

# THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

## AMERICAN SECTION.

### Oriental Department.

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#### THE GARUDA-PURĀNA.

N a previous paper I have described the fate of the wicked after death, as set forth in the *Garuda-Purāna*. I proceed now to finish the subject by giving a brief summary of what that book says about the condition of the meritorious in the next world.

We may conveniently skip over a few chapters describing in detail the means of liberating the pruta from the tortures of hell. These consist of *srāddhas*, which may well be postponed for description to some other occasion. We come at once, then, to the concluding portion of the *Purāna*. It ends with a description of the council of Dharma (the *svarga* proper), and the means of obtaining a place in it. The region of *Vaivasvat*, situate between the west and southwest, surrounded by an impenetrable wall of adamant, has four gates, and covers an area measuring three thousand by seventy-five miles. It is embellished with a variety of decorations, paintings, flowers, music, and all that could

make it pleasant and comfortable. The council of Chitrugupta is situated within this fortress. Chitrugupta takes careful record of the lives of all mortal beings, and reports to Dharma when the period of any one has run out its course. He never swerves from duty, being uninfluenced by partiality nor moved by pity. On all sides of the abode of Chitrugupta are the abodes of all the numerous diseases and epidemics ready to pounce down upon any victim at a nod from him. Sixty miles from the place of Chitrugupta is the council hall of Dharma, brilliant with gold, diamonds, and pearls. The atmosphere there is neither hot nor cold, but most agreeably temperate; and the members thereof are utter strangers to age, misery, disquiet, hunger, or thirst. The observers of severe penance, the righteous, the peaceful Sannyâsins, the Siddhas, and all who have acquired glorious Karma, gain entrance there, being endowed with suitable bodies, all light. Dharmarâja presides over this council, sitting on a high throne, illumined by all the dazzling insignia of royalty, waited upon by Chitrugupta, Death, and others. The pitrs—Agnis'wattha and Barhis'ada—as well as the Somapâs, the Svadhâvantas, and the sages Atri, Vasis'tha, Pulaha, Daks'a, Kratu, Angrî, Jamadagni, Bhrgu, Pulastya, Agastya, Nârada, together with the principal (Râjars'i) kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties, are members of the council of Dharma. There are four ways of access to this council. The way of the wicked is already indicated as the southern. These enter the council only to hear the issue of their case. The Brahmars'is, Râjars'is, Yaks'as, Gandharvas, the worshippers of S'iva, the truly religious, and all pious men in general enter by the eastern gate. The northern gate admits those who are followers of the Vedamârگا (sacrifices, etc.), those who die in battle or in the course of practising Yoga, and all observers of religious rites and ceremonies. The western (pas'chima meaning the last as well) gate is reserved for the knowers of Brahman, the devotees of the supreme (Vis'nu), the worshippers of the Gâyatri, and all high-souled beings in general. Yama (Dharma) reveals himself in a most agreeable form to all those who approach him from the three gates, and, having received them with due ceremony and worships, points especially to the last, saying, "Ye members of this august assembly, bow with all your heart to this jnânin (the knower of Brahman); he is my guest while on his way to the highest heaven." These jnânins, being one with the All, pass onwards, while all the rest remain as gods to be members of that assembly and inhabitants of that region (Svarga-Devasthâna). The latter reside there for a kalpa, and re-descend to the mortal regions on their good Karma being ex-

hausted. There is no absolution, in the sense of cessation of incarnation on this earth, till the rise of pure gnosis, enabling one to realize the unity of the All. Hence the necessity of being re-born on earth.

Such meritorious men are, however, born in the family of some holy ascetic or some wealthy person, and there finish what is wanting for final absolution. It is interesting to note the manner in which such a happy birth is brought about in a family. The religious man of holy intentions does not see his wife the first four days of her periodical sickness, and does not meet her the first week, for conception during that period is sure to produce some most evil-inclined issue. The issue turns out a son or a daughter according as the conception takes place on an even or an odd night (counting from the new moon day of the Hindu month) after the seven days first mentioned. The conception which takes place on the fourteenth night after sickness is sure to bring forth a son of rare religious merit, great name, and the favored of fortune; but ordinary people hardly understand how to keep this auspicious moment. And even then all depends on the condition of the mind at the moment of conception. From the fifth day after sickness up to the sixteenth the wife should be given sweet solid food, avoiding everything salt, pungent, or acid. The husband and wife should apparel themselves, and otherwise conduct themselves, in such a manner as to excite the greatest love and joy in the heart of each other, and thus bring about that unity which is the *sine-qua-non* of the possibility of good issue. The nature of the issue depends entirely on the condition of the mind of its parents. The son born of such union acquires great learning and shines by his piety and virtue. He begins to meditate on the Truth as soon as he is able to think, and thus acquires in a very short time what is wanting for self-realization of the All.

