an Armageddon in which they believe themselves destined to play a prominent part."—(*Pioneer*.)

Mr. Lawrence Oliphant is, in our opinion, one of England's best writers. He is also more deeply acquainted with the inner life of the East than most of the authors and travellers who have written upon the subject—not even excepting Captain and Mrs. Burton. But even

his acute and observing intellect could hardly fathom the secret of the profoundly mystical beliefs of the Druses. To begin with: El Hakim is *not* the founder of their sect. Their ritual and dogmas were *never* made known, but to those who have been admitted into their brotherhood. Their origin is next to unknown. As to their external religion, or what has rather transpired of it, that can be told in a few words. The Druses are believed to be a mixture of Kurds, Mardi-Arabs, and other semi-civilized tribes. We humbly maintain that they are the descendants of, and a mixture of, mystics of *oil nations*—mystics, who, in the face of cruel and unrelenting persecution by the orthodox Christian Church and orthodox Islamism, have ever since the first centuries of the Mahomedan propaganda, been gathered together, and who gradually made a permanent settlement in the fastnesses of Syria and Mount Lebanon, where they had from the first found refuge. Since then, they have preserved the strictest silence upon their beliefs and truly occult rites. Later on, their warlike character, great bravery, and unity of purpose which made their foes, whether Mussulmans or Christians, equally fear them, helped them toward forming an independent community, or, as we may term it, an *imperium in imperio*. They are the Sikhs of Asia Minor, and their polity offers many points of similarity with the late "commonwealth" of the followers of Guru Nanak—even extending to their mysticism and indomitable bravery. But the two are still more closely related to a third and still more mysterious community of religionists, of which nothing, or next to nothing, is known by outsiders: we mean that fraternity of Tibetan Lamaists, known as the Brotherhood of Khe-lang, who mix but little with the rest. Even Csomo de Koros, who passed several years with the Lamas learned hardly more of the religion of these *Chakravortins* (wheel-turners) than what *they* chose to let him know of their exoteric rites; and of the Khe-langs, he learned positively nothing.

The mystery that hangs over the scriptures and religion of the Druses is far more impenetrable than that connected with the Amritsar and Lahore "Disciples," whose *grantha* is well known, and has been translated into European languages more than once. Of the alleged

forty-five sacred books¹ of the Lebanon mystics, none were ever seen, let alone examined, by any European scholar. Many manuscripts have never left the underground Holoweys (place of religious meeting) invariably built under the meeting room on the ground-floor, and the public Thursday assemblies of the Druses are simply blinds intended for over-curious travellers and neighbours.

Verily a strange sect are the “Disciples of H’amsa,” as they call themselves. Their *Okhal* or spiritual teachers besides having, like the Sikh *Akali*, the duty of defending the visible place of worship, which is merely a large, unfurnished room, are also the guardians of the Mystical Temple, and the “wise men,” or the *initiates* of their mysteries, as their name of *Okhal* implies: *Akl* being in Arabic “intelligence” or “wisdom.” It is improper to call them Druses, as they regard it as an insult; nor are they in reality the followers of *Daruzi*, a heretical pupil of H’amsa, but the true disciples of the latter. The origin of that personage who appeared among them in the eleventh century, coming from Central Asia, and whose secret or “mystery” name is “El-Hamma/’is quiet unknown to our European scholars. His spiritual titles are “Universal Source, or Mind,” “Ocean of Light,” and “Absolute or Divine Intelligence.” They are, in short, repetitions of those of the Tibetan Dalai-Lama, whose appellation “Path to the Ocean,”² means, Path or “Way to the Ocean of Light” (Intelligence) or Divine Wisdom—both titles being identically the same. It is curious that the Hebrew word *Lamad* should also mean “the God-taught.”

¹ The work presented by Nasr-Allah to the French King as a portion of the Druse Scriptures, and translated by Petis de la Croix in 1701—is pronounced a forgery. Not one of the copies now in the possession of the Bodleian, Vienna, or Vatican Libraries is genuine and besides each of them is a copy from the other. Great was always the curiosity of the travellers and greater yet the efforts of the indomitable and ever-prying missionary, to penetrate behind the veil of Druse worship, but all have resulted in failure. The strictest secrecy as to the nature of their beliefs, the peculiar rites practised in their subterranean Holoweys, and the contents of their canonical books was enjoined upon their followers by H’amsa and Boha-eddin, the chief and first disciple of the former.

² “Lama” means path or road in the vulgar Tibetan language, but in that figurative sense it conveys the meaning of way: as the “way to wisdom or salvation.” Strangely enough it also means “cross.” It is the Roman figure X or ten, the emblem of perfection or perfect number, and stood for ten with the Egyptians Chinese, Phoenicians, Romans, &c. It is also found in the Mexican secular calendars. The Tartars call it lama from the Scytho-Turanian word lamh, hand, (from the number of fingers on both hands) and it is synonymous with the jod of the Chaldees, “and thus became the name of a cross, of the High Priest of the Tartars, and of the Lamaic Messenger of God,” says the author of the Book of God: “Commentaries on the Apocalypse.” With the Irish luam signifies the head of the Church, a spiritual chief

An English Orientalist recently found that the religion of Nanak had a good deal of Buddhism in it. (*Art. Diwali in Calcutta Review.*) This would be only natural since the Empire of Hindustan is the land of Buddhas and Boddhisattvas. But that the religion of the Druses, between whose geographical and ethnological position and that of the Hindus there is an abyss, should be so, is far more incomprehensible and strange. Yet it is a fact. They are more Lamaists in their beliefs and certain rites, than any other people upon the face of the globe. The fact may be contradicted, but it will be only because Europe knows next to nothing of either. Their system of government is set down as feudal and patriarchal, while it is as theocratic as that of the Lamaists—or as that of the Sikhs—as it used to be. The mysterious representation of the Deity appears in H’amsa, whose spirit is said to guide them, and periodically re-incarnate itself in the person of the chief *Okhal* of the Druses, as it does in the Guru-Kings of the Sikhs, some of whom, like Guru Govind, claimed to be the reincarnations of Nanak, while the Dalai-Lamas of Tibet claim to be those of Buddha. The latter, by the way, are loosely called *Shaberons* and *Khubilghans* (both in various degrees re-incarnations not of Buddha, the MAN, but of his Buddh-like divine spirit) by Abbe Hue and others without any regard to the difference in the appellation: El Hamma or H’amsa came from the “Land of the Word of God.” Where was that land? Swedenborg, the Northern seer, advised his followers to search for the LOST WORD, among the hierophants of Tartary, Tibet and China. To this we may add a few explanatory and corroborative facts. L’hasa, the theocratic metropolis of Tibet, is commonly translated as “God-land,” that is to say, this is the only English equivalent that we can find.³ Though separated by the Karakorum range and little Tibet, the great Tibet is on the same Asiatic plateau in which our

³ And a most unsatisfactory term it is, as the Lamaists have no conception of the anthropomorphic deity which the English word “God” represents. Fo or Buddha (the latter name being quite unknown to the common people) is their equivalent expression for that All-embracing, superior Good, or Wisdom from which all proceeds, as does the light from the sun, the cause being nothing personal, but simply an Abstract Principle. And it is this that in all our theosophical writing, for the want of a better word, we have to term “God-like,” and “Divine.”

Biblical scholars designate the table-land of Pamir⁴ as the cradle of the human race, the birth-place of the mythical Adam. Tibet or Ti-Boutta, will yield, etymologically, the words T7, which is the equivalent for God in Chinese, and *Buddha*, or wisdom: the land, then, of the Wisdom-Deity, or of the incarnations of Wisdom. It is also called “Bod-Jid.” Now “Jid” and “Jod” are synonymous apocalyptic and phallic names for the Deity—YOD being the Hebrew name for God. G. Higgins shows in his *Celtic Druids*, the Welsh Druids altering the name of Bod-Jid into Budd-ud which with them too meant the “Wisdom of Jid” or what people now call “god.”⁵

The religion of the Druses is said to be a compound of Judaism, Mahomedanism and Christianity, strongly tinged with Gnosticism and the Magian system of Persia. Were people to call things by their right names, sacrificing all-conceit to truth, they might confess things otherwise. They could say, for instance, that Mahomedanism being a compound of Chaldeism, Christianity and Judaism; Christianity, a mixture of Judaism, Gnosticism and Paganism; and Judaism, a wholesale Egypto-Chaldean Kabal-ism, masquerading under invented names and fables, made to fit the bits and scraps of the real history of the Israelite tribes—the religious system of the Druses would then be found one of the last survivals of the archaic Wisdom-Religion. It is entirely based on that element of practical mysticism of which branches have from time to time sprung into existence. They pass under the unpopular names of Kabalism, Theosophy and Occultism. Except Christianity which, owing to the importance it gives to the principal prop of its doctrine of Salvation—(we mean the dogma of Satan) had to anathematize the practice of theurgy—every religion, including Judaism and Mahomedanism, credits these above-named branches.

⁴ There are several Pamirs in Central Asia. There is the Alighur Pamir which lies more north than either—the great Pamir with Victoria Lake in its vicinity, Taghdumbast Pamir and the little Pamir, more south; and eastward another chain of Pamir dividing Mustagh Pass and Little Guhjal. We would like to know on which of these we have to look for the garden of Eden?

⁵ The name in Hebrew for sanctuary is Te-bah and Ti-boutta and Tebet, also a cradle of the human race. Thebeth meaning “a box”—the “ark” of Noah and the floating cradle of Moses.

Civilisation having touched with its materialistic all-levelling, and all-destroying hand even India and Turkey, amid the din and chaos of crumbling faiths and old sciences, the reminiscence of archaic truths is now fast dying out. It has become popular and fashionable to denounce “the old and mouldy *superstitions* of our forefathers”;—verily even among the most natural allies of the students of theurgy or occultism—the Spiritualists. Among the many creeds and faiths striving to follow the cyclic tide, and helping it themselves to sweep away the knowledge of old, strangely blind to the fact, that the same powerful wave of materialism and modern science also sweeps away their own foundations—the only religions which have remained as alive as ever to these forgotten truths of old, are those which from the first have kept strictly aloof from the rest. The Druses, while outwardly mixing up with Moslems and Christians alike, ever ready to read the Kuran as well as the Gospels in their Thursday public meetings, have never allowed an uninitiated stranger to penetrate the mysteries of their own doctrines. Intelligence⁶ alone communicates to the soul (which with them is mortal, though it survives the body) the enlivening and divine spark of the Supreme Wisdom or Ti-meami—they say—but it must be screened from all non-believers in H’amsa. The work of the soul is to seek wisdom, and the substance of earthly wisdom is to know Universal Wisdom, or “God,” as other religionists call that principle. This is the doctrine of the Buddhists and Lamaists who say “Buddha” where the Druses say “Wisdom”—one word being the translation of the other. “In spite of their external adoption of the religious customs of the Moslems, of their readiness to educate their children in Christian schools, their use of the Arabic language, and of their free intercourse with strangers, the Druses remain even more than the Jews a peculiar people”—says a writer. They are very rarely if ever converted; they marry within their own race; and adhere most tenaciously to their traditions, *baffling all efforts to discover their cherished secrets*. Yet they are neither fanatical, nor do they covet proselytes.

⁶ The Druses divide man into three principles: body, soul and intelligence—the “Divine Spark.” which Theosophists call “spirit.”

