

Title

The Ancient Wisdom

Annie Besant

Bird Publisher, 2012

About this eBook

Annie Besant: The Ancient Wisdom
Annie Besant, 1897
© Bird Publisher, 2012

ISBN 978-961-279-451-4 (pdf)
ISBN 978-961-279-452-1 (mobi)
ISBN 978-961-279-453-8 (ePUB)

ISBN

Published by:
Bird Publisher
DP d.o.o.
Levčeva ulica 13
SI - 1234 Mengeš
Slovenia
T: +386 (0)1 723 78 28
Email: info@bird-publisher.com
<http://www.bird-publisher.com>

Published in electronic format, April 2012 by Bird Publisher
Available electronically at: www.bird-publisher.com
For the Publisher, cover & eBook: Damjan Plut

Copyright and license

All rights reserved

Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of both the above publisher of this book.

License Notes

This eBook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This eBook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each person you share it with. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then you should purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the author's work.

Contents/page

Title 1

About this eBook 3

Copyright and license 4

Contents/page 5

Preface 6

Intoduction – The Unity Underlying all Religions 7

Chapter I: THE PHYSICAL PLANE 24

Chapter II: THE ASTRAL PLANE 32

Chapter III: KÂMALOKA 43

Chapter IV: THE MENTAL PLANE 53

Chapter V: DEVACHAN 66

Chapter VI: THE BUDDHIC AND NIRVÂNIC PLANES 77

Chapter VII: REINCARNATION 84

Chapter VIII: REINCARNATION CONTINUED 96

KARMA 110

Chapter X: THE LAW OF SACRIFICE 124

Chapter XI: MAN’S ASCENT 131

Chapter XII: BUILDING A COSMOS 141

Preface

This book is intended to place in the hands of the general reader an epitome of theosophical teachings, sufficiently plain to serve the elementary student, and sufficiently full to lay a sound foundation for further knowledge. It is hoped that it may serve as an introduction to the profounder works of H. P. Blavatsky, and be a convenient steppingstone to their study.

Those who have learned a little of the Ancient Wisdom know the illumination, the peace, the joy, the strength, its lessons have brought into their lives. That this book may win some to con its teachings, and to prove for themselves their value, is the prayer with which it is sent forth into the world.

Annie Besant, August 1897

Intoduction – The Unity Underlying all Religions

Right thought is necessary to right conduct, right understanding to right living, and the Divine Wisdom – whether called by its ancient Sanskrit name of Brahma Vidyā, or its modern Greek name of Theosophia, Theosophy – comes to the world as at once an adequate philosophy and an all-embracing religion and ethic. It was once said of the Christian Scriptures by a devotee that they contained shallows in which a child could wade and depths in which a giant must swim. A similar statement might be made of Theosophy, for some of its teachings are so simple and so practical that any person of average intelligence can understand and follow them, while others are so lofty, so profound, that the ablest strains his intellect to contain them and sinks exhausted in the effort.

In the present volume an attempt will be made to place Theosophy before the reader simply and clearly, in a way which shall convey its general principles and truths as forming a coherent conception of the universe, and shall give such detail as is necessary for the understanding of their relations to each other. An elementary textbook cannot pretend to give the fullness of knowledge that may be obtained from abstruse works, but it should leave the student with clear fundamental ideas on his subject, with much indeed to add by future study but with little to unlearn. Into the outline given by such a book the student should be able to paint the details of further research.

It is admitted on all hands that a survey of the great religions of the world shows that they hold in common many religious, ethical, and philosophical ideas. But while the fact is universally granted, the explanation of the fact is a matter of dispute.

Some allege that religions have grown up on the soil of human ignorance tilled by the imagination, and have been gradually elaborated from crude forms of animism and fetishism; their likenesses are referred to universal natural phenomena imperfectly observed and fancifully explained, solar and star worship being the universal key for one school, phallic worship the equally universal key for another; fear, desire, ignorance, and wonder led the savage to personify the powers of nature, and priests played upon his terrors and his hopes, his misty fancies, and his bewildered questionings; myths became scriptures and symbols facts, and their basis was universal the likeness of the products was inevitable. Thus speak the doctors of “Comparative Mythology,” and plain people are silenced but not convinced under the rain of proofs; they cannot deny the likenesses, but they dimly feel: Are all man’s dearest hopes and lofty imaginings nothing more than the outcome of savage fancies and of groping ignorance? Have the great leaders of the race, the martyrs and heroes of humanity, lived, wrought, suffered and died deluded, for the mere personifications of astronomical facts and for the draped obscenities of barbarians?

