

SECTION III. (*Continued.*)

CHAPTER II.

THE GENESIS OF THE VEDAS.

The authors of the *Vedas*.—The rulers of the worlds.
—The world-systems and cycles which they rule.

The World-process works by means of hierarchies of rulers, endlessly graded as subordinates and overlords, all classified by functions under cognition, desire, action and summation, and dealing with definite cycles and extents of space and time, *i. e.*, world-systems, on all scales, ever minuter and ever vaster. Each world-system has a Brahmā, a Viṣṇu and a Shiva, the three being subordinate to a Mahā-Viṣṇu.¹

Mahā-Viṣṇu ideates, places before himself, the *Atharva Veda*, and deals with the summation; Viṣṇu, the *Rg-Veda* and cognition; Brahmā, the *Yajur-Veda* and action; and Shiva, the *Sāma*, and desire.

¹It would probably be correct to add at the end of this sentence, 'in our world-system'. It seems likely that in other world-systems, a Mahā-Shiva or a Mahā-Brahmā is the overlord, according to the predominance of the element of desire or of action in the system. This is hinted in the work elsewhere.

That whereinto all enter, *vishanṭi*, is *Viṣṇu*; he who covers up, *vriṇīṭē*, envelopes, surrounds, undertakes all, is *Brahmā*; he who sleeps, *sheṭē*, in everything, is *Shiva*. *Shiva* sleeps, lies hidden, in all and everything as the nexus, the bond, and this is the nature of desire. *Vriṇīṭē* signifies the envelopment, the covering with an envelope, the demarcation of the limiting bounds or the periphery, and so the formation or creation (of all forms); and this is action presided over by *Brahmā*. *Vishanṭi sarvāṇi* indicates that all things enter into It and It into all, and such is the Self, connected with cognition and *Viṣṇu*. The summation or totality of these is *Mahā-Viṣṇu*.

Mahā-Viṣṇu, 'the overlord of all this world-system, is described as the *Īshvara*, white-colored, four-armed, adorned with the conch, the discus, the mace, the lotus, the forest-wreath, and the *kanstūbhā*-gem, shining, vested in blue and yellow, endless and imperishable in form, attributeless yet ensouling and underlying all attributes.¹ Here, the epithet *Īshvara* indicates the ruler; the four arms, the four activities of

¹ Such parts of the description here as in strictness belong only to the impersonal *Brahman*, e.g., "attributeless, ...all sound, ...all time, ...the whole of that procession...etc.," are to be understood to apply to *Mahā-Viṣṇu* only in a comparative sense, i.e., within the limits of his own body, world-system, 'Ring-pass-not,' or periphery.

cognition, etc.; the white resplendence is the illumination of all things; the *śhaṅkha*, conch or shell, indicates all sound, and the *chakra*, wheel or discus, all time, there being a connexion between the two; *gaḍā*, the (whirling) mace, is the spiral method of the procession of the world and the lotus-flower is the whole of that procession; the *vana-mālā*, the wreath of forest flowers, indicates the stringing together of all things into unity and necessity; the *nīla-piṭ-āmbāra*, blue and yellow vestures, are darkness and light; the *kaustūbhā* jewel indicates inseparable connexion with all; *nirguṇa*, attributeless, shows the presence of the nature of Negation; while *saguṇa*, attributeful, implies possession of name and form.¹

The World-process (as embodied in our world-system) is the result of the ideation of *Mahā-*

¹ The reasons for these attributions of symbols may be a little further explained. Sound is creative—and destructive; forms are built up by sound, and it has been shown by many experiments that shell-forms are among the most frequent creations of musical notes; for these reasons, as well as for the very powerful and peculiar vibrations caused by blowing into it, the conch has been selected as the symbol of creative activity by sound. The *chakra* or whirling disc is the *svastikā*, the cross of fire, which, in rapid rotation, has each arm blown backwards; it is found everywhere in

Viṣṇu. This ideation of the methods, laws, principles or outlines of that World-process is the *Veda*, (as 'I am this and this and this, and not this and this and this' etc). It is true that the ideation is the *Samsāra*, the World-process, and that there is no difference between the two, *i.e.*, between ideation as *Veda* and ideation as *Samsāra*; but all manifestation and description of the successive implies the principle of beginnings and ends, and that implies the world, also as a symbol of creative fire, the 'electric cross,' or wheel. As the conch symbolises creation in space, so is the *svastikā* creation in time, the whirling arms signifying succession. The mace is often given as the sign of rule, held by the ruler of the world-system, the sceptre which directs and if necessary, punishes. The lotus-flower is the symbol of a universe, and this owing to the fact that our universe, *i.e.*, our solar system, when seen from a higher plane, looks like an expanded flower of that kind. All wreaths symbolise the threading of the many on the One. "All this is threaded on me as pearls on a string." The blue vesture symbolises the blue of space, which is, in truth, darkness, and the yellow, the golden rays of the sun, the source of light. The *kaustubha*-gem is the 'Jewel in the Lotus,' the Self in the Universe, and hence ever adorns the breast of Him in whom the I and the This are united, the *Īshvara* of a universe. (A.B.)