In his *Journey through Tartary, Tibet, and China*, Hue speaks with great surprise of the extreme tolerance and even outward respect shown by the Tibetans to other religions. A grand Lama, or a “living Buddha,” as he calls him, whom the two missionaries met at Choang-Long, near Koum-boum certainly had the best of them in good breeding as well as tact and deference to their feelings. The two Frenchmen, however, neither understood nor appreciated the act, since they seemed quite proud of the insult offered by them to the *Hobilgan*. “We were waiting for him ...seated on the kang...and *purposely did not rise to receive him*, but merely made him a slight salutation”—boasts Hue (vol. ii. p. 35-36). The Grand Lama “did not appear disconcerted” though; upon seeing that they as “purposely” withheld from him “an invitation to sit down” he only looked at them “surprised,” as well he might. A breviary of theirs having attracted his attention, he demanded “permission to examine it”; and then, carrying it “solemnly to his brow” he said: “It is *your* book of prayer; we must always honour and reverence other people’s prayers.” It was a good lesson, yet they understood it not. We would like to see that Christian missionary who would reverently carry to his brow the *Vedas*, the *Tripitaka*, or the *Grantha*, and publicly honour other people’s prayers! While the Tibetan “savage,” the heathen *Hobilgan*, was all affability and politeness, the two French”Lamas of Jehovah” as Abbe Hue called his companion and himself, behaved like two uneducated bullies. And to think that they even boast of it in print!

No more than the Druses do the Lamaists seek to make proselytes. Both people have their “schools of magic”—those in Tibet being attached to some *la-khang* (lamaseries), and those among the Druses in the closely-guarded crypts of initiation, no stranger being even allowed inside the buildings. As the Tibetan *Hobilgans* are the incarnations of Buddha’s spirit, so the Druse *Okhals*— erroneously called “Spiritualists” by some writers—are the incarnations of H’amsa. Both peoples have a regular system of passwords and signs of recognition among the neophytes, and we know them to be nearly identical since they are partially those of the Theosophists.

In the mystical system of the Druses there are five “messengers”

or interpreters of the “Word of the Supreme Wisdom,” who occupy the same position as the five chief Bodhisattvas, or *Hobilgans* of Tibet, each of whom is the bodily temple of the spirit of one of the five Buddhas. Let us see what can be made known of both classes. The names of the five principal Druse “messengers,” or rather their titles—as these names are generic, in both the Druse and Tibetan hierarchies, and the title passes at the death of each to his successor—are:

(1) *H’amsa*, or “El Hamma,” (spiritual wisdom) considered as the Messiah, through whom speaks Incarnate Wisdom.

(2) *Ismail*—Ti-meami—(the universal soul). He prepares the Druses before their initiation to receive “wisdom.”

(3) *Mohammed*—(the Word). His duty is to watch over the behaviour and necessities of the brethren;—a kind of Bishop.

(4) *Se-lama*, (the “Preceding”) called the “Right Wing.”

(5) *Mokshatana Boha-eddin*, (the “Following”) named the “Left Wing.”

These last are both messengers between H’amsa and the Brotherhood. Above these *living mediators who remain ever unknown to all but the chief Okhals* stand the ten Incarnates of the “Supreme Wisdom,” the last of whom is to return at the end of the cycle, which is fast approaching—though no one but El Hamma knows the day—that last “messenger” in accordance with the cyclic recurrences of events being also the first who came with H’amsa, hence Boha-eddin. The names of the Druse Incarnations are Ali Al-lal who appeared in India (Kabir we believe); Albar in Persia; Alya in Yemen; Moill and Kahim, in Eastern Africa; Moessa and Had-di in Central Asia; Albou and Manssour in China; and Buddea, that is,

⁷Very curiously the Druses identify their H’amsa with Hamsa, the Prophet Mahomet’s uncle, who, they say, tired of the world and its deceitful temptations, simulated death at the battle of Dhod, A.D. 625, and retired to the fastnesses of a great mountain in Central Asia where he became a saint. He never died in spirit. When several centuries after that he appeared among them it was in his second spiritual body, and when their Messiah had, after founding the brotherhood, disappeared, *Se-lama* and *Boha-eddin* were the only ones to know the retreat of their Master. They alone knew the bodies into which he went on, successively re-incarnating himself—as he is not permitted to die until the return of the *Highest Messenger*, the last or one of the ten avatars. He alone—the now invisible but expected one—stands higher than H’amsa. But, it is not, as erroneously believed, “El-Hakim,” the Fatimite Khalif of bad name.

Boha-eddin⁸ in Tartary, whence he came and whither he returned. This last one, some say, was *dual-sexed* on earth. Having entered into El-Hakim—the Khalif, a monster of wickedness—he brought him to be assassinated, and then sent H'amsa to preach and to found the Brotherhood of Lebanon. El-Hakim then is but a mask. It is Buddea, *i.e.*, Boha-eddin they expect.⁹

And now for the Lamaic hierarchy. Of the living or incarnate Buddhas there are five also, the chief of whom is Dalay, or rather Talay, Lama—from *Tole* “Ocean” or Sea; he being called the “Ocean of Wisdom.” Above him, as above H'amsa, there is but the “SUPREME WISDOM”—the abstract principle from which emanated the five Buddhas—Maitree Buddha (the last Boddhisattva, or Vishnu in the Kalanki avatar) the tenth “messenger” expected on earth—included. But this will be *the* One Wisdom and will incarnate itself into the whole humanity collectively, not in a single individual. But of this mystery—no more at present.

These five “Hobilgans” are distributed in the following order:

(1) Talay-Lama, of Lha-ssa—the incarnation of the “Spiritual” “passive” wisdom—which proceeds from Gautama or Sid-dartha Buddha, or Fo.

(2) Bande-cha-an Rem-boo-tchi, at Djashi-Loombo. He is “the active earthly wisdom.”

(3) Sa-Dcha-Fo, or the “Mouthpiece of Buddha,” otherwise the “word” at Ssamboo.

(4) Khi-sson-Tamba—the “Precursor” (of Buddha) at the Grand Kooren.

(5) Tchang-Zya-Fo-Lang, in the alai mountains. He is called the “Successor” (of Buddha).

The “Shaberons” are one degree lower. They, like the chief Okhals

⁸ One of the names of Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, was Budea.

⁹ In the Druse system there is no room for a personal deity, unless a portion of the divine impersonal and abstract wisdom incarnates itself in a mortal man. The deific principle with them is the essence of Life, the All, and as impersonal as the Parabrahm of the Vedantins or the Nirvana State of the Buddhists, ever invisible, all-pervading and incomprehensible, to be known but through occasional incarnations of its spirit in human form. These ten incarnations or human avatars, as above specified, are called the “Temples of Ti-meam” (Universal Spirit).

of the Druses, are the *initiates* of the great wisdom or Buddh Esoteric religion. This double list of the “Five” shows great similarity at least between the polity of the two systems. The reader must bear in mind that they have sprung into their present *visible* conditions nearly at the same time. It was from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries that modern Lamaism evolved its ritual and popular religion, which serves the Hobilgans and Shaberons as a blind, even against the curiosity of the average Chinaman and Tibetan. It was in the eleventh century that H'amsa founded the Brotherhood of Lebanon; and till now no one has acquired its secrets !

It is supremely strange that both the Lamas and Druses should have the same mystical statistics. They reckon the bulk of the human race at 1,332 millions. When good and evil, they say, shall come to an equilibrium in the scales of human actions (now evil is far the heavier), then the breath of “Wisdom,” will annihilate in a wink of the eye just 666 millions of men. The surviving 666 millions will have “Supreme Wisdom” incarnated in them.¹⁰ This may have, and probably has, an allegorical meaning. But what relation might it possibly bear to the number of the “grand Beast” of John's *Revelation* ?

If more were known than really is of the religions of Tibet and the Druses, then would scholars see that there is more affinity, between Turanian Lamaists and the Semitic, “El-Hammities,” or Druses, than was ever suspected. But all is darkness, conjecture, and mere guesswork whenever the writers speak of either the one or the other. The little that has transpired of their beliefs is generally so disfigured by prejudice and ignorance that no learned Lama or Druse would ever recognise a glimpse of likeness to his faith in these speculative fantasies. Even the profoundly suggestive conclusion to which came Godfrey Higgins (*Celtic Druids* Part I, 101) however true, is but half so. “It is evident” he writes “that there was a *secret science* possessed somewhere (by the ancients) which must have been guarded by the

¹⁰ The Hindus have the same belief. In the “Deva-Yug” they will all be devs or gods. See Lama-nim-tshen-po, or “Great Road to Perfection”; a work of the fifteenth century. The author of this book is the Great Reformer of Lamaism, the famous Tzong-ka-pa, from whose hair sprang up the famous koum-boum letter tree—a tree whose leaves all bear sacred Tibetan inscriptions, according to the tradition This tree was seen by Abbe Hue some forty years ago, and was seen last year by the Hungarian traveller Count Szitcheny; who, however, begging his pardon, could not, under its physical surroundings, have carried away a branch of it, as he pretends to have done.

most solemn oaths . . . and I cannot help suspecting *that there is still a secret doctrine* known only in the deep recesses of the crypts of Tibet.” . . .

To conclude with the Druses: As *Selama* and *boha-eddin*—two names more than suggestive of the words “Lama” and “Buddha”—are the only ones entrusted with the secret of H’amsa’s retreat; and having the means of consulting with their master, they produce from time to time his directions and commands to the Brotherhood, so, even to this day do the Okhals of that name travel every *seventh* year, through Bussora and Persia into Tar-tary and Tibet to the very west of China and return at the expiration of the eleventh year, bringing them fresh orders from “El’ Hamma.” Owing to the expectation of war between China and Russia, only last year a Druse messenger passed through Bombay on his way to Tibet and Tartary. This would explain “the superstitious” belief that “the souls of all pious Druses are supposed to be occupying in large numbers certain cities in China.” It is around the plateau of the Pamirs—they say with the Biblical scholars—that the cradle of the true race must be located: but the cradle of *initiated* humanity only; of those who have for the first time tasted of the fruit of knowledge, and these are in Tibet, Mongolia, Tartary, China and India, where also the souls of their pious and initiated brethren transmigrate, and rebecome “sons of God.” What this language means every Theosophist ought to know. They discredit the fable of Adam and Eve, and say that they who first ate of the forbidden fruit and thus became “Elohim” were Enoch or Hermes (the supposed father of Masonry), and Seth or Sat-an, the father of secret wisdom and learning, whose abode, they say, is now in the planet Mercury,¹¹ and whom the Christians were kind enough to convert into a chief devil, the “fallen Angel.” Their evil one is an abstract principle, and called the “Rival.”

¹¹ Buddha is son of Maya; and (according to Brahmanic notion) of Vishnu; “Maia” is mother of Mercury by Jupiter. Buddha means the “wise” and Mercury is God of Wisdom (Hermes); and the planet sacred to Gautama Buddha is Mercury. Venus and Isis presided over navigation, as Mary or Maria, the Madonna presides now. Is not the latter hymned to this day by the Church:

“Ave Maris Stella

“Dei Mater Alma?”—or Hail, Star of the Sea, . Mother of God—thus identified with Venus?

The “millions of Chinese Unitarians” may mean Tibetan Lamas, Hindus, and others of the East, as well as Chinamen. It is true that the Druses believe in and expect their resurrection day in Armageddon, which, however, they pronounce otherwise. As the phrase occurs in the *Apocalypse* it may seem to some that they got the idea in St. John’s *Revelation*. It is nothing of the kind. That day which, according to the Druse teaching “will consummate the great spiritual plan—the bodies of the wise and faithful will be absorbed into the absolute essence, and transformed from the many, into the ONE.” This is pre-eminently the Buddhist idea of Nirvana, and that of the Vedantin final absorption into Parabrahm. Their “Persian Magianism and Gnosticism,” make them regard St. John as Oannes, the Chaldean Man-Fish, hence connects their belief at once with the Indian Vishnu and the Lamaic Symbology. Their “Armageddon” is simply “Ramdagon,”¹² and this is how it is explained.