The second explanation of the common property in the religions of the world asserts the existence of an original teaching in the custody of a Brotherhood of great spiritual Teachers, who – Themselves the outcome of past cycles of evolution – acted as the instructors and guides of the child-humanity of our planet, imparting to its races and nations in turn the fundamental truths of religion in the form most adapted to the idiosyncrasies of the recipients. According to this view, the Founders of the great religions are members of the one Brotherhood, and were aided in Their mission by many other members, lower in degree than Themselves, Initiates and disciples of various grades, eminent in spiritual insight, in philosophical knowledge, or in purity of ethical wisdom. These guided the infant nations, gave them their polity, enacted their laws, ruled them as kings, taught them as philosophers, guided them as priests; all the nations of antiquity looked back to such mighty men, demigods, and heroes, and they left their traces in literature, in architecture, in legislation.

That such men lived it seems difficult to deny in the face of universal tradition, of still existing Scriptures, and of prehistoric remains for the most part now in ruins, to say nothing of other testimony which the ignorant would reject. The sacred books of the East are the best evidence for the greatness of their authors, for who in later days or in modern times can even approach the spiritual sublimity of their religious thought, the intellectual splendour of their philosophy, the breadth and purity of their ethic? And when we find that these books contain teachings about God, man, and the universe identical in substance under much variety of outer appearance, it does not seem unreasonable to refer to them to a central primary body of doctrine. To that body we give the name Divine Wisdom, in its Greek form: *THEOSOPHY*.

As the origin and basis of all religions, it cannot be the antagonist of any: it is indeed their purifier, revealing the valuable inner meaning of much that has become mischievous in its external presentation by the perverseness of ignorance and the accretions of superstition; but it recognizes and defends itself in each, and seeks in each to unveil its hidden wisdom. No man in becoming a Theosophist need cease to be a Christian, a Buddhist, a Hindu; he will but acquire a deeper insight into his own faith, a firmer hold on its spiritual truths, a broader understanding of its sacred teachings. As Theosophy of old gave birth to religions, so in modern times does it justify and defend them. It is the rock whence all of them were hewn, the hole of the pit whence all were dug. It justifies at the bar of intellectual criticism the deepest longings and emotions of the human heart: it verifies our hopes for man; it gives us back ennobled our faith in God.

The truth of this statement becomes more and more apparent as we study the various world-Scriptures, and but a few selections from the wealth of material available will be sufficient to establish the fact, and to guide the student in his search for further verification. The main spiritual verities of religion may be summarized thus:

- 1) One eternal, infinite, incognisable real Existence.
- 2) From THAT the manifested God, unfolding from unity to duality to trinity.
- 3) From the manifested Trinity many spiritual Intelligences, guiding cosmic order.
- 4) Man a reflection of the manifested God and therefore a trinity fundamentally, his inner and real Self being eternal, one with the Self of the universe.
- 5) His evolution by repeated incarnations, into which he is drawn by desire, and from which he is set free by knowledge and sacrifice, becoming divine in potency as he had ever been divine in latency.

China which is now a fossilized civilization, was peopled in old days by the Turanians, the fourth subdivision of the great Fourth Race, the race which inhabited the lost continent of Atlantis, and spread its offshoots over the world. The Mongolians, the last subdivision of that same race, later reinforced its population, so that in China we have traditions from ancient days, preceding the settlement of the Fifth, or Āryan race in India. In the Ching Chang Ching, or Classic of Purity, we have a fragment of an ancient scripture of singular beauty, breathing out the spirit of restfulness and peace so characteristic of the "original teaching." Mr. Legge says in the introductory note to his translation [The Sacred Books of the East] that the treatise:

"Is attributed to Ko Yüan (*or Hsüan*), a Tāoist of the Wü dynasty (*A.D.* 222-227), who is fabled to have attained to the state of an Immortal, and is generally so denominated. He is represented as a worker of miracles; as addicted to intemperance, and very eccentric in his ways. When shipwrecked on one occasion, he emerged from beneath the water with his clothes un wet, and walked freely on the surface. Finally he ascended to the sky in bright day. All these accounts may safely be put down as the figments of later time."

