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 Atharvaveda, and deals with the summation; Viṣṇu, the Rg-Veda and cognition; Brahmā, the Yajur-Veda and action; and Shiva, the Śāma, 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, *vishanți*, is *Vishnu*; he who covers up, *vriññē*, envelopes, surrounds, undertakes all, is Brahman; he who sleeps, *shetē*, in everything, is Shiva. Shiva sleeps, lies hidden, in all and everything as the nexus, the bond, and this is the nature of desire. *Vriññē* 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. *Vishanți sarvāni* indicates that all things enter into It and It into all, and such is the Self, connected with cognition and Vishnu. The summation or totality of these is Mahā-Viṣṇu.

Mahā-Viṣṇu, 'the overload of all this world-system, is described as the Ishvara, white-colored, four-armed, adorned with the conch, the discus, the mace, the lotus, the forest-wreath, and the *kaṇṭuha-gha*, shining, vested in blue and yellow, endless and imperishable in form, attributeless yet causing and underlying all attributes.² Here, the epithet Ishvara indicates the ruler; the four arms, the four activities of cognition, etc.; the white resplendence is the illumination of all things; the *saṅkha*, conch or shell, indicates all sound, and the *chakra*, wheel or discus, all time, there being a connexion between the two; *gada*, 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-mala*, the wreath of forest flowers, indicates the stringing together of all things into unity and necessity; the *nīlapiṭāmba*, blue and yellow vestures, are darkness and light; the *kaṇṭuha* jewel indicates inseparable connexion with all; *nirguna*, attributeless, shows the presence of the nature of Negation; while *saguna*, attributeful, implies possession of name and form.

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

²The 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 *svastika*, the cross of fire, which, in rapid rotation, has each arm blown backwards; it is found everywhere in...
Vishnu. This ideation of the methods, laws, principles or outlines of that World-process is the \( Vedanta \), (as ‘I am this and this and this, and not this and this and this’ etc). It is true that the ideation is the \( Samsara \), the World-process, and that there is no difference between the two, i.e., between ideation as \( Vedanta \) and ideation as \( Samsara \); 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 \( svastika \) 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 \( kauśambhugam \) 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 Ishvara 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.) Otherwise, indeed, the World-process is Brahman and that is All-Consciousness, All-Ideation.

From Mahā-Vishnu arise in succession, Vishnu, Brahman and Shiva, cognition, action and desire, and each receives from him the \( Vedanta \), i.e., the statute, the body of rules, suited to his own department of work, viz., Rk, Yajña and Sūtra, 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. Brahman, no doubt, is said to be the Karta, 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 Vedas to his eldest son Atharva. Atharva 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 Vedas to Brhaspati; he to Indra; he to Bharadvaja; he to the rṣhis; and they to the brahmānas, etc. Here, Brhaspati indicates a certain class of jīvas, and Indra is an office-bearer also concerned with action. The declaration of the Vedas thus passed downwards in succession through the various hierarchies, for the instruction and benefit of all creation.²

¹ In the Manúdaka-Upaniṣat.
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, leap-sided evolution, to be subsequently balanced up in the perfect Yogi, who belongs to no caste, but manifests the virtues of all. (A.B.)

It is true that the world extends endlessly beyond Mahā-Viśnu also, but we, as limited individuals, can deal with only limited details. We have no words for matters beyond Mahā-Viśnu. The Mahā-Veda, which is known only to Mahā-Viśnu 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 Vedas, from an atom (in size) and a thousandth of a trūti (in time) to Mahā-Viśnu.

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 Vedas which deal with time, as the Praṇava-logion deals with the Timeless that includes all time. As the time-measures from the trūti 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 kr̥ta-yuga or sa ṝ-yuga, concerned with cognition, covers 1,736,000 years; the ārdha-yuga, dealing with action, extends over 1,245,000 \(^2\); 864,000 years make the dvapara, devoted to desire; kāli, with 432,000 years, is the summation of all.

One set of these four = 1 chatu-ya-ga.
1000 chatu-ya-ga-s = 1 viyu-ga.
1000 viyu-ga-s = 1 mahā-ya-ga.
1000 mahā-ya-ga-s = 1 kalpā.
7 kalpā-s = 1 mahā-kalpā.
14 mahā-kalpā-s = 1 chakra.
14 chakra-s = 1 niṣṭha.
14 niṣṭha-s = 1 manu.
(2 manus = 1 manvantara).
14 manus or 7 manvantara-s = 1 manvantara.

\(^1\) 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 Jyotisha assigns 1,728,000, and 1,296,000 respectively to kr̥ta and ārdha-yuga.
As a matter of fact, the knowledge of (our world's) yogis and brāhmaṇas does not extend beyond the limits of a maha-manvantara in its past, present and future.

The ruler of a maha-manvantara is a Mahā-Viṣṇu. Cycles beyond this and up to the vinīhiṭa 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 ghati, mahā-ghati, day, week, fortnight, month, and year. One sun illuminates one brāhmaṇa, and includes seven planets in accordance with that same fourfold rule of cognition, etc., (and subsequent additions. Our seven planets are) Sūrya, Chandra, Bhūma, Budha (the son) of Shashī, Jīva, Bharu 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 manvantara, 'between (two) Manus,' and is under the Root-Manu. (A.B.)

¹These are the same as those mentioned by current Jyotisha. The Sun and the Moon are obviously not 'planets' in the modern sense of the word; western astrologers recognise Mercury,
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 Śiva. 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 Śiva, 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 Brahmā 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 navel\(^1\) of Viṣṇu, because the navel of Viṣṇu or all-knowledge is necessar\(^2\) desire, the primal

It is worth noting that in Sāmśkrit 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, बाजा बजानों हेतुं तेरस: 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 nābhi is said to be the principal seat of aḥīṭṭa (at least while it is ‘downward-turned’, towards things worldly and material). Compare the English expression ‘the navel 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 Veda-
text, is: May I be born forth (as multitudinous
progeny). From such central and essential
desire, the will to live, arises the whole of be-
coming, 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 ātri-bhūvanam, the triple-world.
Because first manifested, therefore is Brahmā
named the first of the gods; by action is mani-
festation, and he is the actor; and because actor,
therefore is he also sometimes called the pre-
server 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 preserva-
tion, which, in strictness, of course, belong to
Vishnu.  

Compare in this connexion, the statements in
some of the ‘minor’ Upaniṣhats as to the sub-
divisions 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 Vishnu) and finally
the First Logos (corresponding to Śiva).