Here follows a detailed description of the body and its parts, together with an analysis of its components, the five so-called elements (properly tattvas), prthvi, jala, tejas, vâyu, âkâs'a. And all this with a view to explain what the meritorious do in order to attain to moks'a. The process of what is called panchikarana, or the way in which the said five tattvas multiply themselves into the twenty-five which go to make up the body of man, is next described in all its detail. This is useful to explain the method of Yoga which follows. The body is, for this purpose, supposed to be of two kinds, the vyâvahârîka (ordinarily seen by the senses) and the pâramârthîka (absolutely real). The latter is fixed upon as the one which one desirous of moks'a should apply himself to. It is shown by comparison made to agree in all the minutest details,

that this body is a miniature of the great body, the cosmos. Constant meditation on this nature of the body is pointed out as the first step on the way of absolution. The particular method of meditation best suited to one who has understood and realized all this, is to fix the mind on the six principal plexuses within the body, repeating mentally the *ajapâ* (a particular mantrajapa, so called because not consisting of actual japa, which is performed by counting the beads of a rosary or in any similar manner) \* all the while. The six plexuses situate respectively in the rectum, the space between the rectum and the navel, the navel, the heart, the throat, and the space between the eyebrows, are described in detail, which may in this place be omitted as not likely to interest the general reader. Each plexus should be kept before the mind, at its proper place, for the time necessary to complete a certain number of repetitions of the *ajapâ*. The total number of repetitions for all the six, plus those for a seventh not described in this *Purâna*, are 21,600, the number of normal breathings in twenty-four hours. Having finished this course of meditation, the ascetic tries to arouse the electric force latent somewhere below the navel (and called the *kundali* or *kundalini*), and carry it onward through the plexuses to the *brahmarandhra* (the medulla oblongata); for when this is accomplished real trance immediately follows and brings about, for the time, complete unity of the macro- and micro-cosmos. The mind is thus accustomed to a condition of rest and firmness, which is most useful at the moment of death. The way onward from this point is an easy one, and the whole of this is one only of the many ways in which the meritorious, compelled to reincarnate themselves on this earth, realize Brahman at once and forever.

But this process of Yoga is far too difficult for ordinary men, and is positively injurious and dangerous in all its details. Those, therefore, who cannot control the senses must not think of any such thing, but should give themselves up, heart and soul, to pure devotion to the Almighty. This is the easiest of all the ways to *moks'a*. Garuda not, therefore, satisfied with all this, requested Hari to tell him the easiest and surest road to final bliss. Hari hereupon proceeds to relate something which he himself describes as able to secure final beatitude even by being simply heard. *Moks'a* is not obtained by any means other than *jnâna*, which consists in the realization of the whole of the universe as all one. Their knowledge is not obtained in any one of the 84 lacs of different kinds and modes of incarnations; it is realized only

\* The real esoteric sense of the *ajapâ*, though transparent, cannot be revealed in this place except through broad hints.

in the form of man. "Having obtained the form of man, the stepping-stone to moks'a, he who does not save himself is the greatest sinner."

"Old age grins in the face, and is ready to pounce down like a ferocious tigress, life imperceptibly oozes out like water from a broken jar, maladies strike like bitter foes, yet the fool does not awake himself. Learn the truth while the body lasts; it is stupid to set about digging a well when the house is on fire. Though men constantly see before their eyes birth, misery, decay, and death in all walks of life, they are not afraid of any of them, being dead drunk with the wine of delusion. And what is this span of existence? Even if it were a hundred years, half of it is lost in sleep and indolence, the rest being devoured by cares, anxiety, disease, and misery. When the great earth is crushed into atoms, when even the high Meru falls to pieces, and when even the vast deep is parched up into a barren waste, what say ye of this fragile point you call your body? Oh my sons! aye my sweetheart! ah for my wealth, relations, friends!—even before these words die out on the tongue, wolf-like death snatches away the unwary fool. Hence, all ye who hear! do not postpone that for the morrow which you can do to-day; and do not leave to the next hour what you can do in this;—death knows no respite, no waiting." But aye! one loaded with irons, or held fast in the pillory, may some time expect release; no release can come to one bound in chains of human flesh in the form of wife and children. The wise should therefore abandon all *attachment* and seek relief in the company of good men and good books.