Such stories are repeatedly told of Initiates of various degrees, and are by no means

necessarily “figments,” but we are more interested in Ko Yüan’s own account of the book.

“When I obtained the true Tāo, I recited this Ching [book] ten thousand times. It is what the Spirits of heaven practice and had not been communicated to scholars of this lower world. I got it from the Divine Ruler of the Eastern Hwa; he received it from the Divine Ruler of the Golden Gate; he received it from the Royal-mother of the West.

Now the “Divine Ruler of the Golden Gate,” was the title held by the Initiate who ruled the Toltec empire in Atlantis, and its use suggests that the Classic of Purity was brought thence to China when the Turanians separated off from the Toltecs. The idea is strengthened by the contents of the brief treatise, which deals with Tāo – literally “the Way” – the name by which the One Reality is indicated in the ancient Turanian and Mongolian religion. We read:

“The Great Tāo has no bodily form, but It produced and nourishes heaven and earth. The Great Tāo has no passions, but It causes the sun and the moon to revolve as they do. The Great Tāo has no name, but It effects the growth and maintenance of all things. (i,1)

This is the manifested God as unity, but duality supervenes:

Now the Tāo (*shows itself in two forms*), the Pure and the Turbid, and has (*two conditions of*) Motion and Rest, Heaven is pure and earth is turbid; heaven moves and the earth is at rest . The masculine is pure and the feminine is turbid; the masculine moves and the feminine is still. The radical (*Purity*) descended, and the (turbid) issue flowed abroad, and thus all things were produced (*I, 2*).

This passage is particularly interesting from the allusion to the active and receptive sides of Nature, the distinction between Spirit, the generator, and Matter, the nourisher, so familiar in later writings.

In the *Tāo Te Ching* the teaching as to the Unmanifested and the Manifested comes out very plainly.

“The Tāo that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tāo. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name. Having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth, having a name, it is the Mother of all things...Under these two aspects it is really the same; but as development takes place it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery (*i, 1, 2, 4*). “

Students of the Kabbalah will be reminded of one of the Divine Names, “the Concealed Mystery.”

Again: “There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before heaven and earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted). It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tāo. Making an effort to give it a name, I call it the Great. Great, it passes on (in constant flow). Passing on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns (*xxv, 1-3*). “

Very interesting it is to see here the idea of the forth going and the returning of the One Life, so familiar to us in the Hindu Literature. Familiar seems the verse:

“All things under heaven sprang from It as existent (*and named*); that existence sprang from

It as non-existent (*and not named*) (*xl, 2*)”.

That a Universe might become, the Unmanifest must give forth the One from whom duality and trinity proceed:

“The Tāo produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced all things. All things leave behind them the Obscurity (*out of which they have come*), and go forward to embrace the Brightness (*into which they have emerged*), while they are harmonised by the Breath of vacancy (*xlii, 1*).”

“Breath of Space” would be a happier translation. Since all is produced from It, It exists in all:

“All pervading is the Great Tāo. It may be found on the left hand and on the right ...It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their lord; - It may be named in the smallest things. All things return (to their root and disappear), and do not know that it is It which presides over their doing so – It may be named in the greatest things (*xxxiv, 1, 2*).”

Chwang-ze (*fourth century BC*) in his presentation of the ancient teachings, refers to the spiritual Intelligences coming from the Tāo:

“It has Its root and ground (of existence) in Itself. Before there were heaven and earth, from of old, there It was securely existing. From It came the mysterious existence of spirits, from It the mysterious existence of God (*Bk. vi, Pt. I, Sec. vi, 7*).”

A number of the names of these Intelligences follow, but such beings are so well known to play a great part in the Chinese religion that we need not multiply quotations about them.