separateness between description and described, thought and thing. (Thought and thing are one only from the standpoint of the absolute *Brahman*, wherein the whole World-process is summed up in a single act of consciousness; in the successive, on the other hand, they become two; the ideation of a definite portion, treated as a whole, becomes an *inner* and ever-complete *potential*; and the *parts* of this, an *outer* and successive *actual*.)¹ Otherwise, indeed, the World-process is *Brahman* and that is All-Consciousness, All-Ideation.

From *Mahā-Viṣṇu* arise in succession, *Viṣṇu*, *Brahmā* and *Shiva*, cognition, action and desire, and each receives from him the *Veda*, *i.e.*, the statute, the body of rules, suited to his own department of work, *viz.*, *Rk*, *Yajuh* and *Sāma*, respectively, the totality being the *Atharva*. This order is only actual (to our world-system) and not essential. Each of the three gods knows all the *Vedas*, because of their mutual relation, their unity, in fact. *Brahmā*, no doubt, is said to be the *Karṭā*, the actor or maker, of the *Vedas*. But this means only that he is the *active* promulgator and teacher of the *Vedas* (to the world that he makes or creates). He is inseparably connected with all action.

¹ For fuller discussion of this distinction between ideal and real see *The Science of Peace*, pp. 283-284.

Whatever appears or is seen or heard or learnt—all that is action ; and Brahmā must be regarded as the *actor* of it all.

As is declared,¹ Brahmā, gave, that is, taught, the *Veḍas* to his eldest son Aṭharva. Aṭharva here signifies the summation, the totality, of the *jīvas* that Brahmā has to deal with. It is also said, in further detail, that Brahmā spoke the *Veḍas* to Bṛhaspati; he to Indra; he to Bharadvāja; he to the ṛṣhis; and they to the *brāhmaṇas*, etc. Here, Bṛhaspati indicates a certain class of *jīvas*, and Indra is an office-bearer also concerned with action. The declaration of the *Veḍas* thus passed downwards in succession through the various hierarchies, for the instruction and benefit of all creation.²

¹ In the *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣaḥ*.

² According to recognised Hindū tradition, the present fourfold division is due to Vyāsa, who said that the then coming race of men would not be able to receive the whole knowledge, as conveyed in the single *Veda*, and hence divided it into four. It may be remarked that similarly, the four castes are due to the incapacity of humanity to unfold itself symmetrically, balanced in each direction; hence it became necessary to practise one set or class of virtues at a time, and to allocate one set to one caste, causing for the time an unequal, lopsided evolution, to be subsequently balanced up in the perfect Yogī, who belongs to no caste, but manifests the virtues of all. (A.B.)

It is true that the world extends endlessly beyond Mahā-Viṣṇu also, but we, as limited individuals, can deal with only limited details. We have no words for matters beyond Mahā-Viṣṇu. The *Mahā-Veḍa*, which is known only to Mahā-Viṣṇu and the three gods immediately next in degree deals with such matters. Our knowledge, *i.e.*, the knowledge of *jīvas* belonging to our particular world-system, can range only within the limits of these *Veḍas*, from an atom (in size) and a thousandth of a *ṛuti* (in time) to Mahā-Viṣṇu.

The various cycles that our gods and we are concerned with may be briefly mentioned here. Knowledge of cycles brings knowledge of the reason of those statements in the *Veḍas* which deal with time, as the *Praṇava-logion* deals with the Timeless that includes all time. As the time-measures from the *ṛuti* up to the *yuga* are matter of common knowledge, we shall begin here with the *yuga*, taking our ordinary human years for this measurement. It is true that all months and years belong to all, (*i.e.*, any system of years and months can be used to measure the course of any system of events); but this depends upon the knowledge (of the measurer being sufficiently comprehensive to include both the sets of systems concerned, in their proper mutual proportion and co-ordination in a

larger system)¹; otherwise the year of one *jīva* is the month of another, and *vice versa*, this being entirely a relative matter.

The *kr̥ṭa-yuga* or *saḍ-yuga*, concerned with cognition, covers 1,736,000 years; the *ṭretā*, dealing with action, extends over 1,245,000²; 864,000 years make the *ḍvāpara*, devoted to desire; *kalī*, with 432,000 years, is the summation of all.