Who are the good? Only those who have lost themselves in the self. Those who waste their time in orally repeating different mantras, or in carefully carrying out the forms of various sacrifices, are simply laboring under the greatest delusion. Nay, even the followers of that Yoga which is just described are no less deluded than those who make much of external marks of religion and piety without the least knowledge of the truth. What absolution can those ignorant people obtain who simply torture their body by penance and austerity? The serpent is not killed by beating about the ant hill. And our talking of Brahman, though internally fast bound to pleasures of sense, should be shunned from a distance like an outcast, being only an abominable apostate both from the course of devotion and the condition of gnosis. If residence in a forest or wallowing in mud and ashes could land in moks'a, jackals, dogs, and asses must by preference lead the way. All forms are but for show, the truth is nothing but gnosis brought about by realization of universal love and complete unity. Even

books and learning are of no avail. Those reciting the *Vedas* and teaching the *S'astras* know nothing of the truth contained in them, even like the ladle that has no taste of the viands it prepares. Having arrived at the truth and being convinced of it, the man of knowledge should throw away his books like so much straw laid aside after gathering the grain it contained.

The real man of knowledge, when he finds death approaching, frees himself from all attachment, keeping his mind entirely free from other things and absorbed completely in the All. In order the better to assist this condition he retires to a forest or some secluded holy place, and spends his time in meditation on the truth. For life after death is regulated by that which the mind fixes itself upon at the last moment. All Yoga, all knowledge, helps the meritorious at this point, for his mind being not attached to anything, he easily passes out of his body to the region of eternal peace and blessedness.

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### THE LANGUAGE OF OUR TEMPLES.



EUROPEANS travelling in India must have seen that our temples, in whatever part of India they might be, have a uniformity of construction among them; they seem, most of them, built after a certain model plan of some, as it were, very ancient Public Works Department. The reason is that these temples are all symbolical; they have a language of their own, a language which is taught only verbally by the Guru to his Chela. The basic symbol of a temple is an equilateral triangle, having Birth at the left-hand corner, Death at the right-hand corner, and Amritam at the top. The base line would, therefore, represent the present condition of Humanity; the condition mentioned in *Geeta* IX, 21, and elsewhere. It represents Life, which is Jeevanam in Sanskrit, meaning the state or existence of Jeeva. This base line becomes the platform or the plinth of the temple, and, with the steps leading to it, symbolizes the present condition of Humanity, the steps meaning the previous stages we have passed through.

The second part of the temple consists of the four walls, which are cut into niches; they represent the four great religious systems of this world, viz. : the Religion of Love or Bhakti, the Religion of Gnanam, the Religion of Karma, and another which I do not remember. The niches stand for the different religious sects.

The third part is the roof, pyramidal or conical, on the top of which is placed a rod or trident vertically, the rod being the fourth. This is Brahma Vidya standing on and uniting in itself all the religious systems of this world. This part is frequently cut into steps. The rod represents Gnanam, or, more properly, Tattva Gnanam.

Then comes the Dvaram, or the door; the door must be either on the Southern wall or the Western wall, so that the worshipper on entering must face either North or East. It is said that Gnanam comes from the North, where the Devas reside, and the rites and ceremonies from the East.

The sixth is the space inside the temple; the seventh is the idol. I do not think it necessary to write anything on the last two portions, and leave them to the intuition of the reader. Shiva, the third of the Hindu Trinity, has seven faces, but only five are allowed to be given out, and the sixth and seventh are always kept in secret. The mysteries connected with the sixth are divulged only to Chelas of certain grades, while the seventh, the last, is known only to the Deekshitas, or the Initiates. There are certain instructions which are never expressed in language, but filtered, as it were, into the mind of the disciple. Many formulas form the key to systems of philosophy which the disciple is told to study at leisure. Most of the disciples are required to visit the sacred shrines all over India; a few also, such as Hingalaz, outside its present geographical limits. Used to the hard life of an ascetic, it does not become very difficult for a Chela to visit the temples and learn the lessons they teach, which act becomes a source of pleasure to him.

The temples also represents our body, and the idol, the Jivatma residing in the Middle Chakram, Anahata. Whatever way it is looked at, the Hindu temple has a deep significance for those who do not look upon our ancient ancestors as little better than barbarians, our *Shastras* as all full of fables and absurdities, and our ancient Hindu civilization as but the effect of Eastern imagination.