The sentence in *Revelation* is no better interpreted than so many other things by Christians, while even the non-Kabalistic Jews know nothing of its real meaning. Armageddon is mistaken for a geographical

¹² Rama, of the solar race, is an incarnation of Vishnu—a Sun-God. In “Machha,” or the first Avatar, in order to save humanity from final destruction (see Vishnu Purana) that God appears to King Satyavrata and the seven saints who accompany him on the vessel to escape Universal Deluge, as an enormous fish with one stupendous horn. To this horn the King is commended by Hari to tie the ship with a serpent (the emblem of eternity) instead of a cable. The Talay-Lama, besides his name of “Ocean,” is also called Sarou, which in Tibetan, means the “unicorn,” or one-horned. He wears on his head-gear a prominent horn, set over a Yung-dang, or mystic cross; which is the Jain and Hindu Swastica. The “fish” and the sea, or water, are the most archaic emblems of the Messiahs, or incarnations of divine wisdom, among all the ancient people. Fishes play prominently a figure on old Christian medals; and in the catacombs of Rome the “Mystic Cross” or “Anchor” stands between two fishes as supporters. “Dagh-dae”—the name of Zaratushta’s mother, means the “Divine Fish” or Holy Wisdom. The “Mover on the Waters” whether we call him “Narayan” or Abatur, (the Kabalistic Superior Father and “Ancient of the World”) or “Holy Spirit” is all one. According to Codex Nazareaeus, Kabalah and Genesis, the Holy Spirit when moving on the waters mirrored himself—and “Adam Kadmon was born.” Mare in Latin, is the sea. Water is associated with every creed. Mary and Venus are both patronesses of the sea and of sailorst—and both mothers of Gods of Love, whether Divine or Earthly. The mother of Jesus is called Mary or Mariah—the word meaning in Hebrew mirror that in which we find but the reflection instead of a reality, and 600 years before Christianity there was Maya, Buddha’s mother, whose name means illusion—identically the same. Another curious “coincidence” is found in the selections of new Dalay Lamas in Tibet. The new incarnation of Buddha is ascertained by a curious ichthumancy with three gold fishes. Shutting themselves up in the Buddha-La (Temple), the Hobilgans place three goldfish in an urn, and on one of these ancient emblems of Supreme Wisdom, shortly appears the name of the child into whom the soul of the late Taley-Lama is supposed to have transmigrated.

locality, viz., the elevated table of Esdraelon or *Ar-mageddon* “the mountain of Megiddo,” where Gideon triumphed over the Midianites.¹³ It is an erroneous notion, for the name in the *Revelation* refers to a mythical place mentioned in one of the most archaic traditions of the heathen East, especially among the Turanian and Semitic races. It is simply a kind of purgatorial Elysium, in which departed spirits are collected, to await the day of final judgment. That it is so is proved by the verse in *Revelation* “And he gathered them together into a place called. . . Armageddon (XVI. 16), when the seventh angel will pour out his vial into the air.” The Druses pronounce the name of that mystical locality “Ramdagon.” It is, then, highly probable that the word is an anagram, as shown by the author of the “Commentary on the Apocalypse.” It means “Rama-Dagon,”¹⁴ the first signifying Sun-God of that name, and the second “Dagon” or the Chaldean Holy Wisdom incarnated in their “Messenger,” Oannes—the Man-Fish, and descending on the “Sons of God” or the Initiates of whatever country; those, in short, through whom Deific Wisdom occasionally reveals itself to the world

Theosophist, October 1879

PERSIAN ZOROASTRIANISM AND RUSSIAN VANDALISM

FEW persons are capable of appreciating the truly beautiful and esthetic; fewer still of revering those monumental relics of bygone ages, which prove that even in the remotest epochs mankind worshipped a Supreme Power, and people were moved to express their abstract conceptions in works which should defy the ravages of Time. The Vandals—whether Slavic Wends, or some barbarous nation of Germanic race—came at all events from the North. A recent occurrence is calculated to make us regret that Justinian did not destroy them all; for it appears that there are still in the North worthy scions left of those terrible destroyers of monuments of arts and sciences, in the persons of certain Russian merchants who have just perpetrated an act of inexcusable vandalism. According to the late Russian papers, the Moscow arch-millionaire, Kokoref, with his Tiflis partner the American Croesus, Mirzoef, is desecrating and apparently about to totally destroy perhaps the oldest relic in the world of Zoroastrianism—the “Attesh-Gag” of Baku.¹

Few foreigners, and perhaps as few Russians, know anything of this venerable sanctuary of the Fire-worshippers around the Caspian Sea. About twenty versts from the small town of Baku in the valley of Absharon in Russian Georgia, and among the barren, desolated steppes of the shores of the Caspian, there stands—alas! rather stood, but a few months ago—a strange structure, something between a mediaeval Cathedral and a fortified castle. It was built in unknown ages, and by builders as unknown. Over an area of somewhat more than a square mile, a tract known as the “Fiery Field,” upon which the structure stands, if one but digs from two to three inches into the

¹³ It is not the “Valley of Megeddo,” for there is no such valley known. Dr. Robinson’s typographical and Biblical notions being no better than hypotheses.

¹⁴ Ram is also womb, and valley; and in Tibetan “goat.” “Dag” is fish; from Dagon, the man-fish, or perfect wisdom.

¹ Attesh-Kudda also.

sandy earth, and applies a lighted match, a jet of fire will stream up, as if from a spout.² The “Guebre Temple,” as the building is sometimes termed, is carved out of one solid rock. It comprises an enormous square enclosed by crenelated Walls, and at the centre of the square, a high tower also rectangular resting upon four gigantic pillars. The latter were pierced vertically down to the bed-rock and the cavities were continued up to the battlements where they opened out into the atmosphere; thus forming continuous tubes through which the inflammable gas stored up in the heart of the mother rock were conducted to the top of the tower. This tower has been for centuries a shrine of the fire-worshippers and bears the symbolical representation of the trident—called *teersoot*. All around the interior face of the external wall, are excavated the cells, about twenty in number, which served as habitations for past generations of Zoroastrian recluses. Under the supervision of a High Mobed, here, in the silence of their isolated cloisters, they studied the Avesta, the Vendidad, the Yacna—especially the latter, it seems, as the rocky walls of the cells are inscribed with a greater number of quotations from the sacred songs. Under the tower-altar, three huge bells were hung. A legend says that they were miraculously produced by a holy traveller, in the tenth century during the Mussulman persecution, to warn the faithful of the approach of the enemy. But a few weeks ago, and the tall tower-altar was yet ablaze with the same flame that local tradition affirms has been kindled thirty centuries ago. At the horizontal orifices in the four hollow pillars burned four perpetual fires, fed uninterruptedly from the inexhaustible subterranean reservoir. From every merlon on the walls, as well as from every embrasure flashed forth a radiant light, like so many tongues of fire; and even the large porch overhanging the main entrance was encircled by a garland of fiery stars, the lambent lights shooting forth from smaller and narrower orifices. It was amid these impressive surroundings, that the Guebre recluses used to send up their daily prayers, meeting under the open tower-altar; every face reverentially turned toward the setting sun, as they united their voices

in a parting evening hymn. And as the luminary—the “Eye of Ahuramazda”—sank lower and lower down the horizon, their voices grew lower and softer, until the chant sounded like a plaintive and subdued murmur... A last flash—and the sun is gone; and, as darkness follows daylight almost suddenly in these regions, the departure of the Deity’s symbol was the signal for a general illumination, unrivalled even by the greatest fire-works at regal festivals. The whole field seemed nightly like one blazing prairie

Till about 1840, “Attesh-Gag” was the chief rendezvous for all the Fire-worshippers of Persia. Thousands of pilgrims came and went; for no true Guebre could die happy unless he had performed the sacred pilgrimage at least once during his life-time. A traveller—Koch—who visited the cloister about that time, found in it but five Zoroastrians, with their pupils. In 1878, about fourteen months ago, a lady of Tiflis, who visited the Attesh-Gag, mentioned in a private letter that she found there but one solitary hermit, who emerges from his cell but to meet the rising and salute the departing sun. And now, hardly a year later, we find in the papers that Messrs. Kokoref and Co., are busy erecting on the Fiery Field enormous buildings for the refining of petroleum! All the cells but the one occupied by the poor old hermit, half ruined and dirty beyond all expression, are inhabited by the firm’s workmen; the altar over which blazed the sacred flame, is now piled high with rubbish, mortar and mud, and the flame itself turned off in another direction. The bells are now, during the periodical visits of a Russian priest, taken down and suspended in the porch of the superintendent’s house; heathen relics being as usual used—though abused—by the religion which supplants the previous worship. And, all looks like the abomination of desolation.... “It is a matter of surprise to me,” writes a Baku correspondent in the *St. Petersburg Vjedomosti*, who was the first to send the unwelcome news, “that the trident, the sacred *teersoot* itself, has not as yet been put to some appropriate use in the new firm’s kitchen...! Is it then so absolutely necessary that the millionaire Kokoref should desecrate the Zoroastrian cloister, which occupies such a trifling compound in comparison to the space allotted to his manufactories and stores? And shall such a remarkable relic of antiquity be sacrificed to

² A bluish flame is seen to arise there, but this fire does not consume, “and if a person finds himself in the middle of it, he is not sensible of any warmth.”—See Kinneir’s *Persia*, page 35.

commercial greediness which can after all neither lose nor gain one single rouble by destroying it?"

It must apparently, since Messrs. Kokoref and Co., have leased the whole field from the Government, and the latter seems to feel quite indifferent over this idiotic and useless Vandalism. It is now more than twenty years since the writer visited for the last time Attesh-Gag. In those days besides a small group of recluses it had the visits of many pilgrims. And since it is more than likely that ten years hence, people will hear no more of it, I may just as well give a few more details of its history. Our Parsee friends will, I am sure, feel an interest in a few legends gathered by me on the spot.

There seems to be indeed a veil drawn over the origin of Attesh-Gag. Historical data are scarce and contradictory. With the exception of some old Armenian Chronicles which mention it incidentally as having existed before Christianity was brought into the country by Saint Nina during the third century,⁸ there is no other mention of it

³ Though St. Nina appeared in Georgia in the third, it is not before the fifth century that the idolatrous Grouzines were converted to Christianity by the thirteen Syrian Fathers. They came under the leadership of both St. Antony and St. John of Zedadzene—so called, because he is alleged to have travelled to the Caucasian regions on purpose to fight and conquer the chief idol Zeda! And thus, while—as incontrovertible proof of the existence of both—the opulent tresses of the black hair of St. Nina are being preserved to this day as relics, in Zion Cathedral at Tiflis—the thaumaturgic John has immortalized his name still more. Zeda, who was the Baal of the Trans-Caucasus, had children sacrificed to him, as the legend tells us, on the top of the Zedadzene mount, about 18 versts from Tiflis. It is there that the Saint defied the idol, or rather Satan under the guise of a stone statue—to single combat, and miraculously conquered him; i.e., threw down, and trampled upon the idol. But he did not stop there in the exhibition of his powers. The mountain peak is of an immense height, and being only a barren rock at its top, spring water is nowhere to be found on its summit. But in commemoration of his triumph, the Saint had a spring appear at the very bottom of the deep, and—as people assert—a fathomless well, dug down into the very bowels of the mountain, and the gaping mouth of which was situated near the altar of the god Zeda, just in the centre of his temple. It was into this opening that the limbs of the murdered infants were cast down after the sacrifice. The miraculous spring, however, was soon dried up, and for many centuries there appeared no water. But, when Christianity was firmly established, the water began re-appearing on the 7th day of every May, and continues to do so till the present time. Strange to say, this fact does not pertain to the domain of legend, but is one that has provoked an intense curiosity even among men of science, such as the eminent geologist, Dr. Abich, who resided for years at Tiflis. Thousands upon thousands proceed yearly upon pilgrimage to Zedadzene on the seventh of May; and all witness the "miracle." From early morning, water is heard bubbling down at the rocky bottom of the well; and, as noon approaches, the parched-up walls of the mouth become moist, and clear cold sparkling water seems to come out from every porosity of the rock; it rises higher and higher, bubbles, increases, until at last having reached to the very brim, it suddenly stops, and a prolonged shout of triumphant joy bursts from the fanatical crowd. This cry seems to shake like a sudden discharge of artillery the very depths of the mountain and awaken the echo for miles around. Every one hurries to fill a vessel with the miraculous water. There are necks wrung and heads broken on that day at Zedadzene, but every one who survives carries home a provision of the crystal fluid. Toward evening the water begins decreasing as mysteriously as it had appeared, and at

anywhere else so far as I know.