Man is regarded as a trinity, Tāoism, says Mr. Legge, recognizing in him the spirit, the mind, and the body. This division comes out clearly in the *Classic of Purity*, in the teaching that man must get rid of desire to reach union with the One: Now the spirit of man loves purity, but his mind disturbs it. The mind of man loves stillness, but his desires draw it away. If he could always send his desires away, his mind of itself would be still. Let his mind be made clean, and his spirit of itself becomes pureThe reason why men are not able to attain to this is because their minds have not been cleansed, and their desires have not been sent away. If one is able to send the desires away, when he then looks at his mind it is no longer his: when he looks out at his body it is no longer his; and when he looks farther off at external things, they are things which he has nothing to do with ..(*i, 3, 4*).

Then, after giving the stages of indrawing to “the condition of perfect stillness,” it is asked:

“In that condition of rest independently of place, how can any desire arise? And when no desire any longer arises there is the true stillness and rest. That true (*stillness*) becomes (a) constant quality, and responds to external things (*without error*); yea, that true and constant quality holds possession of the nature. In such constant response and constant stillness there is constant purity and rest. He who has this absolute purity enters gradually into the (*inspiration of the*) True Tāo (*i, 5*).”

The supplied words “*inspiration of*” rather cloud than elucidate the meaning, for entering into the Tāo is congruous with the whole idea and with other Scriptures.

On putting away of desire is laid much stress in Tāoism; a commentator on the *Classic of Purity*

remarks that understanding the Tāo depends on absolute purity, and

The acquiring the Absolute Purity depends entirely on the putting away of Desire, which is the urgent practical lesson of the Treatise.

The Tāo Teh Ching says:
Always without desire we must be found,
If its deep mystery we would sound;
But if desire always within us be,
Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.(i, 3)

Reincarnation does not seem to be so distinctly taught as might have been expected, although passages are found which imply that the main idea was taken for granted and that the entity was considered as ranging through animal as well as human births. Thus we have from Chwang-ze the quaint and wise story of a dying man, to whom his friend said:

“Great indeed is the Creator! What will He now make you to become? Where will He take you to? Will he make you the liver of a rat or the arm of an insect? Szelai replied, “Wherever a parent tells a son to go, east, west, south or north, he simply follows the command ...Here now is a great founder, casting his metal. If the metal were to leap up (*in the pot*) and say, ‘I must be made into a (*sword like the*) Moysh,’ the great founder would be sure to regard it as uncanny. So again, when a form is being fashioned in the mould of the womb, if it were to say, ‘I must become a man, I must become a man,’ the Creator would be sure to regard it as uncanny. When we once understand that heaven and earth are a great melting pot and the Creator a great founder, where can we go to that shall not be right for us? We are born as from a quiet sleep and we die to a calm awaking” (*Bk. vi, Pt. I, Sec. vi*).

Turning to the Fifth, the Āryan Race, we have the same teachings embodied in the oldest and greatest Āryan religion – the Brāhmanical. The eternal Existence is proclaimed in the Chhāndogyanishad as “One only, without a second,” and it is written:

It willed, I shall multiply for the sake of the universe (*vi, ii, 1, 3*).

The Supreme Logos, Brahman, is threefold – Being, Consciousness, Bliss, and it is said:

From This arise life, mind and all the senses, ether, air, fire, water, earth the support of all (*Mundakopaniṣad, ii,3*).

No grander descriptions of Deity can be found anywhere than in the Hindu Scriptures, but they are becoming so familiar that brief quotation will suffice. Let the following serve as specimens of their wealth of gems:

“Manifest, near, moving in the secret place, the great abode, herein rests all that moves, breathes, and shuts the eyes. Know That as to be worshipped, being and non-being, the best, beyond the knowledge of all creatures. Luminous, subtler than the subtle, in which the worlds and their denizens are in fixed. That, this imperishable Brahman; That, also life and voice and mind...In the golden highest sheath is spotless, part less Brahman; That the pure Light of lights, known by the knowers of the Self...That deathless Brahman is before, Brahman behind, Brahman to the right and to the left, below, above, pervading; this Brahman truly is the all. This is the best (*Mundakopaniṣad, II,ii, 1,2,9,11*).

Beyond the universe, Brahman, the supreme, the great, hidden in all beings according to

their bodies, the one Breath of the whole universe, the Lord, whom knowing (*men*) become immortal. I know that mighty Spirit, the shining sun beyond darkness... I know Him the unfading, the ancient, the Soul of all, omnipresent by His nature, whom the Brahman-knowers call unborn, whom they call eternal (*Shvetāshvataropaniṣad*, iii. 7,8,21).