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## YOGA PHILOSOPHY.

**E**VERYONE who has read *The Voice of the Silence* will recognize in the following another translation of a few of the same stanzas from the *Book of Dzyan*. The article appeared in *The Theosophist* (vol. 1, pp. 86 and 87), then under the management of H. P. B. Since the “archaic manuscript—a collection of palm leaves made impermeable to water, fire, and air”, owing to its symbolic character (see Proem, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1), admits of more or less deep significance, in accordance with the disciple’s ability to extract it (see *Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, 307), it becomes plain why the two translations differ so widely. While the following does not possess the rhythmic flow, the exquisite imagery, and strength of Madame Blavatsky’s translation, still it contains parts omitted in the *Voice*, and therefore a careful comparison of them is instructive. P.

[The following communication from a European Theosophist will be read with attention and interest by Hindû students of Yoga. The references to “vital air”, “wind”, “tubular vessels”, “moon-fluid of immortality”, “chambers of the body”, and such like, may be incomprehensible to the materialist unfamiliar with the figurative nomenclature of mystics; but he who has advanced even a single pace along the road of self-development towards spirituality will comprehend easily enough what is meant by these terms.—EDITOR THEOSOPHIST.]

In the *Dublin University Magazine* for Oct., Nov., Dec., 1853, and Jan., 1854, is a series of papers entitled “The Dream of Ravan”, containing much that is curious on this subject.

In the fourth paper (Jan., 1854), speaking of an ascetic, it is said: “Following his mystic bent, he was full of internal visions and revelations. Sometimes, according to the mystic school of Paithana, sitting cross-legged, meditating at midnight at the foot of a banyan tree, with his two thumbs closing his ears and his fingers pressed upon his eyelids, he saw rolling before him gigantic fiery wheels, masses of serpent shapes, clusters of brilliant jewels, quadrants of pearls, lamps blazing without oil, a white haze melting away into a sea of glittering moonlight, a solitary fixed swan-like fiery eye of intense ruddy glare, and, at length, *the splendor of an internal light more dazzling than the sun*. An internal, un-

produced music (anahata) vibrated on his ear, and sometimes a sweet mouth, sometimes a whole face of exquisite, beseeching beauty, would rise out of a cloud before his inward gnostic eye, look into his soul, and advance to embrace him.

“At other times he followed the Path laid down by the more ancient and profounder school of Alandi, and strove to attain the condition of an illumined yogi as described by Krishna to Arjuna in the 6th Adhyaya of that most mystic of all mystic books, the *Dnyaneshvari*,

### “The Illumined.

“When this Path is beheld, then hunger and thirst are forgotten, night and day are undistinguished in this Path. . . .

“Whether one would set out to the bloom of the east or come to the chambers of the west, *without moving*, Oh holder of the bow, *is the traveling in this road*. In this Path, to whatever place one would go, *that place one's own self becomes!* How shall I easily describe this? Thou thyself shalt experience it. . . .

“The ways of the tubular vessel [nerves] are broken, the nine-fold property of wind [nervous ether] departs, on which account the functions of the body no longer exist. . . .

“Then the moon and the sun, *or that supposition which is so imagined*, appears but like the wind upon a lamp, in such a manner as not to be laid hold of. The bud of understanding is dissolved, the sense of smell no longer remains in the nostrils, but, together with the *Power*,\* retires into the middle chamber. Then with a discharge from above, the reservoir of moon-fluid of immortality (contained in the brain), leaning over on one side, communicates into the mouth of the Power. Thereby the tubes [nerves] are filled with the fluid; it penetrates into all the members; and in every direction the vital breath dissolves thereinto.

“As from the heated crucible all the wax flows out, and it remains thoroughly filled with the molten metal poured in,

“Even so that lustre (of the immortal moon-fluid) has become actually moulded into the shape of the body: on the outside it is wrapped up in the folds of the skin.

“As, wrapping himself in a mantle of clouds, the sun for a while remains, and afterwards, casting it off, comes forth arrayed in light,

“Even so, above is this dry shell of the skin, which, like the husk of grain, of itself falls off.