Tradition informs us—how far correctly is not for me to decide—that long before Zarathustra, the people, who now are called in contempt, by the Mussulmans and Christians, "Guebres," and, who terra themselves "Behedin" (followers of the true faith) recognized Mithra, the Mediator, as their sole and highest God—who included within himself all the good as well as the bad gods. Mithra representing the two natures of Ormazd and Ahriman combined, the people *feared* him, whereas, they would have had no need of fearing, but only of loving and reverencing him as Ahura-Mazda, were Mithra without the Ahriman element in him.

One day as the god, disguised as a shepherd, was wandering about the earth, he came to Baku, then a dreary, deserted sea-shore, and found an old devotee of his quarrelling with his wife. Upon this barren spot wood was scarce, and she would not give up a certain portion of her stock of cooking fuel to be burned upon the altar. So the Ahriman element was aroused in the god and, striking the stingy old woman, he changed her into a gigantic rock. Then, the Ahura-Mazda element prevailing, he, to console the bereaved widower, promised that neither he, nor his descendants, should ever need fuel any more, for he would provide such a supply as should last till the end of time. So he struck the rock again and then struck the ground for miles around, and the earth and the calcareous soil of the Caspian shores were filled up to the brim with naphtha. To commemorate the happy event, the old devotee assembled all the youths of the neighborhood and set himself to excavating the rock—which was all that remained of his ex-wife. He cut the battlemented walls, and fashioned the altar and the four pillars, hollowing them all to allow the gases to rise up and escape through the top of the merlons. The god Mithra upon seeing the work ended, sent a lightning flash, which set ablaze the fire upon the altar, and lit up every merlon upon the walls. Then, in order that it should burn the brighter, he called forth the four winds and

midnight the well is again perfectly dry. Not a drop of water, nor a trace of any spring, could be found by the engineers and geologists bent upon discovering the "trick." For a whole year, the sanctuary remains deserted, and there is not even a janitor to watch the poor shrine. The geologists have declared that the soil of the mountain precludes the possibility of having springs concealed in it. Who will explain the puzzle?

ordered them to blow the flame in every direction. To this day, Baku is known under its primitive name of “Baadey-ku-ba,” which means literally the gathering of winds.

The other legend, which is but a continuation of the above, runs thus: For countless ages, the devotees of Mithra worshipped at his shrines, until Zarathustra, descending from heaven in the shape of a “Golden Star,” transformed himself into a man, and began teaching a new doctrine. He sung the praises of the One but Triple god—the supreme Eternal, the incomprehensible essence “Zervana-Akerene,” which emanating from itself “Primeval Light,” the latter in its turn produced Ahura-Mazda. But this process required that the “Primeval One” should previously absorb in itself all the light from the fiery Mithra, and thus left the poor god despoiled of all his brightness. Losing his right of undivided supremacy, Mithra, in despair, and instigated by his Ahrimanic nature, annihilated himself for the time being, leaving Ahriman alone, to fight out his quarrel with Ormazd, the best way he could. Hence, the prevailing Duality in nature since that time until Mithra returns; for he promised to his faithful devotees to come back some day. Only since then, a series of calamities fell upon the Fire-worshippers. The last of these was the invasion of their country by the Moslems in the 7th century, when these fanatics commenced most cruel persecutions against the Behedin. Driven away from every quarter, the Guebres found refuge but in the province of Kerman, and in the city of Yezd. Then followed heresies. Many of the Zoroastrians abandoning the faith of their forefathers, became Moslems; others, in their unquenchable hatred for the new rulers, joined the ferocious Koords and became devil, as well as fire-worshippers. These are the Yezids. The whole religion of these strange sectarians—with the exception of a few who have more weird rites, which are a secret to all but to themselves—consists in the following. As soon as the morning sun appears, they place their two thumbs crosswise one upon the other, kiss the symbol, and touch with them their brow in reverential silence. Then they salute the sun and turn back into their tents. They believe in the power of the Devil, dread it, and propitiate the “fallen angel” by every means; getting very angry whenever they hear him spoken of disrespectfully by either a Mussulman or a Christian.

Murders have been committed by them on account of such irreverent talk, but people have become more prudent of late.

With the exception of the Bombay community of Parsees, Fire-worshippers are, then, to be found but in the two places before mentioned, and scattered around Baku. In Persia some years ago, according to statistics they numbered about 100,000 men;⁴¹ doubt, though, whether their religion has been preserved as pure as even that of the Gujarathi Parsees, adulterated as is the latter by the errors and carelessness of generations of uneducated Mobeds. And yet, as is the case of their Bombay brethren, who are considered by all the travellers as well as Anglo-Indians, as the most intelligent, industrious and well-behaved community of the native races, the fire-worshippers of Kerman and Yezd bear a very high character among the Persians, as well as among the Russians of Baku. Uncouth and crafty some of them have become, owing to long centuries of persecution and spoliation; but the unanimous testimony is in their favour and they are spoken of as a virtuous, highly moral, and industrious population. “As good as the word of a Guebre” is a common saying among the Koords, who repeat it without being in the least conscious of the self-condemnation contained in it.

I cannot close without expressing my astonishment at the utter ignorance as to their religions, which seems to prevail in Russia even among the journalists. One of them speaks of the Guebres, in the article of the *St. Petersburg Vjedemosti* above referred to, as of a sect of Hindu idolaters, in whose prayers the name of Brahma is constantly invoked. To add to the importance of this historical item Alexandre Dumas (senior) is quoted, as mentioning in his work *Travels in the Caucasus* that during his visit to Attesh-Gag, he found in one of the cells of the Zoroastrian cloister “two Hindu idols”!! Without forgetting the charitable dictum: *Demortuus nil nisi bonum*, we cannot refrain from reminding the correspondent of our esteemed

⁴¹ Mr. Grattan Geary in his recent highly valuable and interesting work “Through Asiatic Turkey” (London, Sampson Law & Co.) remarks of the Guebres of Yezd—“it is said that there are only 5,000 of them all told.” But as his information was gleaned while travelling rapidly through the country, he was apparently misinformed in this instance. Perhaps, it was meant to convey the idea to him that there were but 5,000 in and about Yezd at the time of his visit. It is the habit of this people to scatter themselves all over the country in the commencement of the summer season in search of work.

contemporary of a fact which no reader of the novels of the brilliant French writer ought to be ignorant of namely, that for the variety and inexhaustible stock of *historical facts*, evolved out of the abysmal depths of his own consciousness even the immortal Baron Munchausen was hardly his equal. The sensational narrative of his tiger-hunting in Mingrelia, where, since the days of Noah, there never was a tiger, is yet fresh in the memory of his readers.

Lucifer, March 1891

THE DEVIL'S OWN

THOUGHTS ON ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN

Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven first-born.
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam.

. . . Since God is light
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.

. . . Satan
Puts on swift wings, and towards the gates of hell
Explores his solitary flight.

-MILTON

NO more philosophically profound, nor grander or more graphic and suggestive type exists among the allegories of the World-religions than that of the two Brother-Powers of the Mazdean religion, called Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, better known in their modernized form of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Of these two emanations, “Sons of Boundless Time”—*Zeruana Akarana*—itself issued from the Supreme and Unknowable Principle,¹ the one is the embodiment of “Good Thought” (*Vohu Mano*), the other of “Evil Thought” (*Ako Mono*). The “King of Light” or Ahura Mazda, emanates from Primordial Light² and forms or creates by means of the “Word,” Honover (*Ahuna Vair-ya*), a pure

¹ Though this deity is the “First-born,” yet metaphysically and logically Ormuzd comes in order as a fourth emanation (compare with Parabrahm-Mulaprakriti and the three Logoi, in the Secret Doctrine). He is the Deity of the manifested plane. In the esoteric interpretation of the Avestian sacred allegories, AHURA or ASURA is a generic name for the sevenfold Deity, the Ruler of the Seven Worlds; and Hvaniratha (our earth) is the fourth, in plane and number. We have to distinguish between such names as Ahura Mazda, Varana, the “Supreme” deity and the synthesis of the Ameshaspends, etc. The real order would be: the Supreme or the One Light, called the Eternal; then Zeruana Akarana (compare Vishnu in his abstract sense as the Boundless pervading All and Kala, Time), the Fravashi or the Ferouer of Ormuzd (that eternal Double or Image which precedes and survives every god, man and animal), and finally Ahura Mazda Himself.

² Zeruana Akarana means, at the same time, Infinite Light, Boundless Time, Infinite Space and Fate (Karma). See Vendidad, Farg. xix. 9.

and holy word. But Angra Mainyu, though born as pure as his elder brother, becomes jealous of him, and mars everything in the Universe, as on the earth, creating Sin and Evil wherever he goes.

The two Powers are inseparable on our present plane and at this stage of evolution, and would be meaningless, one without the other. They are, therefore, the two opposite poles of the *One* Manifested Creative Power, whether the latter is viewed as a Universal Cosmic Force which builds worlds, or under its anthropomorphic aspect, when its vehicle is thinking man. For Ormuzd and Ahriman are the respective representatives of Good and Evil, of Light and Darkness, of the spiritual and the material elements in man, and also in the Universe and everything contained in it. Hence the world and man are called the Macrocosm and the Microcosm, the great and the small universe, the latter being the reflection of the former. Even exoterically, the God of Light and the God of Darkness are, both spiritually and physically, the two ever-contending Forces, whether in Heaven or on Earth.³ The Parsis may have lost most of the keys that unlock the true interpretations of their sacred and poetical allegories, but the symbolism of Ormuzd and Ahriman is so self-evident, that even the Orientalists have ended by interpreting it, in its broad features, almost correctly. As the translator⁴ of the *Vendidad* writes, “Long before the Parsis had heard of Europe and Christianity, commentators, explaining the myth of Tahmurath, who rode for thirty years on Ahriman as a horse, interpreted the feat of the old legendary king as the curbing of evil passions and restraining Ahriman in the heart of man.” The same writer broadly sums up Magism in this wise:—

The world, such as it is now, is twofold, being the work of two hostile beings, Ahura Mazda, the good principle, and Angra Mainyu, the evil

³ The Parsis, the last relic of the ancient Magi, or Fire-worshippers of the noble Zoroastrian system, do not degrade their Deity by making him the creator of the evil spirits as well as of the pure angels. They do not believe in Satan or the Devil, and therefore, their religious system cannot in truth be termed dualistic. A good proof of this was afforded about half a century ago, at Bombay, when the Rev. Dr. Wilson, the Orientalist, debated the subject with the Parsi high-priests, the Dasturs. The latter very philosophically denied his imputation, and demonstrated to him that far from accepting the texts of their Sacred Books literally, they regarded them as allegorical as far as Ahriman was concerned. For them he is a symbolical representation of the disturbing elements in Kosmos and of the evil passions and animal instincts in man (*Vendidad*).