One set of these four	= 1 <i>chaṭur-yuga</i> .
1000 <i>chaṭur-yuga</i> -s	= 1 <i>viyuga</i> .
1000 <i>viyuga</i> -s	= 1 <i>mahā-yuga</i> .
1000 <i>mahā-yuga</i> -s	= 1 <i>kalpa</i> .
7 <i>kalpa</i> -s	= 1 <i>mahā-kalpa</i> .
14 <i>mahā-kalpa</i> -s	= 1 <i>chakra</i> .
14 <i>chakra</i> -s	= 1 <i>niṣṭha</i> .
14 <i>niṣṭha</i> -s	= 1 <i>manu</i> .
(2 <i>manu</i> -s	= 1 <i>manvantara</i>).
14 <i>manu</i> -s or 7 <i>manvantara</i> -s	} = 1 { <i>mahā-</i> <i>manvantara</i> .

¹ Thus perhaps the octal and the decimal systems could both be reduced and merged into a system in which progress was in twos; so the apparent incompatibility between matter of three dimensions and matter of more or less dimensions so-called, would probably be removed if the 'atom' which is the 'greatest common measure' of both were found.

² Modern *Jyotiṣha* assigns 1,728,000, and 1,296,000 respectively to *kr̥ṭa*, and *ṭretā*.

7 <i>mahā-man-</i> <i>vanṭara</i> -s	} = 1 <i>nikṣha</i> .
7 <i>nikṣha</i> -s	= 1 <i>chārḍhya</i> ,
7 <i>chārḍhya</i> -s	= 1 <i>ḍaiva</i> .
7 <i>ḍaiva</i> -s	= 1 <i>vinihīṭa-cycle</i> .

This progress by sevens is endless. The cause of it is the quartette of cognition etc. By successive addition of each one of these four (to the quartette) we get 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 etc., endlessly (?)

Ordinarily, seven *manvanṭaras* are said to make a *mahā-manvanṭara*; but each *manvanṭara* is made up of the 'interval' between two *Manus*; hence 14 *manus*, complete the *mahā-manvanṭara*.¹

¹ The ruler of the cycle is called *Manu*, and the period of his reign is also called *manu* here. The details, and the reasons for the details, of this table are naturally difficult to understand without much other information which is so far 'occult' and hidden from the public. There is also some discrepancy between the current Hindū notions on the subject of the *manvanṭaras* or the theosophical ideas of them (as stated in Mrs. Besant's note below) which would probably disappear if the requisite commentaries on the *Purāṇas* were available.

The *Manu* who rules over the period of manifestation is called the *Root-Manu*, since from him proceeds all growth during that period; the *Manu*

As a matter of fact, the knowledge of (our world's) *yogīs* and *brāhmaṇas* does not extend beyond the limits of a *mahā-manvanṭara* in its past, present and future.

The ruler of a *mahā-manvanṭara* is a *Mahā-Viṣṇu*. Cycles beyond this and up to the *vinihīṭa* have been mentioned here only to indicate the endlessness of time. The Sun, which is the light of *Mahā-Viṣṇu*, is the standard of measure of our world for time and space. By the movements of the Sun we have *ghatī*, *mahā-ghatī*, day, week, fortnight, month, and year. One sun illuminates one *brahmāṇḍa*, and includes seven planets in accordance with that same fourfold rule of cognition, etc., (and subsequent additions. Our seven planets are) *Sūrya*, *Chandra*, *Bhauma*, *Buḍha* (the son) of *Shashī*, *Jīva*, *Bhṛgu* and *Shani*.¹

who rules over the period of *pralaya* is called the Seed-Manu, since in him are gathered up all the results of the period of manifestation, and they mature in him during the time of rest. The period of manifestation is called the *manvanṭara*, 'between (two) Manus,' and is under the Root-Manu. (A. B.)

¹ These are the same as those mentioned by current *Jyotiṣha*. The Sun and the Moon are obviously not 'planets' in the modern sense of the word; western astrologers recognise Mercury,

1 Sun with seven planets = 1 *brahmāṇḍa*,
revolving in a
vast cycle, the
maker and ruler
of which is tech-
nically called *Īs-*
hvara.

7 *brahmāṇḍas* = 1 *jagaṭ*, made and
ruled by a *Hari*.

1000 *jagaṭs* = 1 *viśva*, by a *Hara*.

15,000,000 *viśvas* = 1 *mahā-viśva*,
by a *Pareshvara*.

Two *śaṅkhas* of } = 1 *loka*, by a *Para-*
mahā-viśvas } *meshvara*.