\* This extraordinary power who is termed elsewhere the World-Mother—the casket of Supreme Spirit, is technically called Kundalini, serpentine or annular. Some things related of it would make one imagine it to be electricity personified.—*Note from Dublin University Magazine.*

“ ‘Afterwards, such is the splendor of the limbs that one is perplexed whether it is a self-existent shaft of Kashmir porphyry, or shoots that have sprouted up from jewel seed, or a body moulded of tints caught from the glow of evening, or a pillar formed of the interior light;

“ ‘A vase filled with liquid saffron, or a statue cast of divine thaumaturgic perfection molten down. To me it appears Quietism itself, personified with limbs.

“ ‘Or is it the disc of the moon that, fed by the damps of autumn, has put forth luminous beams, or is it the embodied presence of light that is sitting on yonder seat?

“ ‘Such becomes the body; when the serpentine power drinks the moon (fluid of immortality, descending from the brain), then, O friend, death dreads the form of the body.

“ ‘Then disappears old age, the knots of youth are cut in pieces, and *the Lost State of Childhood reappears*. His age remains the same as before, but in other respects he exhibits the strength of childhood, his fortitude is beyond expression. As the golden tree from the extremity of its branches puts forth daily new jewel-buds, so new and beautiful nails sprout forth.

“ ‘He gets new teeth also, but these shine inexpressibly beautiful, like rows of diamonds set on either side. The palms of the hands and soles of the feet become like red lotus flowers, the eyes grow inexpressibly clear.

“ ‘As when, from the crammed state of its interior the pearls can no longer be kept in by the double shell, then the seam of the pearl oyster rim bursts open, so, uncontainable within the clasp of the eyelids, the sight, expanding, seeks to go outwards; it is the same, indeed, as before, but is now capable of embracing the heavens. *Then he beholds the things beyond the sea, he hears the language of Paradise; he perceives what is passing in the mind of the ant.* He takes a turn with the wind; if he walk, his footsteps touch not the water.

“ ‘Finally—

“ ‘When the light of the POWER disappears, then the form of the body is lost: he becomes hidden from the eyes of the world.

“ ‘In other respects, as before, he appears with the members of his body, but he is as one *formed of the wind*.

“ ‘Or like the core of the plantain tree standing up divested of its mantle of outward leaves, or as a cloud from which limbs have sprouted out.

“ ‘Such becomes his body; then he is called Kechara, or Sky-Goer; this step being attained is a wonder among people in the body.’”

The process here described seems similar to that described in the *Ouphnekhat*. “ ‘With your heel stop the fundament, then draw the lower air upwards by the right side, make it turn thrice round the second region of the body, thence bring it to the navel, thence to the middle of the heart, then to the throat, then to sixth region, which is the interior of the nose, between the eyelids; there retain it, it is become the breath of the Universal Soul. Then meditate on the great Ome, the universal voice which fills all, the voice of God; it makes itself heard to the ecstatic in ten manners.

“ ‘The first is like the voice of a sparrow, the second is twice as loud as the first, the third like the sound of a cymbal, the fourth like the murmur of a great shell, the fifth like the chant of the vina, the sixth like the sound of the ‘tal’, the seventh like the sound of a bamboo flute placed near the ear, the eighth the sound of the instrument pahaoujd struck with the hand, the ninth like the sound of a small trumpet, the tenth like the rumbling of a thunder-cloud. At each of these sounds the ecstatic passes through various states until the tenth, *when he becomes God*.

“ ‘At the first all the hairs on the body stand up.

“ ‘At the second his limbs are benumbed.

“ ‘At the third he feels in all his members the exhaustion of excess.

“ ‘At the fourth his head turns, he is, at it were, intoxicated.

“ ‘At the fifth the *the water of life* flows back into his brain.

“ ‘At the sixth this water descends into and nourishes him.

“ ‘At the seventh he becomes master of the vision, he sees into men’s hearts, he hears the most distant voices.

“ ‘At the ninth he feels himself to be so subtile that he can transport himself where he will, and, like the Devas, see all without being seen.

“ ‘At the tenth he becomes the universal and indivisible Voice, he is the creator, the eternal, exempt from change; and, become perfect repose, he distributes repose to the world.’ ”

Compare this with Vaughan, *Anima Magica Abscondita*. “ ‘This mystery is finished when the light in a sudden, miraculous corruscation darts from the center to the circumference, and the divine Spirit has so swallowed up the body that it is a glorious body shining like the sun and moon. In this rotation it doth pass, and no sooner, from the natural to the supernatural state, for it is no more fed with visibles, but with invisibles, and the eye of the creator is perpetually upon it. After this the material parts are never more seen.’ ”



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