⁴ *Vendidad*, trans by J. Darmsteter, “Introduction” p. lvi.

principle; all that is good in the world comes from the former, all that is bad in it comes from the latter. The history of the world is the history of their conflict, how Angra Mainyu invaded the world of Ahura Mazda and marred it, and how he shall be expelled from it at last. Man is active in the conflict, his duty in it being laid before him in the law revealed by Ahura Mazda to Zarathustra. When the appointed time is come a son of the lawgiver, still unborn, named Saoshyant (*Sosiosh*) will appear, *Angra Mainyu and hell* will be destroyed, men will *rise from the dead*, and everlasting happiness will reign overall the world.

Attention is drawn to the sentences italicised by the writer, as they are esoteric. For the Sacred Books of the Mazdeans, as all the other sacred Scriptures of the East (the Bible included), have to be read esoterically. The Mazdeans had practically two religions, as almost all the other ancient nations—one for the people and the other for the initiated priests. Esoterically, then, the underlined sentences have a special significance, the whole meaning of which can be obtained only by the *study* of occult philosophy. Thus, Angra Mainyu, being confessedly, in one of its aspects, the embodiment of man’s lowest nature, with its fierce passions and unholy desires, “his hell” must be sought for and *located on earth*. In occult philosophy there is no other hell—nor can any state be comparable to that of a specially unhappy human wretch. No “asbestos” soul, inextinguishable fires, or “worm that never dies,” can be worse than a life of hopeless misery upon this earth. But it must, as it has once had a beginning, have also an end. Ahura Mazda alone,⁵ being the divine, and therefore the immortal and eternal symbol of “Boundless Time,” is the secure refuge, the spiritual haven of man. And as Time is twofold, there being a measured and finite time within the Boundless, Angra Mainyu is only a periodical and temporary Evil. He is Heterogeneity as developed from Homogeneity. Descending along the scale of differentiating nature on the cosmic planes, both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu become, at the appointed time, the representatives and the dual type of man, the inner or divine INDIVIDUALITY, and the outer *personality*, a compound of visible and invisible elements and principles. As in heaven, so on earth; as above, so below. If the divine *light* in man, the Higher Spirit-

⁵ Ahura Mazda stands here no longer as the supreme One God of eternal Good and Light but as Its own Ray, the divine EGO which informs man—under whatever name.

Soul, forms, including itself, the seven Ameshaspends (of which Ormuzd is the seventh, or the synthesis), Ahriman, the thinking *personality*, the animal soul, has in its turn its seven Archidevs opposed to the seven Ameshaspends. During our life cycle, the good Yazatas, the 99,999 Fravashi (or Ferouers) and even the “Holy Seven,” the Ameshaspends themselves,⁶ are almost powerless against the Host of wicked Devs—the symbols of cosmic opposing powers and of human passions and sins.⁷ Fiends of evil, their presence radiates and fills the world with moral and physical ills: with disease, poverty, envy and pride, with despair, drunkenness, treachery, injustice, and cruelty, with anger and bloody-handed murder. Under the advice of Ahriman, man from the first made his fellow-man to weep and suffer. This state of things will cease only on the day when Ahura Mazda, the sevenfold deity, assumes his seventh name⁸ or aspect. Then, will he send his “Holy Word” *Mathra Spenta* (or the “Soul of Ahura”) to incarnate in Saoshyant (Sosiash), and the latter will conquer Angra Mainyu. Sosiash is the prototype of “the faithful and the true” of the *Revelation*, and the same as Vishnu in the *Kalki-ovatar*. Both are expected to appear as the *Saviour of the World, seated on a white horse* and followed by a host of spirits or genii, mounted likewise on milk-white steeds.⁹ And then, *men will arise from the dead* and immortality come.¹⁰

Now the latter is of course purely allegorical. It stands in the occult sense, that materialism and sin being called death, the materialist, or the unbeliever, is “a dead man”—spiritually. Occultism has never regarded the physical personality as *the* man; nor has Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (vi-vii), is correctly understood. Thus mankind, arrived “at the appointed time” (the end of our present *Round*), at

⁶ The gods of light, the “immortal seven,” of whom Ahura Mazda is the seventh They are deified abstractions.

⁷ Or devils.

⁸ In verse 16th of Yast XIX, we read: “I invoke the glory of the Ameshaspends, who all seven, have one and the same thinking, one and the same speaking, one and the same doing, one and the same lord, Ahura Mazda.” As an occult teaching says: During each of the seven periods (Races) the chief ruling Light is given a new name; i.e., one of the seven hidden names, the initials of which compose the mystery name of the Septenary Host, viewed as one.

⁹ Nork ii. 176. Compare Rev. xix., 11-14, “I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon him . . . and the armies followed him upon white horses.”

¹⁰ Yast XIX. 89 et seq.

the end of the cycle of gross material flesh, will, with certain bodily changes, have come to a clearer spiritual perception of the truth. Redemption from flesh means a proportionate redemption from sin. Many are those who *seeing will believe*, and, in consequence, *rise “from the dead.”* By the middle of the Seventh Race, says an occult prophecy, the struggle of the two conflicting Powers (*Buddhi* and *Kama Manas*) will have almost died out. Everything that is irredeemably sinful and wicked, cruel and destructive, will have been eliminated, and that which is found to survive will be swept away from being, owing, so to speak, to a Karmic tidal-wave in the shape of scavenger-plagues, geological convulsions and other means of destruction. The Fifth Round will bring forth a higher kind of Humanity: and, as intelligent Nature always proceeds gradually, the last Race of this Round must necessarily develop the needed materials thereof. Meanwhile, we are still in the Fifth Race of the Fourth Round only, and in the Kaliyuga, into the bargain. The deadly strife between spirit and matter, between Light and Goodness and Darkness and Evil, began on our globe with the first appearance of contrasts and oppo-sites in vegetable and animal nature, and continued more fiercely than ever after man had become the selfish and personal being *he now is*. Nor is there any chance of its coming to an end before falsehood is replaced by truth, selfishness by altruism, and supreme justice reigns in the heart of man. Till then, the noisy battle will rage unabated. It is selfishness, especially; the love of *Self* atyove all things in heaven and earth, helped by human vanity, which is the begetter of the seven mortal sins. No; Ashmogh, the cruel “biped serpent,” is not so easily reduced. Before the poor creature now in the clutches of Darkness is liberated through Light, it has to know itself. Man, following the Delphic injunction, has to become acquainted with, and gain the mastery over, every nook and corner of his heterogeneous nature, before he can learn to discriminate between HIMSELF and his *personality*. To accomplish this difficult task, two conditions are absolutely requisite: one must have thoroughly realised in practice the noble Zoroastrian precept: “Good thoughts, good words, good deeds” and must have impressed them indelibly on his soul and heart, not merely as a lip-

utterance and form-observance. Above all, one has to crush *personal vanity* beyond resurrection.

Here is a suggestive fable and a charming allegory from the old Zoroastrian works. From the first incipient stage of Angra Mainyu's power, he and his wicked army of fiends opposed the army of Light in everything it did. The demons of lust and pride, of corruption and impiety, systematically destroyed the work of the Holy Ones. It is they who made beautiful blossoms poisonous; graceful snakes, deadly; bright fires, the symbol of deity, full of stench and smoke; and who introduced death into the world. To light, purity, truth, goodness and knowledge, they opposed darkness, filth, falsehood, cruelty and ignorance. As a contrast to the useful and clean animals created by Ahura Mazda, Angra Mainyu created wild beasts and bloodthirsty fowls of the air. He also added insult to injury and deprecated and laughed at the peaceful and inoffensive creations of his elder brother. "It is thine envy," said the holy Yazatas one day to the unholy fiend, the evil-hearted, "Thou art incapable of producing a beautiful and harmless being, O cruel Angra Mainyu"...

The arch-fiend laughed and said that he could. Forthwith he created the loveliest bird the world had ever seen. It was a majestic peacock, the emblem of vanity and selfishness, which is self-adulation in deeds.

"Let it be the King of Birds," quoth the Dark One, "and let man *worship him and act after his fashion*"

From that day "Melek Taus" (the Angel Peacock) became the special creation of Angra Mainyu, and the messenger through which the arch-fiend is invoked by some¹¹ and propitiated by all men.

How often does one see strong-hearted men and determined women moved by a strong aspiration towards an ideal they know to be the true one, battling successfully, to all appearance, with Ahriman and conquering him. Their external *Selves* have been the battle-ground of a most terrible, deadly strife between the two opposing Principles; but they have stood firmly—and won. The dark enemy seems

conquered; it is crushed in fact, so far as the animal instincts are concerned. Personal selfishness, that greed for self, and self only, the begetter of most of the evils—has vanished; and every lower instinct, melting like soiled icicles under the bene-ficent ray of Ahura Mazda, the radiant EGO-SUN, has disappeared, making room for better and holier aspirations. Yet, there lurks in them their old and but partially destroyed vanity, that spark of personal pride which is the last to die in man. Dormant it is, latent and invisible to all, including their own consciousness; but there it is still. Let it awake but for an instant, and the seemingly crushed-out personality comes back to life at the sound of its voice, arising from its grave like an unclean ghoul at the command of the midnight incantator. Five hours—nay, five minutes even—of life under its fatal sway, may destroy the work of years of self-control and training, and of laborious work in the service of Ahura Mazda, to open wide the door anew to Angra Mainyu. Such is the result of the silent and unspoken but ever-present *worship* of the only beautiful creation of the Spirit of Selfishness and Darkness.

Look around you and judge of the deadly havoc made by this last and most cunning of Ahriman's productions, notwithstanding its external beauty and harmlessness. Century after century, year after year, all is changing; everything is progressing in this world; one thing only changeth not—*human nature*. Man accumulates knowledge, invents religions and philosophies, but himself remains still the same. In his ceaseless chase after wealth and honours and the will o' the wisps of novelty, enjoyment and ambition, he is ever moved by one chief motor—vain selfishness. In these days of so-called progress and civilization, when the *light* of knowledge claims to have replaced almost everywhere the *darkness* of ignorance, how many more volunteers do we see added to the army of Ahura Mazda, the Principle of Good and Divine Light? Alas, the recruits of Angra Mainyu, the Mazdean Satan, outnumber these, daily more and more. They have overrun the world, these worshippers of Melek Taus, and the more they are enlightened the easier they succumb. This is only natural. Like *Time*, both the boundless and the finite, *Light* is also twofold; the divine and the eternal, and *the artificial light*, which paradoxically but correctly defined, is the *darkness* of *Ahr\`man*. Behold on what

¹¹ The Yezidis, or "Devil Worshippers," some of whom inhabit the plains of ancient Babylonia, to this day worship Melek Taus, the peacock, as the messenger of Satan and the mediator between the Arch-fiend and men.

objects the best energies of knowledge, the strongest human activity, and the inventive powers of man are wasted at the present hour: on the creation, amelioration and perfection of war-engines of destruction, on guns and smokeless powders, and weapons for the mutual murder and decimation of men. Great Christian nations seek to outvie each other in the discovery of better means for destroying human life, and for the subjecting by the strongest and the craftiest of the weakest and the simplest, for no better reason than to feed their peacock-vanity and self-adulation; and Christian men eagerly follow the good example. Whereon is spent the enormous wealth accumulated through private enterprise by the more enlightened through the ruin of the less intelligent? Is it to relieve human suffering in every form, that riches are so greedily pursued? Not at all. For now, just as 1,900 years ago, while the beggar Lazarus is glad to feed on the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, no means are neglected by Dives to hedge himself off from the poor. The minority that gives and takes care that its left hand remains ignorant of what its right hand bestows, is quite insignificant when compared with the enormous majority who are lavish in their charity—only because they are eager to see their names heralded by the press to the world.