When there is no darkness, no day nor night, no being nor non-being (*there is*) Shiva even alone; That the indestructible, That is to be worshipped by Savriti, from That came forth the ancient wisdom. Not above nor below, nor in the midst, can He be comprehended. Nor is there any similitude for Him whose name is infinite glory. Not with the sight is established His form, none may by the eye behold Him; they who know Him by the heart and by the mind, dwelling in the heart, become immortal (*Ibid.*, iv, 18-20).

That man in his inner Self is one with the Self of the universe – “I am That” – is an idea that so thoroughly pervades all Hindu thought that man is often referred to as the “divine town of Brahman,” [Mundakopaniṣad] the “town of nine gates,” [*Shvetāshvataropaniṣad*, iii,14.] God dwelling in the cavity of the heart.[*Ibid.*, Ii]

“In one manner is to be seen (the Being) which cannot be proved, which is eternal, without spot, higher than the ether, unborn, the great eternal Soul...This great unborn Soul is the same which abides as the intelligent (soul) in all living creatures, the same which abides as ether in the heart; (*The “ether in the heart” is a mystical phrase used to indicate the One, who is said to dwell therein.*) - in him it sleeps; it is the Subduer of all, the Ruler of all, the sovereign Lord of all; it does not become greater by good works nor less by evil work. It is the Ruler of all, the sovereign Lord of all beings, the Preserver of all beings, the Bridge, the Upholder of the worlds, so that they fall not to ruin (*Bṛihadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, IV, iv, 20,22, Trs. Dr. E. Röer.)

When God is regarded as the evolver of the universe, the threefold character comes out very clearly as Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahmā or again as Vishnu sleeping under the waters, the Lotus springing from Him, and in the Lotus Brahmā. Man is likewise threefold, and in the Māndūkyaopaniṣad the self is described as conditioned by the physical body, the subtle body, and the mental body, and then rising out of all into the One “without duality.” From the Trimurti (Trinity) come many Gods, connected with the administration of the universe, as to whom it is said in the Bṛihadāraṇyakopaniṣad.

“Adore Him, ye Gods, after whom the year by rolling days is completed, the Light of lights, as the Immortal Life (*IV*, iv, 16).”

It is hardly necessary to mention the presence in Brâhmanism of the teaching of reincarnation, since its whole philosophy of life turns on this pilgrimage of the Soul through many births and deaths, and not a book could be taken up in which this truth is not taken for granted. By desires man is bound to this wheel of change, and therefore by knowledge, devotion, and the destruction of desires, man must set himself free. When the Soul knows God it is liberated. (*Shvetāsh*, I, 8.) The intellect purified by knowledge beholds Him. (*Mund.*, III, I,8 .) Knowledge joined to devotion finds the abode of Brahman. (*Mund.*, III, ii,4). Whoever knows Brahman, becomes Brahman. (*Mund.*, III, ii,9) When desires cease the mortal becomes immortal and obtains Brahman. (*Kathop.*, vi, 14).

Buddhism, as it exists in its northern form, is quite at one with the most ancient faiths, but in the southern form it seems to have let slip the idea of the Logoic Trinity as of the One Existence from which They came forth. The LOGOS in His triple manifestation is: the First LOGOS, Amitâbha, the Boundless Light; the Second, Avalokiteshvara, or Padmapāni (*Chenresi*); the Third, Manjusri – “the representative of creative wisdom, corresponding to Brahmâ.” (*Eitel’s Sanskrit*

Chinese Dictionary, sub voce.) Chinese Buddhism apparently does not contain the idea of a primordial Existence, beyond the LOGOS, but Nepalese Buddhism postulates Âdi-Buddha, from Whom Amitâbha arises. Padmapâni is said by Eitel to be the representative of compassionate Providence and to correspond partly with Shiva, but as the aspect of the Buddhist Trinity that sends forth incarnations He appears rather to represent the same idea as Vishnu, to whom He is allied by bearing the Lotus (fire and water, or Spirit and Matter as the primary constituents of the universe).