One *Mahā-śaṅ-* } = 1 *mahā-loka*, by
kha of *lokas* } *a Maheshvara*.

One hundred *paḍ-* } = 1 *samsāra*, by
mas of *mahā-lokas* } *a Mahā-Viṣṇu*.

Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Herschel or Uranus, regarding the 'Moon' as substituted for the Earth, and the 'Sun' for Uranus. Some add Neptune. In the western horoscope, the Sun and Moon have their 'houses,' as powerful influences, and the nodes of the Moon, *Rāhu* and *Keṭu* are also recognised. The text making one Sun with seven, takes the theosophical view, in which the Sun is the eighth, and is not included in the seven. See *The Secret Doctrine*, i. 483, 578. The seven planets are the brothers of the Sun. (A. B.)

Mahā-Viṣṇu presides over the summation and totality of all this. In every brahmāṇḍa the activity is fourfold, and the chief functionaries are Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Shiva. Sub-divisions of their functions give rise to the names and offices of Nārāyaṇa, etc.

Among these functions, that of making or creating goes with action and belongs to Brahmā. Again, "that which has been made is maintained by knowledge"; this maintenance or preservation is the work of Viṣṇu. Further, because it is necessary that what has appeared should disappear, therefore is there a destroyer, and he is Shiva, connected with desire (which first affirms and next denies, acts and reacts, now attracts and then repels, begins with craving for, and, after satiety, revolts from, its object and casts it off. It precedes action or Brahmā, as longing for manifestation; and it succeeds knowledge or Viṣṇu, after maintenance or enjoyment of that manifestation, as a sense of fatigue, a growth of inertness, a need for rest by winding up the manifestation).

The significance of the tradition that Brahma is born from or in the lotus, is the same. The lotus symbolises a world-system, and Brahmā dwells therein representing action; he is therefore called the Kamal-āsana, the Lotus-seated. The lotus, again, is said to arise from or in the

navel¹ of Viṣṇu, because the navel of Viṣṇu or all-knowledge is *necessary desire*, the primal

¹ It is worth noting that in Samskr̥t literature the navel is often treated as more central and almost more essential to the organism than the heart. Indications of the importance of the heart are not wanting, it is true, as, for instance, in the verse, राजा प्रजानां हृदयं गरीयः but it is probable that physiologically the 'navel' was the more vital organ in the earlier stages of evolution, and is even at the present stage more essentially connected with desire proper than the heart which may perhaps be regarded as connected with the actional sub-division of desire. The nabhi is said to be the principal seat of chitta (at least while it is 'downward-turned,' towards things worldly and material). Compare the English expression 'the nave or hub of the universe'.

The 'navel' represents the solar plexus, perhaps the most important plexus of the sympathetic system; it controls the digestive tract, and sends its branches to liver, spleen, stomach, as well as to the alimentary canal and generative organs. Nor is it unconnected with the lungs and heart. It may be regarded as the brain of the sympathetic system, and responds with dangerous facility to thought; concentration on it, often rashly undertaken, is apt to result in a peculiarly intractable form of nervous disease. Emotions set up in it violent disturbances, and the feeling of a nausea, which often follows an emotional shock, is due to its excited action. (A. B.)

form of which, as embodied in the *Veḍa*-text, is : May I be born forth (as multitudinous progeny). From such central and essential desire, the will to live, arises the whole of becoming, all the operations, all the whirls and whorls, of change and manifestation which make up life. In such becoming dwells Brahmā, and from him and by him, *i.e.*, by incessant activity, arises and manifests the organised world, the *ṭri-bhuvanam*, the triple-world. Because first *manifested*, therefore is Brahmā *named* the first of the gods ; by action is manifestation, and he is the actor ; and because actor, therefore is he also sometimes called the preserver or protector of the world ; for he who makes a thing desires also the maintenance and preservation of his handiwork, and, moreover, by the making of the thing supplies the basis and opportunity for the operation of preservation, which, in strictness, of course, belong to Viṣṇu.¹

Compare in this connexion, the statements in some of the 'minor' *Upaniṣats* as to the subdivisions of *agni*, *e.g.*, *kāmāgni*, *koṣṭhāgni*, etc., and the transformation of these various 'energies' or vital forces into one another.

¹ In theosophical phraseology, the Third Logos (corresponding to Brahmā) manifests first, then the Second Logos (corresponding to Viṣṇu) and finally the First Logos (corresponding to Shiva).

Birth, stay, and death ; becoming, succession, relation ; origin, middle, end ; cognition, desire, action ; such triplets make the World-process, and also each world-system, a *ṭri-bhuvanam*, a triple-world, a triple-becoming, a constant illustration of the tri-unity of the absolute Brahmaṇ.