Great is the power of Ahriman! Time rolls on, leaving with every day the ages of ignorance and superstition further behind, but bringing us in their stead only centuries of ever-increasing selfishness and pride. Mankind grows and multiplies, waxes in strength and (book-) wisdom; it claims to have penetrated into the deepest mysteries of physical nature; it builds railroads and honeycombs the globe with tunnels; it erects gigantic towers and bridges, minimizes distances, unites the oceans and divides whole continents. Cables and telephones, canals and railways more and more with every hour unite mankind into one “happy” family, but only to furnish the selfish and the wily with every means of stealing a better march on the less selfish and improvident. Truly, the “upper ten” of science and wealth have subjected to their sweet will and pleasure, the Air and the Earth, the Ocean and the Fire. This, our age, is one of progress, indeed, an era of the most triumphant display of human genius. But what good has all this great civilization and progress done to the millions in the

European slums, to the armies of the “great unwashed”? Have any of these displays of genius added one comfort more to the lives of the poor and the needy? Is it not true to say that distress and starvation are a hundred times greater now than they were in the days of the Druids or of Zoroaster? And is it to help the hungry multitudes that all this is invented, or again, only to sweep off the couch of the rich the last-forgotten rose-leaves that may uncomfortably tickle their well-fed bodies? Do electric wonders give one additional crust of bread to the starving? Do the towers and the bridges, and the forests of factories and manufactures, bring any mortal good to the sons of men, save giving an additional opportunity to the wealthy to vampirize or “sweat” their poorer brother? When, I ask again, at what time of the history of mankind, during its darkest days of ignorance, when was there known such ghastly starvation as we see now? When has the poor man wept and suffered, as he weeps and suffers in the present day—say, in London, where for every club-visitor who dines and wines himself daily, at a price that would feed twenty-five families for a whole day, one may count hundreds and thousands of starving wretches. Under the very windows of the fashionable City restaurants, radiant with warmth and electric lights, old trembling women and little children may be seen daily, shivering and fastening their hungry eyes on the food they smell each time the entrance door is opened. Then they “move on”—by order, to disappear in the dark gloom, to starve and shiver and finally to die in the frozen mud of some gutter. . . .

The “pagan” Parsis know not, nor would their community tolerate, any beggars in its midst, least of all—STARVATION!

Selfishness is the chief prompter of our age; *Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tout le monde*, its watchword. Where then is the truth, and what practical good has done that light brought to mankind by the “Light of the World,” as claimed by every Christian? Of the “Lights of Asia” Europe speaks with scorn, nor would it recognise in Ahura Mazda a *divine* light. And yet even a *minor* light (if such) when practically applied for the good of suffering mankind, is a thousand times more beneficent than even infinite Light, when confined to the realm of abstract theories. In our days the latter Light has only

succeeded in raising the pride of Christian nations to its acme, in developing their self-adulation, and fostering hard-heartedness under the name of all-binding law. The “personality” of both nation and individual has thrown deep roots into the soil of selfish motives; and of all the flowers of modern culture those that blossom the most luxuriously are the flowers of polite Falsehood, Vanity, and Self-exaltation.

Few are those who would confess or even deign to see, that beneath the brilliant surface of our civilization and culture lurks, refusing to be dislodged, all the inner filth of the evils created by Ahriman; and indeed, the truest symbol, the very picture of that civilization is the last creation of the Arch-fiend—the beautiful Peacock. Truly saith Theosophy unto you—it is *the Devil's Own*.

Lucifer, August 1890

PROGRESS AND CULTURE

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me
were sun or clime?

I, the heir of all the ages, in the foremost
files of time—

* * * *

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward,
forward let us range

Let the great world spin for ever down the
ringing groves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep
into the younger day

Better fifty years of Europe, than a cycle of
Cathay . . .

—TENNYSON

WE, of the century claiming itself as the XIXth of *our* era, are very proud of our Progress and Civilization—Church and Churchmen attributing both to the advent of Christianity—“Blot Christianity out of the pages of man’s history,” they say, “and what would his laws have been?—what his civilization?” Aye; “not a law which does not owe its truth and gentleness to Christianity, not a custom which cannot be traced in all its holy and healthful parts to the Gospel.” What an absurd boast, and how easily refuted! To discredit such statements one has but to remember that our laws are based on those of Moses—life for life and tooth for tooth; to recall the laws of the *holy* Inquisition, *i.e.*, the burning of heretics and witches by the hecatomb, on the slightest provocation;

the alleged right of the wealthiest and the strongest to sell their servants and fellow men into slavery, not to carry into effect the curse bestowed on Ham, but simply “to purchase the luxuries of Asia by supplying the slave market of the Saracens”;¹ and finally the *Christian* laws upheld to this day in England, and called women’s *disabilities*, social and political. Moreover, as in the blessed days of our forefathers’ ignorance, we meet now with such choice bits of unblushing *blague* as this, “We speak of our civilization, our arts, our freedom, our laws, and forget entirely *how large a share of all Is due to Christianity*” (Rose).

Those ladies who claim day after day and night after night with such earnest and passionate eloquence, at “Woman’s Franchise League” meetings, their legitimate share of rights as mothers, wives and citizens, and still attend “divine” service on Sundays—prosecute at best the unprofitable business of boring holes through sea-water. It is not the laws of the country that they should take to task, but the Church and chiefly themselves. It is the *Karma* of the women of our era. It was generated with Mary Magdalene, got into practical expression at the hands of the mother of Constantine, and found an ever renewed strength in every Queen and Empress “by the grace of God.” Judean Christianity owes its life to a woman—*une sublime hallucinee*, as Renan puts it. Modern protestantism and Roman Catholicism owe their illegitimate existence, again, to priest-ridden and church-going women; to the mother who teaches her son his first Bible lesson; to the wife or sister who forces her husband or brother to accompany her to church and chapel; to the emotional and hysterical spinster, the admirer of every popular preacher. And yet the predecessors of the latter have for fifteen centuries degraded women from every pulpit!

In *Lucifer* of October, 1889, in the article “The Women of Ceylon,” we can read the opinion of Principal Donaldson, LL.D., of the University of St. Andrews, about the degradation of woman by the Christian Church. This is what he said openly in the *Contemporary Review*.

It is a prevalent opinion that woman owes her present high position to Christianity. I used to believe in this opinion. But in the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favorable effect on the position of women, but, on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity.

Just so! “our laws and our arts,” but neither “our civilization” nor “our freedom.” No one could contradict the statement that these were won in spite of the most terrible opposition by the Church during long centuries, and in the face of her repeated and loud anathemas against civilization and freedom and the defenders of both. And yet, notwithstanding fact and truth, it is being constantly urged that even the elevated position (!) of the Christian woman as compared with her “heathen” sister, is entirely the work of Christianity! Were it true, this would at best be but a poor compliment to pay to a religion which claims to supersede all others. As it is not true, however—Lecky, among many other serious and trustworthy writers, having shown that “in the whole feudal legislation (of Christendom) women were placed *in a much lower legal position than in the Pagan Empire*”—the sooner and the oftener this fact is mentioned the better it will be for plain truth. Besides this, our ecclesiastical laws are honeycombed as has been said, with the Mosaic element. It is *Leviticus* not the Roman code, which is the creator and inspirer of legislation—in Protestant countries, at any rate.

Progress, says Carlyle, is “living movement.” This is true; but it is

¹ View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages by H. H. Hallam, LL.D., F.R.A.S., p. 614. The author adds: “This trade was not peculiar to Venice. In England, it was very common, even after the Conquest, to export slaves to Ireland; till in the reign of Henry II, the Irish came to a non-importation agreement which put a stop to the practice.” And then, in a footnote: “William of Malmesbury accuses the Anglo-Saxon nobility of selling their female servants even when pregnant by them, as slaves to foreigners.” This is the Christian mode of dealing as Abraham with Hagar with a vengeance!

How very correct then, the remark of H. H. Gardener, that in the New Testament “the words sister, mother, daughter, and wife, are only names for degradation and dishonor”!

That the above is a fact, may be seen in various works, and even in certain *Weeklies*. “Saladin” of the *Agnostic* gives in his last “At Random” eloquent proofs of the same by bringing forward dozens of quotations. Here are a few of these:

Mrs. Mary A. Livermore says: “The early Church fathers denounced women as noxious animals, necessary evils, and domestic perils.”

Lecky says: “Fierce invectives against the sex form a conspicuous and grotesque portion of the writings of the fathers.”

Mrs. Stanton says that holy books and the priesthood teach that “woman is the author of sin, who [in collusion with the devil] effected the fall of man.”

Gamble says that in the fourth century holy men gravely argued the question, “Ought women to be called human beings?”

But let the Christian fathers speak for themselves. Tertullian, in the following flattering manner, addresses woman: “You are the devil’s gateway; the unsealer of the forbidden tree; the first deserter from the divine law. You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed God’s image—man.”

Clement of Alexandria says: “It brings shame to reflect of what nature woman is.”

Gregory Thaumaturgus says: “One man among a thousand may be pure; a woman, never.”

“Woman is the organ of the devil.”—St. Bernard.

“Her voice is the hissing of the serpent.”—St. Anthony.

“Woman is the instrument which the devil uses to get possession of our souls.”—St. Cyprian.

“Woman is a scorpion.”—St. Bonaventure.

“The gate of the devil, the road of iniquity.”—St. Jerome.

“Woman is a daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of hell, the enemy of peace.”—St. John Damascene

“Of all wild beasts the most dangerous is woman.”—St. John Chrysostom.

“Woman has the poison of an asp, the malice of a dragon.”— St.

Gregory the Great.

Is it surprising, with such instructions from the fathers, that the children of the Christian Church should *not* “look up to women, and consider them men’s equals”?

Withal, it is emotional woman who, even at this hour of progress, remains as ever the chief supporter of the Church! Nay it is she again who is the sole cause, if we have to believe the Bible allegory, that there is any Christianity or churches at all. For only imagine where would be both, had not our mother Eve listened to the tempting Serpent. First of all there would be no sin. Secondly, the Devil having been thwarted, there would be no need of any Redemption at all, nor of any woman to have “seed” in order that it should “bruise under its heel the serpent’s head”; and thus there would be neither Church nor Satan. For as expressed by our old friend Cardinal Ventura de Raulica, Serpent-Satan is “one of the fundamental dogmas of the Church, and serves as a basis for Christianity.” Take away that basis and the whole struggle topples overboard into the dark waters of oblivion.

Therefore, we pronounce the Church ungrateful to woman, and the latter no worse than a willing martyr; for if her enfranchisement and freedom necessitated more than an average moral courage a century ago, it requires very little now; only a firm determination. Indeed, if the ancient and modern writers may be believed, in real culture, freedom, and self-dignity the woman of our century has placed herself far beneath the ancient Aryan mother, the Egyptian —of whom Wilkinson and Buckle say that she had the greatest influence and liberty, social, religious and political among her countrymen—and even the Roman matron. The late Peary Chand Mitra has shown, “Manu” in hand, to what supremacy and honor the women of ancient Aryavarta had been elevated. The author of the “Women of Ancient Egypt” tells us that “from the earliest time of which we can catch a glimpse, the women of Egypt enjoyed a freedom and independence of which modern nations are only beginning to dream/” To quote once more from “At Random”:

Sir Henry Maine says: “No society, which preserves any tincture of Christian institutions, is ever likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by the Roman law.”