Reincarnation and Karma are so much the fundamentals of Buddhism that it is hardly worthwhile to insist on them save to note the way of liberation, and to remark that as the Lord Buddha was a Hindu preaching to Hindus, Brâhmanical doctrines are taken for granted constantly in His teaching, as matters of course. He was a purifier and a reformer, not an iconoclast, and struck at the accretions due to ignorance, not at fundamental truths belonging to the Ancient Wisdom.

“Those beings who walk in the way of the law that has been well taught, reach the other shore of the great sea of birth and death, that is difficult to cross.” (*Udânavarga, xxix. 37*).

Desire binds man, and must be gotten rid of:

“It is hard for one who is held by the fetters of desire to free himself of them, says the Blessed One. The steadfast, who care not for the happiness of desires, cast them off and do soon depart (to Nirvâna)...Mankind has no lasting desires: they are impermanent in them who experience them; free yourselves then from what cannot last, and abide not in the sojourn of death (*Ibid., Ii, 6, 8*).

He who has destroyed desires for (worldly)goods, sinfulness, the bonds of the eye of the flesh, who has torn up desire by the very root, he, I declare, is a Brâhmana (*Ibid., xxxiii, 68*).

And a Brâhmana is a man “having his last body,” (*Udânavarga, xxxiii, 41*) and is defined as one.

“Who, knowing his former abodes (existences) perceives heaven and hell, the Muni, who has found the way to put an end to birth”. (*ibid., xxxiii, 55*).

In the exoteric Hebrew Scriptures, the idea of a Trinity does not come out strongly, though duality is apparent, and the God spoken of is obviously the LOGOS, not the One Unmanifest:

“I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am the Lord that doeth all these things.” (*Is., xlvi, 7*)

Philo, however, has the doctrine of the LOGOS very clearly, and it is found in the Fourth Gospel:

“In the beginning was the Word [Logos] and the Word was with God and the Word was God....All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. (*St. John i, 1, 3*).

In the Kabalah the doctrine of the One, the Three, the Seven, and then the many, is plainly taught:

The Ancient of the Ancients, the Unknown of the Unknown, has a form, yet also has not any

form. It has a form through which the universe is maintained. It also has not any form, as It cannot be comprehended. When It first took this form [*Kether, the Crown, the First Logos*] It permitted to proceed from It nine brilliant Lights [*Wisdom and the Voice, forming with Kether the Triad, and then the seven lower Sephiroth*] ...It is the Ancient of the Ancients, the Mystery of the Mysteries, the Unknown of the Unknown.

It has a form which appertains to It, since It appears (*through it*) to us, as the Ancient Man above all as the Ancient of the Ancients, and as that which there is the Most Unknown among the Unknown. But under that form by which It makes Itself known, It however still remains the Unknown (*Issac Myer's Qabalah, from the Zohar, pp. 274-275*).

Myer points out that the "form" is "not 'the Ancient of the Ancients,' who is the Ain Soph.

Again: "Three Lights are in the Holy Upper which Unite as One; and they are the basis of the Torah, and this opens the door to all....Come, see! the mystery of the word. These are three degrees and each exists by itself, and yet all are One and are knotted in One, nor are they separated one from another....Three come out from One, One exists in Three, it is the force between Two, Two nourishes One. One nourishes many sides, thus All is One. (*ibid.*, 373, 375,376).

Needless to say that the Hebrews held the doctrine of many Gods – "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods?" –and of multitudes of subordinate ministrants, the "Sons of God," the "Angels of the Lord," the "Ten Angelic Hosts."(*Exodus, xv,ii.*)

Of the commencement of the universe the Zohar teaches: In the beginning was the Will of the King, prior to any existence which came into being through emanation from this Will. It sketched and engraved the forms of all things that were to be manifested from concealment into view, in the supreme and dazzling light of the Quadrant [the Sacred Tetractys] (*Myer's Quabalah, pp. 194-95*).

Nothing can exist in which the Deity is not imminent, and with regard to Reincarnation it is taught that the Soul is present in the divine Idea ere coming to earth; if the Soul remained quite pure during its trial it escaped rebirth, but this seems to have been only a theoretical possibility, and it is said:

All souls are subject to revolution (metempsychosis, a'leen o'gilgoolah), but men do not know the ways of the Holy One: blessed be It! they are ignorant of the way they have been judged in all time, and before they came into this world and when they have quitted it (*ibid.*, p. 198).