The cause of "Woman's Rights" was championed in Greece five centuries before Christ.

Helen H. Gardener says: "When the Pagan law recognised her [the wife] as the equal of her husband, the Church discarded that law."

Lecky says: "In the legends of early Rome we have ample evidence both of the high moral estimate of women and of their prominence in Roman life. The tragedies of Lucretia and of Virginia display a delicacy of honor and a sense of the supreme excellence of unsullied purity which no Christian nation can surpass."

Sir Henry Maine, in his "Ancient Laws," says that "the inequality and oppression which related to women disappeared from Pagan laws," and adds: "the consequence was that the situation of the Roman female became one of great personal and proprietary independence; but Christianity tended somewhat, from the very first, to narrow this remarkable liberty." He further says that "the juriconsults of the day contended for better laws for wives, but the Church prevailed in most instances, and established the most oppressive ones."

Professor Draper, in his "Intellectual Development of Europe," gives certain facts as to the outrageous treatment of women by Christian men (the clergy included) which it would be exceedingly indelicate in me to repeat.

Moncure D. Conway says: "There is not a more cruel chapter in history than that which records the arrest, by Christianity, of the natural growth of European civilisation regarding women."

Neander, the Church historian, says: "Christianity diminishes the influence of woman."

But what are really culture and civilization? Dickens' idea that our hearts have benefited as much by macadam as our boots, is more original from a literary, than anaphoristical, standpoint. It is not true in principle, and it is disproved in nature by the very fact that there are far more good-hearted and noble-minded men and women in muddy country villages than there are in macadamised Paris or London. Real culture is spiritual. It proceeds from within outwards, and unless a person is naturally noble-minded and strives to progress on the spiritual before he does so on the physical or outward plane, such culture and civilization will be no better than whitened sepulchres full of dead men's bones and decay. And how can there be any true spiritual and intellectual culture when dogmatic creeds are the State religion and

enforced under the penalty of the opprobrium of large communities of 'believers.' No dogmatic creed can be progressive. Unless a dogma is the expression of a universal and proven fact in nature, it is no better than mental and intellectual slavery. One who accepts dogmas easily ends by becoming a dogmatist himself. And, as Watts has well said: "A dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious of his neighbors.... He is tempted to disdain his correspondents as men of low and dark understandings because they do not believe what he does."

The above finds its demonstration daily in bigoted clergymen, in priests and Rabbis. Speaking of the latter and of the *Talmud* in connection with progress and culture, we note some extraordinary articles in *Les Archives Israelites*, the leading organ of the French Jews, at Paris. In these the stagnation of all progress through fanaticism is so evident, that after reading some papers signed by such well-known names of *men of culture* as F. Cremieux (*Cleri-colisme et judaisme*), A. Franck, a member of the Institute (*Les Juifs et l'Humanite*), and especially an article by Elie Aristide Astruc, "*Grand rabbin de Bayonne, grand rabbin honoraire de la Belgique*," etc.—("Pourquoi nous restons Juifs")—no one can detect the faintest trace of the progress of the age, or preserve the slightest hope of ever witnessing that which the Christians are pleased to call the moral regeneration of the Jews. This article (not to mention the others), written by a man who has an enormous reputation for learning and ability, bears on its face the proofs of what is intellectual culture, *minus* spirituality. The paper is addressed to the French Jews, considered as the most progressed of their race, and is full of the most ardent and passionate apology for Talmudic Judaism, soaked through and through with colossal religious self-opinionatedness. Nothing can approach self-laudation. It precludes every moral progress and spiritual reformation in Judaism; it calls openly upon the race to exercise more than ever an uncompromising exclusiveness, and awakens the darkest and the most bigoted form of ignorant fanaticism. If such are the views of the leaders of the Jews settled in

France, the hotbed of civilization and progress, what hope is there left for their coreligionists of other countries?

The article, "Why we remain Jews," is curious. A. Astruc, the learned author thereof, notifies his readers solemnly that the Jews have to remain *nolens volens* Jews, as not one of the existing religions could "satisfy the genius of the nation." "Were we forced to break with Judaism," he argues, "where is that other creed which could guide our lives?" He speaks of the star that once arose in the East and led the Magi to Bethlehem, but asks, "could the East, the cradle of religions, give us now a true creed? Never!" Then he turns to an analysis of Islamism and Buddhism. The former, he finds too dry in dogma and too ritualistic in form, and shows that it could never satisfy the Israelitish mind. Buddhism with its aspirations towards *Nirvana*, considered as the greatest realisation of bliss and "the most abstruse *consciousness of non-being*" (?) seems to him too negative and passive.

We will not stop to discuss this new phase of metaphysics, *i.e.*, the phenomenon of *non-being* endowed with self-consciousness. Let us rather see the author's analysis of the two forms of Christianity—Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The former with its Trinitarianism, and the dogmas of Divine Incarnation and Redemption, are incomprehensible "to the free mind of the Israelite"; the latter is too much scattered into innumerable sects to ever become the religion of the future. Neither of these two faiths "could satisfy a Jew," he says; therefore, the Rabbi implores his coreligionists to remain faithful to Judaism, or the Mosaic law, as this faith is *the best and the most saving of all*; it is, in short, as he puts it, "the ultimate as the highest expression of human religious thought."

This ultra-fanatical article has drawn the attention of several "Christian" papers. One of these takes its author to task severely for *his fear of dogmas only because human reason is unable to comprehend them*; as though, he adds, "any religious faith *could ever be built upon reason*"! This is well said, and would denote real progressive thought in the mind of the critic, had not his definition of

belief in dogmas been a *bona fide* defence of them, which is far from showing philosophical progress. Then, the Russian reviewer, we are happy to say, defends Buddhism against the Rabbi's assault.

We would have our honorable friend understand that he is quite wrong in undervaluing Buddhism, or regarding it, as he does, as infinitely below Judaism. Buddhism with its spiritual aspiration heavenward, and its ascetic tendencies, is, with all its defects, most undeniably more spiritual and humanitarian than Judaism ever was; especially modern Judaism with its inimical exclusiveness, its dark and despotic *kahal*, its deadening talmudic ritualism, which is a Jewish substitute for religion, and its determined hatred of all progress (*Nov. Vremya*).

This is good. It shows a beginning, at any rate, of spiritual culture in the journalism of a country regarded hitherto as only *semi-civilised*, while the press of the fully civilised nations generally breathes religious intolerance and prejudice, if not hatred, whenever speaking of a *pagan* philosophy.

And what, after all, does *our* civilization amount to in the face of the grandiose civilizations of the Past, now so remote and so forgotten, as to furnish our modern conceit with the comforting idea that there never were any true civilizations at all before the advent of Christianity? Europeans call the Asiatic races "inferior" because, among other things, they eat with their hands and use no pocket-handkerchiefs. But how long is it that we, of Christendom, have ceased eating with our thumb and fingers, and begun blowing our noses with cambric? From the beginnings of the nations and down to the end of the XVIIIth century Christendom has either remained ignorant of, or scorned the use of, the fork. And yet in the Rome of the Caesars, civilization was at the height of its development; and we know that if at the feasts of Lucullus, famous for their gorgeous luxury and sumptuousness, each guest chose his succulent morsel by plunging his fingers into a dish of rare viands, the guests of the Kings of France did the same as late as the last century. Almost 2,000 years rolled away, between Lucullus and the Pagan Caesars on the one hand and the latest Bourbons on the other, yet the same personal habits prevailed; we find the same at the brilliant

courts of Francois I, Henry II, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV. The French historian, Alfred Franklin, gives in his interesting volumes *La Vie privee d'autrefois du XII au XVIII siecles, les Repas, etc.*, a mass of curious information, especially as to the etiquette and the laws of propriety which existed in those centuries. He who, instead of using daintily his three fingers, used the whole hand to fish a piece of food out of the dish, sinned as much against propriety in those days, as he who puts his knife to his mouth while eating, in our own day. Our forefathers had very strict rules on cleanliness: e.g., the three fingers being *de rigueur*, they could be neither licked, nor wiped on one's jacket, but had to be cleaned and dried after every course "on the table cloth." The VIth volume of the work named acquaints the reader with all the details of the sundry customs. The modern habit of washing one's hands before dinner—existing now in truth, only in England—was strictly *de rigueur*, not only at the courts of the French kings, but was a general custom, and had to be repeated before every course. The office was performed at courts by chamberlains and pages, who holding in their left hand a gold or silver basin, poured with their right hand out of a similar jug, aromatic, tepid water on to the hands of the diners. But this was in the reign of Henry III and IV. Two centuries later, in the face of progress and civilization, we see this custom disappearing, and preserved only at the courts and by the highest aristocracy. In the XVIth century it began to fall into desuetude: and even Louis the XIVth limited his ablutions to a wet napkin. In the midst of the *bourgeoisie* it had almost disappeared; and Napoleon 1st washed his hands only once before dinner. To-day no country save England has preserved this custom.

How much cleaner are the primitive peoples in eating than we are—the Hindus, for instance, and especially the Brahmans. These use no forks, but they take a full bath and change entirely their clothes before sitting down to dinner, during which they wash their hands repeatedly. No Brahman would eat with both his hands, or use his fingers for any other purpose while eating. But the Europeans of the eighteenth century had to be reminded, as we find in various works

upon etiquette, of such simple rules as the following: "It is considered improper, and even indecent, to touch one's nose, especially when full of snuff, while eating one's dinner" (*loc. cit.*). Yet Brahmans are "pagans" and our forefathers Christians.

In China, native forks (chop-sticks) were used 1,000 years B.C., as they are now. And when was the fork adopted in Europe? This is what Franklin tells us:

Roasted meats were eaten with fingers as late as the beginning of this century. Montaigne remarks in his *Essais* that he more than once bit his fingers through his habitual precipitation in eating. The fork was known in the days of Henry III, but rarely used before the end of the last century. The wife of Charles le Bel (1324) and Clemence of Hungary had in their dowry each one fork only; and the Duchess of Tours had two. Charles V (1380) and Charles VI (1418) had in their table inventory only three golden forks—for fruit. Charlotte d'Albrey (1514) three likewise, which were, however, never used.

Germany and Italy adopted the fork at their meals a century earlier than did the French. Cornet, an Englishman, was much surprised, while travelling in Italy in 1609, to find "a strange-looking, clumsy, and dangerous weapon called a fork," used by the natives while eating. In 1651 we find Ann of Austria refusing to use this "weapon," and eating together with her son (Louis XIV) with her fingers. The fork came into general use only at the beginning of our own century.

Whither then shall we turn to find a corroboration of the mendacious claim, that we owe our civilization and culture, our arts, sciences, and all, to the elevating and benign influence of Christianity? We owe to it nothing—nothing at all, neither physically nor morally. The progress we have achieved, so far, relates in every case to purely physical appliances, to objects and things, not to the *inner* man. We have now every convenience and comfort of life, everything that panders to our senses and vanity, but not one atom of moral improvement do we find in Christendom since the establishment of the religion of Christ. As the cowl does not make the monk, so the renunciation of the old Gods has not made men any better than they were before, but only, perhaps, worse. At any rate, it has created a

new form of hypocrisy—*cont*; nor has civilization spread as much as is claimed for it. London is civilized, but in truth—only in the West-end. As to the East-end with its squalid population, and its desolate wildernesses of Whitechapel, Limehouse, Stepney, etc., it is as uncultured and almost as barbarous as Europe was in the early centuries of our era, and its denizens, moreover, have acquired a form of brutality quite unknown to those early ages, and never dreamt of by the worst savages or modern heathen nations. And it is the same in every Christian metropolis, in every town and city; outward polish, inward roughness and rottenness—a Dead Sea fruit indeed!

The simple truth is that the word “civilization” is a very vague and undefined term. Like good and evil, beauty and ugliness, etc., civilization and barbarism are relative terms. For that which to the Chinaman, the Hindu, and the Persian would appear the height of culture, would be regarded by the European as a shocking lack of manners, a terrible breach of Society etiquette. In India the traveller is disgusted whenever he sees the native using his fingers instead of a pocket-handkerchief. In China, the Celestial is profoundly sickened at perceiving a European storing carefully into his pocket the product of his mucous glands. In Bombay the Puritan English woman regards, suffused with blushes, the narrow space of bared waist, and the naked knees and legs of the native woman. Bring the Brahmanee into a modern ball-room—nay, the “Queen’s Drawing-room”—and watch the effect produced on her. Several thousand years B.C., the Amazons danced the Circle Dance around the “Great Mother,” at the Mysteries; the daughters of Shiloh, bare to the waist, and the prophets of Baal divested of their clothes, whirled and leaped likewise at the Sabeian festivals. This was simply symbolical of the motion of the planets around the Sun, but is now branded as a *phallic dance*. How then will future generations characterize our modern ball-room dances and the favorite *waltz*? What difference is there between the ancient priestesses of the God Pan, or the Bacchantes, with the rest of the sacred dancers, and the modern priestesses of Terpsychore? We really see very little. The latter, nude almost down to their waists, dance likewise their “circle dance,” while whirling around the ballroom; the

only distinction between them being, that the former performed their dance without mixing with the opposite sex, while the waltzers are clasped in turn in the arms of strangers, of men who are neither their husbands nor their brothers.

How unfathomable are thy mysteries, O sphinx of progress, called modern civilization!

Theosophist, October, 1879

ANTIQUITY OF THE VEDAS

A JOURNAL interested like the THEOSOPHIST in the explorations of archaeology and archaic religions, as well as the study of the occult in nature, has to be doubly prudent and discreet. To bring the two conflicting elements— exact science and metaphysics—into direct contact, might create as great a disturbance as to throw a piece of potassium into a basin of water. The very fact that we are predestined and pledged to prove that some of the wisest of Western scholars have been misled by the dead letter of appearances and that they are unable to discover the hidden spirit in the relics of old, places us under the ban from the start. With those sciolists who are neither broad enough, nor sufficiently modest to allow their decisions to be reviewed, we are necessarily in antagonism. Therefore, it is essential that our position in relation to certain scientific hypotheses, perhaps tentative and only sanctioned for want of better ones—should be clearly defined at the outset.

An infinitude of study has been bestowed by the archaeologists and the orientalists upon the question of chronology—especially in regard to Comparative Theology. So far, their affirmations as to the relative antiquity of the great religions of the pre-Christian era are little more than plausible hypotheses. How far back the national and religious Vedic period, so called, extends—“it is impossible to tell,” confesses Prof. Max Muller; nevertheless, he traces it “to a period anterior to 1,000 B.C.,” and brings us “to 1,100 or 1,200 B.C., as the earliest time when we may suppose the collection of the Vedic hymns to have been finished.” Nor do any other of our leading scholars claim to have finally settled the vexed question, especially delicate as it is in its bearing upon the chronology of the book of Genesis.

Christianity, the direct outflow of Judaism and in most cases the State religion of their respective countries, has unfortunately stood in their way. Hence, scarcely two scholars agree; and each assigns a different date to the Vedas and the Mosaic books, taking care in every case to give the latter the benefit of the doubt. Even that leader of the leaders in philological and chronological questions—Professor Muller, hardly twenty years ago, allowed himself a prudent margin by stating that it will be difficult to settle “whether the Veda is ‘the oldest of books,’ and whether some of the portions of the Old Testament may not be traced back to the same or even an earlier date than the oldest hymns of the Veda.” The THEOSOPHIST is, therefore, quite warranted in either adopting or rejecting as it pleases the so-called authoritative chronology of science. Do we err then, in confessing that we rather incline to accept the chronology of that renowned Vedic scholar, Swami Dayanund Saraswati, who unquestionably knows what he is talking about, has the four Vedas by heart, is perfectly familiar with all Sanskrit literature, has no such scruples as the Western Orientalists in regard to public feelings, nor desire to humour the superstitious notions of the majority, nor has any object to gain in suppressing facts? We are only too conscious of the risk in withholding our adulation from scientific authorities. Yet, with the common temerity of the heterodox we must take our course, even though, like the Tarpeia of old, we be smothered under a heap of shields—a shower of learned quotations from these “authorities.”

We are far from feeling ready to adopt the absurd chronology of a Berosus or even Syncellus—though in truth they appear “absurd” only in the light of our preconceptions. But, between the extreme claims of the Brahmins and the ridiculously short periods conceded by our Orientalists for the development and full growth of that gigantic literature of the ante-Mahabharatan period, there ought to be a just mean. While Swami Dayanund Saraswati asserts that “The Vedas have now ceased to be objects of study for nearly 5,000 years,” and places the first appearance of the four Vedas at an immense antiquity; Professor Muller, assigning for the composition of even the earliest among the Brahmanas, the years from about 1,000 to 800 B.C.,

hardly dares, as we have seen, to place the collection and the original composition of the Sanhita, of Rig- Vedic hymns, earlier than 1,200 to 1,500 before our era!¹ Whom ought we to believe; and which of the two is the better informed? Cannot this gap of several thousand years be closed, or would it be equally difficult for either of the two cited authorities to give data which would be regarded by science as thoroughly convincing? It is as easy to reach a false conclusion by the modern inductive method as to assume false premises from which to make deductions. Doubtless Professor Max Muller has good reasons for arriving at his chronological conclusions. But so has Dayanund Saraswati Pandit.

The gradual modifications, development and growth of the Sanskrit language are sure guides enough for an expert philologist. But, that there is a possibility of his having been led into error would seem to suggest itself upon considering a certain argument brought forward by Swami Dayanund. Our respected friend and teacher maintains that both Professor Muller and Dr. Wilson have been solely guided in their researches and conclusion by the inaccurate and untrustworthy commentaries of Sayana, Mahidar, and Uvata, commentaries which differ diametrically from those of a far earlier period as used by himself in connection with his great work the Veda Bhashya. A cry was raised at the outset of this publication that Swami's commentary is calculated to refute Sayana and the English interpreters. "For this," very justly remarks Pandit Dayanund, "I cannot be blamed; if Sayana has erred, and English interpreters have chosen to take him for their guide, the delusion cannot be long maintained. Truth alone can stand, and Falsehood before growing civilization must fall."² And if, as he claims, his Veda Bhashya is entirely founded on the old commentaries of the ante-Mahabharatan period to which the Western scholars have had no access, then, since his were the surest guides of the two classes, we cannot hesitate to follow him, rather than the best of our European Orientalists.

¹ Lecture on the Vedas.

² Answer to the Objections to the Veda-Bhashya.

But, apart from such *prima facie* evidence, we would respectfully request Professor Max Muller to solve us a riddle. Propounded by himself, it has puzzled us for over twenty years, and pertains as much to simple logic as to the chronology in question. Clear and un-deviating, like the Rhone through the Geneva lake, the idea runs through the course of his lectures, from the first volume of "Chips" down to his last discourse. We will try to explain.

All who have followed his lectures as attentively as ourselves will remember that Professor Max Muller attributes the wealth of myths, symbols, and religious allegories in the Vedic hymns, as in Grecian mythology, to the early worship of nature by man. "In the hymns of the Vedas," to quote his words, "we see man left to himself to solve the riddle of this world. He is awakened from darkness and slumber by the light of the sun"...and he calls it—"his life, his truth, his brilliant Lord and Protector." He gives names to all the powers of nature, and after he has called the fire "Agni," the sun-light "Indra," the storms "Maruts," and the dawn "Usha," they all seem to grow naturally into beings like himself, nay greater than himself.³ This definition of the mental state of *primitive* man, in the days of the very infancy of humanity, and when hardly out of its cradle—is perfect. The period to which he attributes these effusions of an infantile mind, is the Vedic period, and the time which separates us from it is, as claimed above, 3,000 years. So much impressed seems the great philologist with this idea of the mental feebleness of mankind at the time when these hymns were composed by the four venerable Rishis, that in his introduction to the Science of Religion (p. 278) we find the Professor saying: "Do you still wonder at polytheism or at mythology? Why, they are inevitable. They are, if you like, a *parler enfantin* of religion. But the world has its childhood, and when it was a child it spake as a child, (note bene, 3,000 years ago), it understood as a child, it thought as a child . . . The fault rests with us if we insist on *taking the language of children for the language of men*. . . . The language of antiquity is the language of childhood . . . the *parler enfantin* in

³ *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. I, p. 68.

religion is not extinct... as, for instance, the religion of India.”

Having read thus far, we pause and think. At the very close of this able explanation, we meet with a tremendous difficulty, the idea of which must have never occurred to the able advocate of the ancient faiths. To one familiar with the writings and ideas of this Oriental scholar, it would seem the height of absurdity to suspect him of accepting the Biblical chronology of 6,000 years since the appearance of the first man upon earth as the basis of his calculations. And yet the recognition of such chronology is inevitable if we have to accept Professor Muller’s reasons at all; for here we run against a purely arithmetical and mathematical obstacle, a gigantic miscalculation of proportion . . .

No one can deny that the growth and development of mankind—mental as well as physical—must be analogically measured by the growth and development of man. An anthropologist, if he cares to go beyond the simple consideration of the relations of man to other members of the animal kingdom, has to be in a certain way a physiologist as well as an anatomist; for, as much as ethnology it is a progressive science which can be well treated but by those who are able to follow up retrospectively the regular unfolding of human faculties and powers, assigning to each a certain period of life. Thus, no one would regard a skull in which the wisdom-tooth, so called, would be apparent, the skull of an infant. Now, according to geology, recent researches “give good reasons to believe that under low and base grades the existence of man can be traced back into the tertiary times.” In the old glacial drift of Scotland— says Professor W. Draper—“the relics of man are found along with those of the fossil elephant”; and the best calculations so far assign a period of two-hundred-and-forty thousand years since the beginning of the last glacial period. Making a proportion between 240,000 years—the least age we can accord to the human race— and 24 years of a man’s life, we find that three thousand years ago, or the period of the composition of Vedic hymns, mankind would be just twenty-one—the legal age of majority, and certainly a period at which man ceases using, if he ever will, the *parler enfantin* or childish lisping. But, according to the

views of the Lecturer, it follows that man was, three thousand years ago, at twenty-one, a foolish and undeveloped—though a very promising—infant, and at twenty-four, has become the brilliant, acute, learned, highly analytical and philosophical man of the nineteenth century. Or, still keeping our equation in view, in other words, the Professor might as well say, that an individual who was a nursing baby at 12 M. on a certain day, would at 12:20 P.M., on the same day, have become an adult speaking high wisdom instead of his *parler enfantin!*

It really seems the duty of the eminent Sanskritist and Lecturer on Comparative Theology to get out of this dilemma. Either the Rig-Veda hymns were composed but 3,000 years ago, and, therefore, cannot be expressed in the “language of childhood”—man having lived in the glacial period—but the generation which composed them must have been composed of adults, presumably as philosophical and scientific in the knowledge of their day, as we are in our own; or, we have to ascribe to them an immense antiquity in order to carry them back to the days of human mental infancy. And, in this latter case, Professor Max Muller will have to withdraw a previous remark, expressing the doubt “whether some of the portions of the Old Testament may not be traced back to the same or even an earlier date than the oldest hymns of the Vedas.”