Traces of this belief occur both in the Hebrew and Christian exoteric Scriptures, as in the belief that Elijah would return, and later that he had returned in John the Baptist.

Turning to glance at Egypt, we find there from hoariest antiquity its famous Trinity, Ra, Osiris-Isis as the dual Second LOGOS, and Horus. The great hymn to Amun-Ra will be remembered:

The Gods bow before Thy Majesty by exalting the Souls of That which produceth them....and say to Thee: Peace to all emanations from the unconscious father of the conscious Fathers of the Gods....Thou Producer of beings, we adore the Souls which emanate from Thee. Thou begetteth us, O Thou Unknown, and we greet Thee in worshipping each God-Soul which descendeth from Thee and liveth in us (*quoted in Secret Doctrine iii, 485, 1893 ed.; v, 463, Adyar Ed.*).

The “conscious Fathers of the Gods” are the LOGOI, the “unconscious Father” is the One Existence, unconscious not as being less but as being infinitely more than what we call consciousness, a limited thing.

In the fragments of the *Book of the Dead* we can study the conceptions of the reincarnating of the human Soul, of its pilgrimage towards and its ultimate union with the *LOGOS*. The famous papyrus of “the scribe Ani, triumphant in peace,” is full of touches that remind the reader of the Scriptures of other faiths; his journey through the underworld, his expectation of re-entering his body (the form taken by reincarnation among the Egyptians), his identification with the *LOGOS*:

Saith Osiris Ani: I am the great One, son of the great One; I am Fire, the son of Fire ...I have knit together my bones, I have made myself whole and sound; I have become young once more; I am Osiris the Lord of eternity (*xlili, 1, 4*).

In Pierret’s recension of *The Book of the Dead* we find the striking passage: I am the being of mysterious names who prepares for himself dwellings for millions of years (*p. 22*). Heart, that comest to me from my mother, my heart necessary to my existence on earth ...Heart, that comest to me from my mother, heart that is necessary for me for my transformation (*pp. 113-114*).

In Zoroastrianism we find the conception of the One Existence, imaged as Boundless Space, whence arises the *LOGOS*, the creator *Aûharmazd*:

Supreme in omniscience and goodness, and unrivalled in splendor: the region of light is the place of *Aûharmazd* (*The Bundahis, Sacred Books of the East, v, 3, 4; v, 2*).

To him in the *Yasna*, the chief liturgy of the Zarathustrians, homage is first paid:

I announce and I (will) complete (my *Yasna* [worship] to Ahura Mazda, the creator, the radiant and glorious, the greatest and the best, the most beautiful (?) (to our conceptions), the most firm, the wisest, and the one of all whose body is most perfect, who attains his ends the most infallibly, because of His righteous order, to Him who disposes our minds aright, who sends His joy-creating grace afar; who made us and has fashioned us, and who has nourished and protected us, who is the most bounteous Spirit (*Sacred Books of the East, xxxi, pp. 195,196*).

The worshipper then pays homage to the Ameshaspends and other Gods, but the supreme manifested God, the *LOGOS*, is not here presented as triune. As with the Hebrews, there was a tendency in the exoteric faith to lose sight of this fundamental truth. Fortunately we can trace the primitive teaching, though it disappeared in later times from the popular belief. Dr. Haug, in his *Essays on the Parsis (translated by Dr. West and forming vol. v of Trubner’s Oriental Series)* states that Ahuramazda – *Aûharmazd* or *Hârmazd* – is the Supreme Being, and that from him were produced –

Two primeval causes, which, though different were united and produced the world of material things as well as that of the spirit (*p. 303*).

These were called twins and are everywhere present, in Ahuramazda as well as in man. One produces reality, the other non-reality, and it is these who in later Zoroastrianism became the opposing Spirits of good and evil. In the earlier teachings they evidently formed the Second Logos, duality being his characteristic mark.

The “good” and “bad” are merely Light and Darkness, Spirit and Matter, the fundamental “twins” of the Universe, the Two from the One.